



Gloucester City Council

COUNCIL

**Meeting: Thursday, 21st March 2024 at 6.30 pm
in Civic Suite, North Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EP**

ADDENDUM

5.	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES) (PAGES 5 - 8) The opportunity is given to members of the public to put questions to Cabinet Members or Committee Chairs provided that questions do not contravene the provisions set out Council Procedure Rule 10.01. The enclosed questions were submitted in accordance with the relevant deadline and the responses have been published at least 24 hours before the meeting. Supplementary questions may be put and answered during the meeting, subject to the relevant time limit.
8.	MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME (PAGES 9 - 22) a) Leader and Cabinet Members' Question Time (45 minutes) Questions and responses have been published at least 24 hours before the meeting. Supplementary questions will be put and answered during the meeting, subject to the relevant time limit. b) Questions to Chairs of Meetings (15 Minutes) There are no questions to Chairs of Meetings.

Yours sincerely

Jon McGinty
Managing Director

NOTES

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 as follows –

<u>Interest</u>	<u>Prescribed description</u>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within the previous 12 months (up to and including the date of notification of the interest) in respect of any expenses incurred by you carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between you, your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (or a body in which you or they have a beneficial interest) and the Council (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the Council's area. For this purpose "land" includes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for you, your spouse, civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the Council's area for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) – (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body in which you, your spouse or civil partner or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where – (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the Council's area and

(b) either –

- i. The total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
- ii. If the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

For this purpose, “securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

NOTE: the requirements in respect of the registration and disclosure of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and withdrawing from participating in respect of any matter where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest apply to your interests and those of your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner where you are aware of their interest.

Access to Information

Agendas and reports can be viewed on the Gloucester City Council website: www.gloucester.gov.uk and are available to view five working days prior to the meeting date.

For further details and enquiries about this meeting please contact Tanya Davies, 01452 396125, tanya.davies@gloucester.gov.uk.

For general enquiries about Gloucester City Council’s meetings please contact Democratic Services, 01452 396126, democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk.

If you, or someone you know cannot understand English and need help with this information, or if you would like a large print, Braille, or audio version of this information please call 01452 396396.

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions:

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building; gather at the assembly point in the car park and await further instructions;
- Do not re-enter the building until told by a member of staff or the fire brigade that it is safe to do so.

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Paragraph 10.01 of Part 4 of the Rules of Procedure contained within the City Council's Constitution provides that members of the public who live, work or study in Gloucester may submit a maximum of three questions to the meeting.

This document details the written questions submitted in accordance with the notice requirements and the written replies thereto.

Council is recommended to

(a) Note the written questions submitted and corresponding responses.

(b) Note the supplementary questions and corresponding responses delivered verbally within the 15 minutes available for Questions by the Public.

No.	Question from/to	Question
1.	From Mr Randolph to Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Our councillors have not carried out any public consultations over net zero plans which will effect every aspect of everyone's life, from work, holidays, travel and even how our homes are heated. Does our council have plans to hold any public consultations for what they are trying to achieve?
Response:		
The Council has recently completed its new Climate Change Strategy and accompanying Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment. These documents are on the agenda for consideration by Council this evening. One of the recommendations for Council to consider is that they be issued for public and key stakeholder consultation.		
2.	From Mr Randolph to Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Our councillors have signed up to the great reset also known as agenda 21, or agenda 2030, this agenda is being pushed by non government organisations like the UN WHO and WEF. As the council are meant to be by the people for the people and of the people, and are meant to have the best interests of the local community at heart, will we be having public consultations where we the people can decide if we wish to go ahead with these plans or not? You know like a DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.
Response:		
Gloucester City Council has not "signed up to the great reset also known as agenda 21, or agenda 2030". Gloucester City Council's decarbonisation targets and its decarbonisation ambitions for the wider district were established by its 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration, which was democratically debated and agreed by Council, and subsequent revisions in 2021 (also democratically agreed by Council) to bring the Council into line with the higher confidence		

	thresholds of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 1.5C report and the targets of neighbouring districts.	
3.	From Mr Whitefield to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	<p>Since 2016, 5G has significantly improved our local emergency services, enhanced communication, and streamlined operation efficiency across the police, NHS and Fire Services. This has included; The ability for police body cams to live stream to call handlers, allowing healthcare professionals to perform diagnostics remotely such as blood analysis, and facilitating the rapid deployment of services like Fire and Rescue during significant events. There are many more examples...</p> <p>Given the recent rise and disruptions by local groups/individuals who spread baseless misinformation intending to disrupt and instil fear. Would the council consider a dedicated webpage or informational campaign to educate/inform the public on how 5G benefits everyone and improves the quality of life for all?</p>
Response:		
Thank you for the question and suggestion. I can confirm we are currently working on an informational campaign.		
4.	From Mr Chilcott to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	<p>I understand that brownfield enabling funding (Brownfield, Infrastructure and land fund, brownfield release funding) is available from Homes England & the Department for levelling up, for private sector housing developments, including homes for private sector sale, build to rent and also key worker housing.</p> <p>Have Gloucester city council submitted bids to help facilitate the proposed developments at the former Prison site, Bakers Quay and Great Western yard development?</p> <p>If not are there plans to do so? (I understand that there is no limit to the number of bids that can be submitted)</p>
Response:		
<p>The Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) enables Councils to apply for funding to unlock brownfield sites for development in certain circumstances. One of the requirements is that any site is in the ownership of the council at the time of the application. Currently none of the sites mentioned are in the Council's ownership and consequently the Council has not made an application for BLRF funding for any of these sites.</p> <p>The council has had considerable success in bidding for BLRF funds which qualify (i.e., on land in the council's ownership). We have secured £2.2m for works at St Oswald's in collaboration with Rooftop housing, and £470k for the next phase of residential development at Whitefriars.</p>		
5.	From Mr Chilcott to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	The staff recruitment and retention difficulties experienced by Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, other NHS services and the wider health and care sector are well documented.

		<p>The provision of decent quality key worker housing within the central area of the city would no-doubt be a considerable benefit in recruiting and retaining staff. This would not only help reduce waiting lists for local residents, it could potentially mean the difference between life and death for some residents.</p> <p>Does the city council have plans to adopt a strategy for the supply of key worker housing, whether this be dedicated developments - the former Wessex House site in Gt Western road and the adjacent car park, former KC's site and Quayside House would be ideal - or priorities the affordable allocation of new build developments - Great Western Yard (I understand that an allocation of Eutopia Homes development in Exeter is dedicated key worker housing), Whitefriars phase 2 and the former Sainsbury sites again would be ideal?</p>
<p>Response:</p>		
<p>There are currently no plans to adopt a strategy relating to the supply of key worker housing as the Council's existing planning policies clearly set out a range of requirements in respect of the delivery of affordable homes (including key worker accommodation).</p> <p>When considering development opportunities for land we own, as is the case with the Wessex House site and Whitefriars, the council always explores opportunities with other parties. If a viable and timely opportunity arises, we would of course pursue this.</p>		

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Paragraph 12.01 of Part 4 of the Rules of Procedure contained within the City Council's Constitution provides that a Member of the Council may submit up to five written questions to the Leader of Council or any Cabinet Member.

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

Council is recommended to

- (a) Note the written questions submitted and corresponding responses.**
- (b) Note the supplementary questions and corresponding responses delivered verbally within the 45 minutes available for Questions by Members.**

No.	Question from/to	Question
1.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	<p>At a previous meeting you told me that the unaudited statement of accounts for 2022/23 would be published on the council's website ahead of this council meeting to enable members to ask questions on them.</p> <p>The deadline for questions was 12 noon on the 13th of March and they hadn't been published at 10am.</p> <p>What is the excuse this time?</p>
<p>Response:</p> <p>Officers are continuing to work towards publishing the unaudited accounts ASAP with a target date of the end of April.</p> <p>Unfortunately, they haven't been able to achieve the completion prior to the March Council meeting, due to managing the conflicting priorities of rehydrating 2022/23 data while continuing to manage the ongoing financial pressures of 2023/24 and finalising the 2024/25 budget.</p> <p>Last week, officers were working with the Council's supplier, Civica, to rehydrate the data into the financial system. Now this work is complete, the information is available to review, compile and reconcile in order to finalise the financial statements.</p>		

2.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	<p>The unaudited statement of accounts for 2021/22 have been published on the council's website. Normal practice would have been to file the independently audited version by September 2022.</p> <p>This council is now 18 months late filing audited accounts.</p> <p>When can we expect the final version of these accounts to be completed and independently audited?</p>
Response:		
<p>As previously noted, this is a national issue, it is not limited to Gloucester. The Government is consulting on how to clear the audit backlog, this was reported in detail at the most recent Audit and Governance Committee where the current external auditor explained the position for Gloucester. The Government consultation on clearing the backlog only closed on the 7th March 2024. The Council awaits the outcomes of the consultation, the results of which will be discussed with the auditors.</p>		
3.	From Councillor Pullen to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	<p>In the recent budget the government asked councils to cut their spending on consultants. How is this council going to do this?</p>
Response:		
<p>The Council only looks to use consultants where it doesn't have the skills in house or the one-off nature of the work would mean it was uneconomical to employ individuals for the work.</p> <p>In 2023/24, the previously reported spend of £491k covered 30 activities, the majority of which were under £10k. Of the spend, £194k was for specialist IT services which the Council doesn't expect to require in the future following recovery from the cyber incident.</p>		
4.	From Councillor Pullen to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>How many operational cameras are there in the city for use in detecting and deterring fly tipping?</p>
Response:		
<p>We currently have 3 mobile cameras that we are able to deploy. The 9 used cameras that were donated to us by the police could not be used, as they are too old and beyond repair.</p> <p>We also have approximately 60 stationary CCTV cameras situated throughout the city, with a majority concentrated in and around the city centre. These cameras operate continuously, capturing activities, and are under the observation of a team of professionals within the Gloucestershire Constabulary based at Waterwells. They provide the police with the capability to oversee various forms of criminal activities and anti-social behavior, such as fly tipping. The recorded footage from these CCTV cameras can also serve as valuable evidence when investigating enviro-crime offenders.</p>		
5.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>How many missed waste bin collections have happened this year in the City of Gloucester and how many in the ward of Coney Hill?</p>

	Response:	
	Since 1 st January 2024 there have been 474 reported missed waste collections in Gloucester, 31 of these from the ward of Coney Hill. During this period there have been 325,765 collections carried out (based on a fortnightly collection schedule, on 59,230 properties), making the percentage of missed collections 0.15% overall.	
6.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	What disabled friendly changes have happened in the city council after I raised my concerns about disability discrimination in council buildings?
	Response:	
	Changes have been made so all individuals can now ask questions from the same place at Council meetings. In addition, a review conducted as a result of legislation changes confirmed the Council was compliant with existing legislation (Part M of the Building Regulations under the equalities act 2010).	
	All works since the change in legislation are designed to meet the current building regulations and signed off by a RICS approved surveyor (where in line with listed building regulations)	
	We have also sought training from certain groups such as the Gloucestershire Sight Loss Council and the GDA Deaf and Hard of Hearing Association to enhance the regulations where feasible.	
7.	From Councillor Gravells to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	In Abbeydale and Abbeymead there are more pathways and cycle paths than in many other city wards, which makes for a great area in which to live. However, sometimes the alley ways and cycle paths become overgrown and are very difficult to walk down or cycle along, and their maintenance becomes a problem because there is still confusion, so I'm told, about which hedges the city council are still responsible for and are on the city council's schedule of maintenance work each year. To help resolve this, will the Leader please list the hedges and the roads they're in, or in between in the case of cycle paths, which the city council are cutting back each year, so I can share that with County council Highways staff to ensure they're prepared to maintain those not on the city's lists, unless they're in private ownership?
	Response:	
	The Council is currently identifying and mapping open spaces under its management. Once this process has been completed mapping information will be available for ward members to access. This will include distinguishing hedges owned by the authority and those managed by the City Council on behalf of the County Council.	
8.	From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	When will the number of applicants on the housing waiting list to start reducing?
	Response:	

There are currently just under 4,500 live applications on the Council's housing register, and we have seen the number of live applications reduce by 9% over the last 12 months as follows:

Band	Date	
	29.02.24	28.02.23
Emergency	41	56
Gold	289	319
Silver	1384	1513
Bronze	2754	3042
Total	4468	4930

There are many reasons why households apply to join the housing register that are outside of the Council's control, and therefore the reduction in live applications we have seen over the last 12 months may not represent an on-going trend.

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| 9. | From Councillor Campbell to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment | Would the Council agree that Gloucester would greatly benefit from a traditional, large scale Entertainment Venue in the City Centre, which the former MECCA Bingo building in Eastgate Street could easily provide, and although NOT FINANCIALLY, would it commit to assisting and supporting such a project in every other way possible, please? |
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Response:

I would agree that the city would benefit greatly from such a large scale entertainment venue, and the city centre would be the most appropriate location for it. Leisure and culture have an important role to play in driving regeneration, as they attract new footfall and provide employment and supply opportunities for local people.

The Council would be willing to offer advice and encouragement to the owner of the former Mecca Bingo building to identify a suitable reuse of the property. The development suggested would be subject to securing planning permission, and Planning officers would be willing to offer advice in that regard.

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| 10. | From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy | When will the motion that we Independents put in for homeless shelters, that we all voted for, well all except Labour who didn't even vote or even support the motion even with the amendments, be up and running? |
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Response:

The motion agreed in November sought that the Council worked with partners to provide a night shelter to help meet the needs of rough sleepers in Gloucester that are owed a duty to. Using additional funding received from DLUHC and working in partnership with The Cavern we are currently piloting a dedicated night shelter provision accessible by all people sleeping rough in Gloucester during March.

Officers are also working to provide additional direct access bed spaces to provide accommodation for rough sleepers and it is expected that this additional provision will be mobilised during April when the night shelter pilot is due to end.

	<p>During the winter period our Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) had been in place for some time prior to the motion being proposed, with a range of night-time accommodation solutions for rough sleepers provided in both Gloucester and Cheltenham. This SWEP provision provided a safe and warm space for rough sleepers throughout the winter period when the prevailing weather conditions have presented a risk to health, safety, and welfare.</p>	
11.	<p>From Councillor Trimnell to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment</p>	<p>Please could the Leader of the Council tell me whether any contact has been made with Sainsbury's to voice disappointment that in spite of continual residential development at Hobbs Way both the pharmacy and the cafe at the Sainsbury's off St. Ann's Way are now closed?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>I am not aware of any contact having been made by the Council with Sainsbury's in relation to this particular issue.</p>	
12.	<p>From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member Planning and Housing Strategy</p>	<p>A member of the public is claiming that recently approved planning applications for 5G masts in the city had invalid Declaration of Conformity safety certificates at the time of their approval. The claim seems to centre around the use of the company name of "Three UK Ltd" (a company dissolved in 2015) on the certificates and an out-of-date company address (the old Three UK HQ which is a different company to Three UK Ltd. Three UK is the trading name for Hutchinson 3G Holdings).</p> <p>Are we satisfied that these planning approvals are legally sound and do they require amended safety certificates with the correct name and up-to-date address of the company?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>Paragraph 121 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides that applications for electronic communications development (including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order) should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development and that this should include: for an addition to an existing mast or base station, a statement that self-certifies that the cumulative exposure, when operational, will not exceed International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection; and for a new mast or base station a statement that self-certifies that, when operational, International Commission guidelines will be met.</p> <p>The council is satisfied that the approvals that have been given by this council for the installation of 5G Infrastructure are legally sound, without any requirement for further certificates.</p>	
13.	<p>From Councillor Sawyer to the Cabinet Member Performance and Resources</p>	<p>What is the council's total annual expenditure on outsourced services?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>£10.8m is spent on outsourced services. Of this spend (85%) is spent with our Waste provider Ubico, 5% One Legal, 4% Gloucestershire County Council and 3% with our Leisure Services provider. Just 3% is spent on other outsourced</p>	

	services to deliver smaller projects, where it is unlikely to be best value to employ individuals to do these works for the City Council.	
14.	From Councillor Sawyer to the Cabinet Member Performance and Resources	How many contracts for outsourced services does the council manage?
	Response:	
	The Council have 30 outsourced services ranging from our Waste provider Ubico which covers 85% of the total costs, to shared services for pest control for example, which accounts for less than 0.1%.	
15.	From Councillor Radley to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	How are particulate matter levels for air quality, particularly PM 2.5 and PM 10 measured in the city?
	Response:	
	PM10 and PM2.5 are not currently measured. The City Council is working with Defra, as part of the national monitoring structure to set up (at Defra's Cost) a Particulate Monitor. The data derived will be available freely once the site is agreed and commissioned, this project is currently at scoping phase and a completion timeline is yet to be confirmed.	
16.	From Councillor Conder to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>Kingsholm Councillors this week were surprised to see several newly-planted trees on Sebert Street Recreation Ground. While new trees are welcome, and some saplings were well-positioned, at least seven were placed in the middle of a grassed play area.</p> <p>The local councillors were neither consulted nor even informed of this planting. Kingsholm does not have extensive open space; both children and adults use this Recreation ground for leisure and sport, and precious open space needs to be preserved.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member reassure all councillors that they will be fully consulted before any such future planting takes place, or indeed ANY such actions which affect particular wards?</p>
	Response:	
	The Council's primary aim is to replace failed trees by replanting in the same location. However, it is not always possible to replant in the exact position where a tree was previously growing.	
	We will need to continue with this replacement strategy of existing tree locations and will consult ward members where new locations are required for additional tree planting, or where it is necessary to relocate replacement trees because the original location is inappropriate. Ward members will also be consulted where alternative tree species are being sought.	
17.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	How many full-time equivalent employees does this council employ today and how many did employ on the same date in 2016?
	Response:	

The core FTE headcount for Gloucester City Council between 2024-2016 on 14th March was:

	FTE
14/03/2016	224.90
14/03/2017	214.05
14/03/2018	181.84
14/03/2019	197.31
14/03/2020	197.13
14/03/2021	201.30
14/03/2022	207.42
14/03/2023	253.64
14/03/2024	258.53

NB. In keeping with standard reporting this excludes casual, temporary and zero-hour workers.

18. From Councillor Pullen to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment
- Why are there still so many empty shops in the city centre?

Response:

Gloucester's 'high street' reflects the issues of many town and city centres across the UK, and I would refer Cllr Pullen to The Gloucester City Centre Vision, which was produced by Officers for the Gloucester City Centre Commission and endorsed by Cabinet in February 2023 (www.futureofgloucester.co.uk). The Vision describes the transformation of the high street, explaining that it is shifting away from traditional retail and towards other types of service industry as well as production and knowledge-based sectors.

The city centre is also seeing the development of new homes, and it is worth noting that over the past few years (with the exception of the COVID years) the city centre has seen the development of around 200 new homes per year. Many of those homes are in former commercial premises, and I would point to Westgate Street, which has benefited from investment through the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme over the past four years, and where numerous retail properties have seen redevelopment to include residential within their upper floors.

I share Cllr Pullen's concern that there are too many empty shops in the city centre, but I would assure him that we are working with landlords to address the challenge. What better an example than the former Debenhams store, where the University of Gloucestershire, with the support of the Council and funding through the Levelling Up Fund, is forging ahead with redevelopment to the new City Campus. When it is completed the city centre will be thronging with students and staff, prompting and sustaining further investment in the city.

We're also supporting the third sector, offering a handful of retail units on short term leases at next to no rent in King's Walk and Eastgate Shopping Centres, and I would hope all members have taken the opportunity to visit the superb Hundred Heroines gallery on the first floor of Eastgate, which has benefited in this way. These are not just charitable ventures; some of those third sector businesses have moved on to take full leases from the Council.

	<p>Our investment in The Forum and our support for The Food Dock and Bakers Quay all demonstrate our commitment to creating new business opportunities that will stimulate growth. Each of those developments recognises that the future of the city centre lies not in retail but in other forms of business investment.</p> <p>The city centre is in transition, and this Council is working tirelessly to facilitate its reinvention and to make sure it is fit for purpose and relevant for generations to come.</p>						
19.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</td> <td>What land transfer projects are the city council looking to issue to outside organisations such as GCH?</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Response:</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <p>The current land transfer projects where the Council is looking to transfer land to an outside organisation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackbridge CCBC – Land at Laburnum Road, Podsmead, Gloucester. • Podsmead Regeneration – Scott Avenue and Byron Avenue. </td> </tr> </table>	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	What land transfer projects are the city council looking to issue to outside organisations such as GCH?	Response:		<p>The current land transfer projects where the Council is looking to transfer land to an outside organisation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackbridge CCBC – Land at Laburnum Road, Podsmead, Gloucester. • Podsmead Regeneration – Scott Avenue and Byron Avenue. 	
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20.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>From Councillor Gravells to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</td> <td>In the review of the City's car parks, or even outside of it, will the Cabinet Member please review what needs to be done to ensure that the city has parking spaces for motorhomes, not just day visitors, but visitors who want to stay overnight too? For example, Gloucester is an ideal base for the Cotswolds, and the Forest of Dean and is ideally located near to the M5, and that's not even listing our historic buildings like the Cathedral and other sites. We're missing a trick if we fail to attract the visitors who would visit our city if only we made it more welcoming for Motorhomes and their owners.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Response:</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <p>Vehicles (including motorhomes) may park overnight with the exception of Westgate Street Coach & Car Park. However, the current parking orders only allow for vehicles to be unoccupied, the Council does not currently have overnight parking availability where individual can stay in their vehicles.</p> <p>To enable motorhomes to be occupied in our car parks overnight we would need to change permissions from a car park to a campsite and this would require additional planning approvals and a change to the car park orders.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	From Councillor Gravells to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	In the review of the City's car parks, or even outside of it, will the Cabinet Member please review what needs to be done to ensure that the city has parking spaces for motorhomes, not just day visitors, but visitors who want to stay overnight too? For example, Gloucester is an ideal base for the Cotswolds, and the Forest of Dean and is ideally located near to the M5, and that's not even listing our historic buildings like the Cathedral and other sites. We're missing a trick if we fail to attract the visitors who would visit our city if only we made it more welcoming for Motorhomes and their owners.	Response:		<p>Vehicles (including motorhomes) may park overnight with the exception of Westgate Street Coach & Car Park. However, the current parking orders only allow for vehicles to be unoccupied, the Council does not currently have overnight parking availability where individual can stay in their vehicles.</p> <p>To enable motorhomes to be occupied in our car parks overnight we would need to change permissions from a car park to a campsite and this would require additional planning approvals and a change to the car park orders.</p>	
From Councillor Gravells to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	In the review of the City's car parks, or even outside of it, will the Cabinet Member please review what needs to be done to ensure that the city has parking spaces for motorhomes, not just day visitors, but visitors who want to stay overnight too? For example, Gloucester is an ideal base for the Cotswolds, and the Forest of Dean and is ideally located near to the M5, and that's not even listing our historic buildings like the Cathedral and other sites. We're missing a trick if we fail to attract the visitors who would visit our city if only we made it more welcoming for Motorhomes and their owners.						
Response:							
<p>Vehicles (including motorhomes) may park overnight with the exception of Westgate Street Coach & Car Park. However, the current parking orders only allow for vehicles to be unoccupied, the Council does not currently have overnight parking availability where individual can stay in their vehicles.</p> <p>To enable motorhomes to be occupied in our car parks overnight we would need to change permissions from a car park to a campsite and this would require additional planning approvals and a change to the car park orders.</p>							
21.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</td> <td>What is the cost of the capital backlog of essential repairs to GL1 and Oxstalls?</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Response:</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <p>The Council commissioned a schedule of works to cover works required for the next 10 years on each building. These works will maintain and improve the two sites over the period, and the schedule of works estimates the total cost over 10 years at £8m.</p> <p>The schedule of works identified the following projects as urgent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GL1 Poolside seating • Pool grates </td> </tr> </table>	From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure	What is the cost of the capital backlog of essential repairs to GL1 and Oxstalls?	Response:		<p>The Council commissioned a schedule of works to cover works required for the next 10 years on each building. These works will maintain and improve the two sites over the period, and the schedule of works estimates the total cost over 10 years at £8m.</p> <p>The schedule of works identified the following projects as urgent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GL1 Poolside seating • Pool grates 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool Area Lighting • Lighting in the tennis courts at Oxstalls. <p>These works have already been completed in collaboration with our new interim provider Freedom Leisure.</p>	
22.	From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	What is the projected/forecast for 2024/25 of the closing balance?
Response:		
The current forecast outturn position as reported for Q3 is a decrease to the general fund of £683k, compared to a budget decrease of £104k. This represents a £579k reduction against budget.		
23.	From Councillor Sawyer to the Cabinet Member Performance and Resources	How many officers have a formal, recognised qualification in contract management?
Response:		
Contract Management is a responsibility of several roles across the Officer group, as opposed to being concentrated in a single dedicated contract management role. As such our roles do not ask for a specific formal qualification in contract management. However, at least 9 officers hold a formal qualification which included Contract Management as a subject area.		
24.	From Councillor Sawyer to the Cabinet Member Performance and Resources	How many officers has the council put through training courses in contract management through which they have achieved a recognised qualification?
Response:		
Training provided to date has not been linked to a formal qualification.		
25.	From Councillor Radley to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Car parking is challenging in Gloucester, is the City Council working with the County Council to bring forward the proposed park and ride scheme at Elmbridge Court?
Response:		
Any proposal to bring forward the Elmbridge Court park and ride is a matter for Gloucestershire County Council. At present, officers are not engaged in discussions on this scheme with the County Council.		
Car parking in the city centre is slightly reduced due to the temporary closure of Longsmith Street Carpark. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources has recently announced a plan for the partial reopening of that car park. Later this year we will also be opening the new 400 space car park at The Forum.		
26.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	<p>Longsmith Street carpark was recently closed for safety reasons.</p> <p>Has the condition assessment now been completed and what is its core finding?</p> <p>What is the estimated cost of the repairs, and when do you plan to reopen the carpark?</p>
Response:		
The assessments have now been concluded and work started on the 19 th March.		

	<p>Phase one of the refurbishment will see floors one to five reopened at a cost of £220,000 and which will see 135 spaces made available again out of the original 300 spaces. Works are expected to take 9 weeks.</p> <p>The car park upper levels will be secured in such a way to prevent unauthorised access and leaving it safe and secure to work on those levels in the future if we wish.</p>
27.	<p>From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p> <p>What is the total cost of officer pay rises this year?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>Officer pay awards are agreed nationally by the National Joint Council. Green Book staff were given a flat rate increase of £1,925 and Chief Officers received 3.5%. The cost to the Council was £763k in 2023/24 (this is the total cost, including on-costs).</p>
28.	<p>From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy</p> <p>When will there be a serious reduction in the number of homeless people in Gloucester?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>While the Council is committed to preventing homelessness, we are unable to directly influence the drivers of homelessness including for example private landlords seeking to gain possession of their private rented accommodation.</p> <p>Nationally homelessness has increased in recent years, and unfortunately this is also the case in Gloucester. In Gloucester over 300 new homelessness cases on average are currently being opened by officers each month. This represents a 12.5% increase in demand compared with the level of demand experienced during 2020/21.</p> <p>From the beginning of January 2021 to the end of December 2023 officers have prevented homelessness in over 820 cases – an average of 275 cases each year, equating to more than one homelessness case prevented every working day.</p> <p>This Council remains committed to reducing and preventing homelessness wherever possible, however unfortunately the Council is unable to control the many drivers of homelessness and therefore it is not possible to predict when we might see a reduction in the number of homeless presentations.</p>
29.	<p>From Councillor O'Donnell to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment</p> <p>I saw the video the leader of the council made about the new hub, and he said in that, "70% was already leased, is that signed sealed and delivered, is that signed contracts or pending signage of contracts?"</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>I believe the video you are referring to is something recently produced, in which I provided an update on the huge amount of progress that has been made regenerating our city, led by the current administration.</p>

	<p>In that video I outlined that at The Forum, which includes apartments, retail space and offices, almost 70% of the space available has been let before we have finished building. So far we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sold all 19 apartments at Whitefriars • moved Tesco from their former site (now home to new Hotel Indigo which is under construction) to the new retail space below the apartments at Whitefriars • entered into agreement with Hotel Indigo to operate the new hotel • entered into contract with Q-Park for the new car park • leased c.30,000 sq.ft. of commercial/office space to Reef <p>This represents around 70% of the entire development, before we have finished building. We have active interest in the remaining commercial/office space and I am confident further occupier announcements will be made in the near future. We disposed of a site to Gloucester City Homes to provide 25 new affordable apartments which are now complete, and we have secured £480k in Brownfield Land Remediation Fund funding to facilitate the final phase of residential development (referred to as Whitefriars Phase 2) with work starting there in the Spring.</p>	
30.	<p>From Councillor Sawyer to the Cabinet Member Performance and Resources</p>	<p>I recently asked for the Asset team to come to Overview and Scrutiny to give us an update on what they are doing to fill empty or partly empty assets. I was told it would take months to gather this information. This is something I would expect the team to have to hand and be working on regularly. Why is this not readily available?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>The question raised at Overview & Scrutiny Committee related to the Asset Management Strategy, which the Property Manager is currently working on, and this is expected to go to Cabinet in June/July 2024. This strategy will set out plans for all of our empty properties going forward.</p> <p>The Asset Management team do have a list of all assets that are in a suitable condition to be let, such assets are on the open market and regular viewings are conducted both in our commercial / investment portfolio and our community assets.</p>
31.	<p>From Councillor Radley to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p>	<p>Can residents make timely appointments to meet in person with City Council staff to raise council tax concerns?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>The council operates a pre-booked appointment system for residents that would like to discuss their council tax concerns face-to-face. Visits to the office are dealt with by a council tax officer who is best placed to help with the more complex issues.</p>
32.	<p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p>	<p>How long have the former council offices at HKP warehouses remained unoccupied and when do we expect to receive confirmation that they have been sold and for how much?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>The Council moved out of HKP in 2019. The buildings are currently for sale on the open market, the Council has received bids which have been evaluated. The Council is now working with the preferred bidder to progress the sale, which is</p>

	subject to planning permission. Once final negotiations have been completed, the proposals will be taken to Cabinet for final sign off.	
33.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	What is the total cost of councillor allowance rises for the new year based on 4 political groups?
	Response:	
	<p>The cost of Members' Allowances at any given time is dependent on the positions held at that time because of factors such as the 'one Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) per Member' rule, which prevents Councillors who hold more than one Special Responsibility from being paid more than one of the SRAs.</p> <p>Based on current positions held, there will be no increase to the cost of Members' allowances from 1 April 2024, as the recent review of Members' Allowances did not propose any increases or changes to the Basic Allowance or SRAs from that date.</p> <p>It is impossible to predict the makeup of the Council after the May elections, however, based on current makeup of the Council and positions held at this time, the cost of Members' allowances would increase by £5,876. Based on current makeup of the Council and positions held at this time, the breakdown of changes by political group would be: Conservatives: no change; Liberal Democrats: +£1,679; Labour: -£2,099; Community Independent Group: +£6,296.</p> <p>This increase relates entirely to changes to SRAs for Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders, which were proposed by the Independent Remuneration Panel and approved by full Council. The changes have been introduced to ensure there is provision to appropriately and fairly remunerate Leaders and Deputy Leaders of any number of Opposition Groups, instead of the current limit of two Groups.</p> <p>Members' Allowances are linked to the Local Government Staff Pay Award and the pay award for 2024/25 will be applied and backdated to 1 April once it has been agreed. In 2023/24 the increase was 3.88%, representing an increase to the Basic Allowance of £250 per year. Details of actual allowances paid to Councillors are published on the Council website.</p>	
34.	From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	How many days per week does each head of department work from the office?
	Response:	
	This information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.	
35.	From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	<p>Recently we attended a home with an older couple with serious mental health issues brought on by the damp wet and EXTREMELY mouldy property that was actually seen earlier in the same week and told to wipe it down, which because of how bad it was would have released them into the air making it 10x worse. It took myself and Councillor A. Chambers to actually go round and make sure that it was dealt with. While we were there to actually get things sorted, luckily Councillor A. Chambers</p>

		<p>had managed to secure a hotel room at least overnight for them, and I jest you not, it was that bad that myself and Councillor A. Chambers were choking on the air when we tried to go in. So what are the council going to do to make sure housing partners will not keep people in slum properties such as this one, including private landlords of a few I have dealt with?</p>
<p>Response:</p>		
<p>The Private Sector Housing Team was first made aware of this case when we received a referral and spoke directly to Cllr A Chambers and Cllr S Chambers on Friday afternoon when they were supporting the resident at the property. There had not been any previous requests for engagement for support to the Council before this date and no history for this address. The Councillors provided evidence to allow the case to be investigated and appropriate action will be taken to remedy damp and mould hazards found at the property.</p> <p>The recently approved Regulating Housing Standards Policy (approved at Cabinet on the 6 March 2024) sets out the robust regulatory framework for tackling poor property and tenancy management including requiring landlords and housing partners to carry out all necessary repairs to ensure homes are safe and habitable, including damp and mould hazards. A media release was issued to improve awareness of this new policy and how to report Housing Repair complaints to the Council.</p> <p>In addition to the Council's range of regulatory powers, new reforms to social housing became law as the government's new Social Housing (Regulation) Act received Royal Assent (20 July 2023).</p> <p>This drives forward significant change in holding poor landlords to account, placing the needs of tenants at the heart of government reforms to improve the quality of life for those living in social housing across the country, by introducing changes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthening the Regulator of Social Housing to carry out regular inspections of the largest social housing providers and the power to issue unlimited fines to rogue social landlords. • additional Housing Ombudsman powers to publish best practice guidance to landlords following investigations into tenant complaints. • powers to set strict time limits for social landlords to address hazards such as damp and mould. • new qualification requirements for social housing managers. • introducing stronger economic powers to follow inappropriate money transactions outside of the sector. <p>New enforcement powers will be made available to tackle failing social housing landlords who are not pulling their weight in taking swift action to address damp, cold and unsafe homes.</p>		
36.	<p>From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment</p>	<p>How much did the 'Gloucester is changing' promotional video cost to make?</p>
<p>Response:</p>		

The video was produced as part of the existing communications contract with Gloucestershire County Council and as such there is no additional cost to the Council.

The video has been in the making since November 2023, but it has taken time to complete due to bringing all the elements together including key sections of the footage submitted by partners.

Since releasing the video highlighting the regeneration of Gloucester, it has received over 50,000 views and we've received positive feedback from partners.