

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 Stephens to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Forecast for numbers of social housing units broken down by type and tenure that will be built/ completed within the current financial year 2020/21 Forecast for the number of social housing units broken down by type and tenure that are forecast to be built in 2021/22.
Response:		
<p>Following the start of the current lockdown, it is difficult to provide accurate estimates for new-build completions, given the potential impact that the lockdown and Covid cases may have on the construction industry. However, based on current information, we estimate the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2020/21 – a total of 216 affordable homes are estimated to be completed (comprising 104 affordable rent and 112 shared ownership homes) 2021/22 – a total of 185 affordable homes are estimated to be completed (comprising 73 affordable rent and 112 shared ownership homes) 		
2.	From Councillor Coole to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	As the Government has announced it won't re-start the 'Everyone In' scheme, what support will the City Council provide to rough sleepers during the third lockdown?
Response:		
<p>Since the start of the Covid pandemic and the previous 'Everyone In' initiative, Gloucester City Council, as part of the Countywide Housing Partnership have continued to take a discretionary approach to housing those rough sleeping, at risk of rough sleeping or vulnerable in a way which meant rough sleeping was a possibility. This approach has supported many rough sleepers seeing numbers at the peak of the crisis as high as 48 countywide reducing to 14 (as of 05.01.21), 3 of whom are in Gloucester City. Rough Sleeper number are very fluid and someone housed on one night may quickly return to the street and vice versa.</p> <p>The Government released an announcement on 08 January setting out their expectation that councils continue to provide support to all people sleeping rough during the current January 2021 lockdown. As such, the council will continue supporting rough sleepers with providing the offer of accommodation during the winter months as part of our Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) and on-going outreach support is provided through the countywide outreach service.</p>		

	<p>Currently, all people sleeping rough have been offered alternative accommodation.</p> <p>Councillors are encouraged to report rough sleepers through Streetlink as usual to ensure rough sleepers are engaged with quickly and offered accommodation swiftly, before they become entrenched.</p>	
3.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Environment	How much did the leaflet detailing Christmas and New Year refuse and recycling arrangements cost to produce and deliver? Was it recyclable?
	Response:	
	The cost of the bin hangers was £2082 and covered all 57,000 properties in the city. We always use recycled and recyclable paper for our promotional campaigns.	
4.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Environment	How can we balance the need for people to exercise outdoors during lockdown with the need for people to keep safe? Related to this, what is the council doing and what more can be done, such as a 'Keep Gloucester Tidy' campaign, to remind people not to drop litter when they are out?
	Response:	
	<p>We all recognise the importance of controlling the spread of the Virus so we should minimise time spent outside of our homes. Exercising is important for our wellbeing and the Government guidance allows for us to leave home to exercise, but this should be limited to once per day and of course we should not travel outside our local area, some key pointers are;</p> <p>Yes, we can exercise in a public outdoor place;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On our own • with the people we live with • with our support bubble (if legally permitted to form one) https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-support-bubble-with-another-household • in a childcare bubble where providing childcare https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-childcare-bubble-with-another-household • or, when on your own, with 1 person from another household socially distanced. <p>More details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#exercising</p> <p>Amey's litter pickers have been keeping on top of things in hot spot areas and are responding quickly to reactive requests for clearance work. To assist us in monitoring litter levels across the City, we are currently carrying out intelligence gathering around fill levels of our litter bins. Amey staff are using their handheld device to record whether a bin is 25% full, 50% full or 100% full when they empty it. This intelligence will allow us to improve the service by retro fitting smart technology into the bins which are not used as often, this way we need only send a crew to empty when the bin goes over ¾ full.</p> <p>To fund the new smart technology, we are of applying for grant funding from WRAP. If successful as well as the sensors we will install "on the go" recycling bins in the gate streets and in our open spaces which have sports pitches. We</p>	

	<p>will also commit to replace our aged post mounted bins and concrete bins which have no top and cause windblown litter as budgets allow.</p> <p>For obvious reasons, organising volunteer litter picks has been difficult but when the situation allows, we will continue to support local groups.</p> <p>We will continue to use social media to encourage our businesses and residents to act responsibility and I think we all have a role in challenging this form of anti-social behaviour wherever it is encountered.</p>
5.	<p>From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</p> <p>The creative industries are still in shutdown due to Covid. What plans does the council have to kickstart the cultural life of the city once Covid is defeated/in decline?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>The city council is applying to the governments Cultural Recovery Funding streams and encouraging other cultural providers in the city that are eligible to do the same. The city is still planning for a Tall Ships Festival in May 2021 – with contingency plans in place depending on the latest restrictions. The Bright Nights winter lights programme planned to brighten up the city with artists and light installations will be brought back bigger and brighter in late 2021. The summer festivals programme is being developed currently and will include Gloucester Carnival, Gloucester Goes Retro and more. The Culture and Visitor Economy Board continues to support the sector, pool resources and has identified a number of successful campaigns to date – including the Gloucester Good to Go campaign. This group will continue to meet to identify collective actions to support the city’s wider recovery. The latest Festivals and Events report has committed to supporting new commissions to ensure that Gloucester benefits from ground-breaking new work as stated in the Cultural Strategy, which is being refreshed for the next 5 years placing culture as a key economic and social driver for recovery.</p>
6.	<p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p> <p>What is the net income from the council’s commercial estate activities?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>The budgeted net income from the Council’s commercial estate activities is £2.729m.</p>
7.	<p>From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council</p> <p>Does the Leader have an update on 67/69 London Road?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>Officers have introduced further developers and housing associations to the owners. Discussions have also been held recently with Homes England on potential development options.</p> <p>The owners have also confirmed that a local architecture practice are currently conducting a high level feasibility review of the site.</p>
8.	<p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p> <p>How many full time equivalent members of staff are on the council’s payroll right now?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>As of 1 January 2021 there are 227 staff employed by the City Council (FTE 199.41). Please note that as per standard reporting practice reports are run at the beginning of each month and exclude casual and zero hours staff.</p>
9.	<p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for</p> <p>How many staff vacancies does the council have right now?</p>

	Performance and Resources	
	Response:	
	There are 25.8 posts vacant with plans in place to recruit to a number of these in the near future.	
10.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	How have staff sickness rates changed due to the Coronavirus pandemic?
	Response:	
	Sickness absence levels due to confirmed or suspected Coronavirus have remained very low and since the introduction of mass testing confirmed cases have collectively remained in single digits. We have seen a slight increase in cases from November onwards but this continues to remain very low and the impact thus far has thankfully been minimal.	
11.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery and Growth	What discussions have been held with Aviva about the future of the Debenhams department store?
	Response:	
	Officers have been in regular contact with the agent for Aviva over a number of months and have requested an early discussion with any preferred bidder for the Debenhams store as a matter of urgency. It is understood that Aviva have yet to make any decision on disposal.	
	Officers have also made the agents aware of the Council's redevelopment plans for the City and the context within which any future plans for the Debenhams store need to be considered. I would welcome proposals that were in keeping with our desire to provide our residents with more reasons to be in the City Centre for more of the time as well as being complementary to our recently announced plans for the Forum.	
12.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery and Growth	How many retail outlets in the city centre have closed or announced their closure during the Coronavirus pandemic? Please name them.
	Response:	
	The closure of retail outlets nationally has been a constant refrain throughout the Covid pandemic and Gloucester is not immune to such effects. Based on the information currently available, the retailers who have "closed or announced their closure during the Coronavirus pandemic" of their store in the city centre include; Brighthouse, Sainsbury's & SJP Bridal. However Quiz & Oasis closed their concessions in Debenhams.	
	Although the question was specific to the City Centre we can also confirm the following closures took place at the Docks Carluccio's, Bella Italia, So Pie, Cath Kidston & Jaeger. At St Oswald's two food and beverage outlets have also closed namely Frankie and Bennies & Harvester.	
	I would acknowledge that the list will not be comprehensive as some stores will have closed on a temporary basis and, having furloughed their staff, are waiting for trading conditions to improve before considering a reopening. Furthermore, acquisition deals and potential MBOs are still very much in the mix and although it is essential to be mindful of potential risks, we are very proactive in keeping	

	well informed with regard to all retail, hospitality & service supply locations in the city.	
	It is important to note that several retail units have opened in the City since March 2020 and these include: Idun Spirit, House of Tweed, Eco Farm Foods, Jackies Hair, the Fabric shop, Nevitt retro antique market, Sahara Lounge Antiques & The Shabby Tiger Vintage Shop. Tommy Hilfiger and Molton Brown have also opened at the Docks.	
13.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for the Leader of the Council	What is happening with the Fleece Hotel site? It seem that no or very little progress has taken place over the last twelve months.
	Response:	
	Members will be aware from recent news coverage that the redevelopment of the Fleece Hotel is still very much a priority for this administration. It's the flagship development of the High Street Heritage Action Zone for which the local council secured funding of £1.9m to regenerate Westgate Street by bringing vacant or underused historic properties back in to beneficial economic use and to raise the design standards in the City.	
	The proposal for a high quality hotel and associated commercial and leisure offer is entirely consistent with our ambition to repurpose our City Centre.	
	As recently announced by the Managing Director of Dowdeswell, one of the vacant retail units in Westgate Street will be refurbished to provide a focus of the project and, when Covid restrictions allow, members of the public can drop in and see the plans as they emerge in the months to come.	
	Officers are currently working with Dowdeswell on the detailed Business Case for the project.	
14.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	How many members of staff are employed in the development control team under the City Growth and Delivery Manager? Both full time and under temporary contracts.
	Response:	
	Currently there are 11 members of staff employed within the Development Management Team representing 10.25 FTE.	
15.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	Have contracts been exchanged between the purchaser of HKP warehouses and the city council?
	Response:	
	Not yet, although the main terms of the disposal are agreed, the fine detail of the contract is in negotiation, the matter is in hands of the respective parties' solicitors and is following the normal course. This is a complex disposal of a historic buildings which will result in the redevelopment and a new use in the building and there is a substantial amount of detail and due diligence to be undertaken.	
16.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	Who is the planning inspector that is dealing with the review of our city plan and when do we expect the public inquiry will be held?
	Response:	
	The Planning Inspectorate has appointed Louise Nurser as the Inspector for the Examination in Public of Gloucester's Local Plan.	
	No date has yet been fixed for the Examination in Public.	

17.	From Councillor David Brown to the Cabinet Member for Environment	What are the Council doing to inform that small minority of dog owners who fail to clean up after their pets of their responsibilities? Response: I think it is the role of all Councillors and members of the public to challenge dog owners when they fail to clean up after their pets. As Cllr Brown acknowledges, it is the small minority of dog owners but the health and environmental impact of not doing so can be severe. The Council has used social media to re-enforce the message and notices are located across the City to advise dog owners.
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