

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
1.	From Councillor Haigh to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy	Recent reports in the press about the new bus station have referred to the public toilet provision on site. Whilst any provision in the City is to be welcomed the design of individual separate toilets lends itself to a gender neutral designation but the reports indicate that cubicles have been designated 'male' and 'female' with a gender neutral 'disabled' toilet. Will the Leader take action to redesignate all the toilets at the bus station as 'toilets' and not designate them by gender?
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The new bus station has seven public toilets – two each designated male and female, one family, one disabled and one unisex. This was felt to be a reasonable and balanced approach and there are no plans to change the designations. The operation of the toilets and the bus station generally will be kept under review and we will take into account of the views of the public before making any changes.</p>		
2.	From Councillor Pullen to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy	The quality of the public realm in the Gate Streets is deteriorating, outdated and of poor quality. This situation is made worse by the poor level of maintenance and cleaning. When will the objectives outlined in City Centre Action Plan (2016 -19) be achieved (ie. "Ensure high standards of street cleanliness are maintained " and "Ensure paved areas and street furniture is maintained to a high standard")?
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>I share Councillor Pullen's view that the standard of public realm in the gate streets is not what we aspire to. Eastgate Street was the first gate street to be pedestrianised in the late 1980s, shortly followed by Westgate Street. Both streets are largely unchanged since that time, aside from some decluttering works in Eastgate Street, and are indeed tired. Southgate and Northgate Streets were pedestrianised in the late 1990s and, in my view, are in substantially better condition.</p> <p>In terms of cleaning and maintenance, I would respond as follows:</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Protection Officers (a joint initiative with Gloucester BID and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) have worked alongside the City Cleaning Squad to deal with incidents and waste issues. As a result, street litter has dropped approximately 60%, which has meant that the Council have been able to re-allocate a litter picker from the Gate Streets to focus on additional areas in the City Centre. The introduction of a new environmental enforcement regime should improve the situation further.</li> <li>• The City Council has purchased a 'gum zapper' and has made great progress with removing chewing gum from the streets and we are now trialling street washer machines.</li> <li>• Options are being explored in relation to removal and relocating the planters sited across the Four Gates Streets. Officers are also reviewing street furniture and its placement.</li> <li>• The Licensing and Enforcement Committee will next month consider changes to the licensing regime for tables, chairs and 'A' boards for City Centre businesses to improve the quality of the street scene.</li> <li>• The Council invested a significant sum in the rising bollard system to prevent unauthorised vehicle movements in the pedestrian priority area during core hours.</li> </ul> <p>Maintenance of the paved surface is the responsibility of the County Council as Highway Authority and the City Centre Improvement Team works closely with highways officers to deal with any issues identified.</p>	
3.	From Councillor Pullen to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy	Following the work carried out by consultants LDA to produce a Public Realm scheme for the Gate Streets, when is the Council going to deliver the Gate Streets element of the Public Realm Strategy (2017) and ensure that these are streets we can be proud of and a place that we can all enjoy?
<b>Response:</b>		
<p>The Administration recognises the importance of the public realm and has delivered a number of improvements in recent years, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Docks/Quays/Southgate Street linkages scheme.</li> <li>• The repaving of Kings Walk.</li> <li>• The creation of a new paved area in Kings Square following the demolition of the Golden Egg</li> <li>• The installation of rising bollards in the gate streets to prevent unauthorised vehicle access.</li> <li>• The completion of the public realm scheme to the north of the Victoria Basin in the Docks.</li> <li>• Public realm elements of the new Gloucester Transport Hub.</li> </ul> <p>The Council has worked with partner organisations to deliver improved public realm in a number of areas of the city centre, including Project Pilgrim at the Cathedral, Greyfriars Square in the Linden Homes development and Orchard Square at the Docks. The Gloucester Public Realm Strategy sets out a number of guiding principles which should be used to improve the public realm within the city centre when designing major redevelopment schemes.</p> <p>I share Councillor Pullen's view that the standard of public realm in the gate streets is not what we aspire to. Eastgate Street was the first gate street to be pedestrianised in the late 1980s, shortly followed by Westgate Street. Both streets are largely unchanged since that time, aside from some decluttering</p>		

works in Eastgate Street, and are indeed tired. Southgate and Northgate Streets were pedestrianised in the late 1990s and, in my view, are in substantially better condition.

The Council will be making a substantial investment in the public realm in 2019/20 with the refurbishment of Kings Square, on which public consultation has recently taken place, and it is not proposed to bring forward a major gate street scheme at the same time for practical as well as financial reasons.

There will, however, be some improvements to the Eastgate Street public realm associated with the works to bring the former BHS store back into use.

Maintenance of the paved surface is the responsibility of the County Council as Highway Authority, although it is general practice for major public realm schemes in two tier areas to be delivered by a partnership of both authorities. Discussions are taking place with the County Council on how and when we can work with them to deliver the improvements to the gate streets public realm that we all want to see.