

Council
19 July 2012
Written Questions to Cabinet Members

| No. | Question from/to | Question | Response |
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| 1. | From Councillor Haigh to the Cabinet Member for Policy and Performance | How much money was spent by the City Council on Consultants in the financial year 2011/12? Please give the total amount and the amount spent in each Directorate with a brief summary of the nature of the work and the duration of their employment. Please give the same information for this financial year up to 30 Jun (1st quarter). | Details for each financial year are shown in the table appended. The total expenditure comprises a combination of both Revenue and Capital Expenditure |
| 2. | From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture | There is a campaign afoot to secure a stained glass window in Gloucester Cathedral as a memorial to Ivor Gurney. Are you aware of the campaign, and will you support it in any way you can? | I understand that this is an aspiration of the Ivor Gurney Society. It will clearly be a matter for the Cathedral authorities to consider in due course. I understand that such matters, which affect the fabric of one of the country's finest buildings, are very complex and do take time. Whilst I do appreciate the close links between Ivor Gurney and the Cathedral I do think it is appropriate that the proposal is first considered by the relevant Cathedral authorities. If they deem it to be appropriate I would be very happy to add my support. |
| 3. | From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture | Is this City still considering a joint bid with Cheltenham for European City of Culture? If so, what is the status of our plans? | We have not had any recent direct dialogue with Cheltenham Borough Council on the joint bid for City of Culture 2017 but that remains a possibility. However, officers have been in discussion about joint promotion of major events and we are very keen to work closely with Cheltenham. Together, our complementary cultural offer is very significant and an important economic driver of the visitor and tourist economy. We will keep the door open to consider options for the 2017 bid but the main priority now is to continue delivering improvements to the city's cultural offer. |

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| 4. | From Councillor Field to Cabinet Member for Environment | What plans do you and the administration have to expand the range of recyclates collected on the doorstep? | <p>Neighbourhood Management are currently carrying out a waste and recycling review, in which the range of recyclates collected will be considered. The initial phase of this review will consider and implement strategies for increasing the quantities of existing recyclates collected. The current recycling service has been in place for a few years and we are therefore keen to promote the service and ensure more people are recycling. Strategies currently under consideration to increase volumes of recyclates collected include extending the garden waste collection service, increased recycling at flats through partnership working with GCH and other landlords and increased food waste recycling participation through education and revisions to the existing scheme.</p> <p>Where this review will consider extending the range of recyclates collected, this is limited due to the types of vehicles that are currently being used to collect recycling. These vehicles are not due for renewal until 2017 and to change them before this would result in significant financial penalties. It may be possible to look to extend the range of recyclates to include cardboard and other plastics, the logistics of this will be considered as part of the review.</p> |
| 5. | From Councillor Field to Cabinet Member for Environment | Whilst litter bins are fairly prevalent in the city centre (even if some people decline to use them!), bins where people can put their recycling into different slots are hard-to-find. Will you and the administration increase the number of these bins? | On street recycling will be considered as part of the waste and recycling review and it is the Councils intention to reintroduce this, in particular in the gate streets. Previously when this was tried there were issues relating to contamination which undermined the principles of the scheme. Through the waste and recycling review best practice across the Country will be considered and any proposal properly planned and budgeted. Given that the current focus is on increasing volumes of recyclates from existing recyclate schemes it is currently planned that any such proposal would look to be in place in or around 2014/2015. |

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| 6. | From Councillor Field to Cabinet Member for Environment | <p>What will you do to encourage people to decrease their use and reliance on free plastic carrier bags in shops? Although some shops now charge a nominal fee it is clear that this is still a problem both for the city centre in terms of litter, and for the environment as a whole.</p> | <p>Plastic bag usage is thought to have peaked in 2006 when 12.2 billion bags were issued by retailers. Following a number of media campaigns and a voluntary agreement with the retail industry usage declined to the point that it had dropped to 7.5 billion by 2009. Sadly it has begun to creep up again with a 2011 figure being 8.4 billion.</p> <p>Some governments have introduced a bag tax with the Republic of Ireland leading the way. The devolved government of Wales is one for the more recent to go down this route Scotland may follow. Those nations who have introduced a tax have seen significant drops in bag usage. While only in operation since October it is thought that Wales has seen a 90% drop in bag usage and raised a significant amount of money for charity.</p> <p>With regard to the City Council, at the height of concern there were discussions regarding what we could do to reduce usage, however, it is always been problematic as to what can actually be done as the vast majority of the retailers are national chains and are reluctant to follow local policy. However in 2008 The Gloucestershire Waste Partnership did get involved and entered into discussions with a major retailer.</p> <p>To conclude therefore other than educate the public and lobby Government there are few policy options available to us. The EU have consulted on the issue during 2011, there has yet been no response. The UK government has consistently suggested that if voluntary agreements do not work then legislation is an option.</p> <p>In terms of a way forward it is suggested that we could lobby Government to introduce a tax such as currently in place in Wales and proposed in Scotland and through the Operation and Communications group of the Gloucestershire Waste Partnership raise the profile of the issue.</p> |
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