

Paragraph 12 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 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.

**Cabinet 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 Members.

No.	Question from/to	Question
1.	From Councillor Wilson to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Gloucester has a network of volunteer Friends groups who do great work in improving the open spaces where they live. Examples include Friends of Hucclecote Green, Barnwood Arboretum, Milton Avenue Green Space and Saintbridge Pond. How many of these groups were consulted in advance to allow them to give their input before trees were recently planted in the areas they so carefully look after?
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The new, structural approach to tree planting – undertaken in response to the unanimous support expressed for tree planting by Councillors at September 2021 Full Council – enabled this administration to deliver the largest tree planting season in the City's history.</p> <p>Members of the Council were kept abreast of developments in respect of this season's planting programme through the following: an item in the October 2021 Members' Bulletin; a November update e-mail sent to all Councillors; an e-mail with proposed tree planting sites for each ward sent to all Councillors in December 2021, including an opportunity for feedback; an update provided to January 2022 Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and a full report by me on the 2021-22 tree planting season circulated to all members.</p> <p>In the March report, I emphasised my commitment to ensuring that the city's woodland creation activities strongly feature "community, private sector, and third-sector stakeholders in future" and I am happy to reiterate that commitment this evening. However, this Council also declared a climate emergency on 11 July 2019. That commitment, by definition, calls on us to act with a degree of urgency commensurate with the scale of the emergency we face. Most of the time, the actions we take will be part of an ongoing dialogue with the residents of Gloucester, but sometimes, as in the case of the 2021-22 planting season, both we as Councillors and the City Council's officers will have to undertake</p>		

	<p>action armed with the mandates we have been provided with at the ballot box the public and the expertise of our officers.</p> <p>Given the absence of planting plan for the 2021-22 planting season, the introduction of a new approach to delivering canopy cover in line with the Gloucestershire Tree Strategy, the absence of an arboricultural officer – a post that we are in the process of recruiting to, and the time constraints associated with the grant funding received, it was, unfortunately, not possible to engage more widely with community groups this season.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, I am aware that the lead officer for this season’s tree planting programme has had a number of conversations with friends groups and, wherever it has been possible to do, has worked with the city’s Open Spaces Manager to accommodate their requests.</p>	
2.	From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	One of the Friends groups in the city was told that the money for the tree planting had to be spent by the end of March before the end of the financial year. Is this true and if so, why can the money not be carried over into 2022/23 to enable the process to be less rushed?
<b>Response:</b>		
<p>Section 3.4 of Cllr Cook’s recent <i>Gloucester City Council Tree Planting</i> report, which was circulated to all Members of the Council on 8 March, noted that at the start of the 2021-22 planting season “there was an internal budget of some £16,000 for tree planting in the borough, sufficient to plant approximately 4,000 saplings...However, following collaboration with the Royal Forestry Commission, the Woodland Trust, and the County Council, an additional £118,142 and 9,000 saplings have been secured for the delivery of 12,800 saplings and 100 ‘standard’ specimens this season.</p> <p>While the grant funding required allowed the Council to deliver this season’s programme at no cost to local Council Tax-payers, and enabled the Open Spaces team to carry over the initial budget into the 2022-23 season, the strict contractual basis upon which the funding was allocated meant that all trees had to be planted by 31 March 2022. If this had not been achieved, any remaining grant would have had to have been returned and many of the whips would have perished, with the environmental and amenity value of the trees to the residents of Gloucester lost.</p>		
3.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	At Council on the 24th March you confirmed in an answer to me that the council did not have insurance to cover the cost of a cyber attack on the council’s IT systems. Could you confirm who made a decision not to have insurance against such a risk?
<b>Response:</b>		
<p>The implementation of the Council’s insurance policies were approved by the Director of Policy &amp; Resources following advice and consultation with insurance brokers and the Audit, Risk and Assurance partnership.</p>		

4.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	In view of the previous cyber attack where 30,000 emails were hacked, did cabinet, at the time, have discussions with officers about insuring against such a breach of our IT Systems?
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The previous incident occurred in 2014 and none of the current Cabinet members were in the cabinet at the time of the 2014 incident.</p>		
5.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	What progress has been made in the last six months in progressing a regeneration project for the Fleece Hotel site and please also confirm the name of the council's development partner?
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>A 'deep strip out' of the Great Inn and the Westgate Range (the earliest listed structures on the site) has taken place, removing internal partitions, plasterboard, studwork, collapsing ceilings, bathrooms fittings etc. This is enabling a greater understanding of the importance and significance of the building, through onsite review and analysis of building fabric, construction methods and so on. The Council is preparing a Stage 1 National Heritage Lottery, Enterprise Partnership bid for the £2.5M required to match Fund the allocation from the Levelling Up Fund. This will be submitted in May 2022.</p> <p>The Council's preferred development partner is Dowdeswell Estates.</p>		
6.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	Could you please provide me with an update on plans for the regeneration of the Wessex House site on Great Western Road?
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>An officer working group has been set up to progress the development options for this site with the aim of submitting a planning application in early 2023. In the meantime, the site is being used to support the construction works at the Forum.</p>		
7.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	Could you please provide an update on progress to build 300 houses at St Oswald's Park (land behind Tesco)?
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The intention is to continue to work together with Rooftop Housing to deliver residential development at St Oswald's. Officers are in the process of transacting the land at St Oswald's held by the Council, to Rooftop Housing.</p> <p>Masterplanning for the site is underway. Public consultation is expected late 2022/early 2023, with a planning application anticipated in 2023. Onsite delivery will commence thereafter.</p>		
8.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	What progress has been made on extending the no drinking of alcohol Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) on London Road to Alvin Street, Worcester Street, Skinner Street and Kingsholm Road? It's many months since I requested this action.

	<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The implementation of a PSPO should be evidenced based. A PSPO for the City currently covers the Kingsholm area in respect of alcohol related nuisance so Officers have been working to understand what additional benefit can be added by extending the City Centre alcohol free zone to the Kingsholm areas. The next steps are to discuss the process with the Kingsholm action planning group this month to ensure impact is understood. We will also need further engagement with police colleagues to ensure that the legal evidential tests can be met should any changes be made, and that appropriate policing could be carried out.</p> <p>This work ties into a number of street based Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) workstreams which are being delivered by the community well-being team and Cllr Hilton will be pleased to hear this work has already included the upgrade of a number of CCTV cameras in the Kingsholm ward from analogue to digital, enhancing our ability to identify offenders.</p>	
9.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	What plans do you have to toughen up the council's response to removing unauthorised tents being pitched at Hillfield Gardens for overnight camping?
	<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Camping in Hillfield Gardens is prohibited by a byelaw which is enforceable by court. In the case of camping in Hillfield Gardens, this is usually by people who are rough sleeping who remain in that location for a very short period of time meaning that evidence to create a case for the courts is more difficult to obtain. Taking a case to court may result in a fine but is unlikely to have any impact on someone camping in Hillfield Gardens again.</p> <p>The Council is looking at ways to make camping in Hillfield Gardens less attractive to rough sleepers to prevent and deter people from camping there. This is likely to be more successful and a longer-term solution than enforcement.</p>	
10.	From Councillor Conder to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	Spreadeagle Court is a continuing eyesore in a prominent position in Northgate Street. More importantly, it now appears to be in an unsafe condition. Given that the roof is no longer watertight, and windows have been broken, can the Cabinet Member assure the Council and the public that steps have been taken to ensure the safety of passers-by and will the Cabinet member take further action to enter into dialogue with the owners?
	<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Building Control officers have very recently visited the site and confirm that whilst the building is in a poor state of repair and clearly in need of maintenance, it is not a dangerous structure. Officers have in the past been in dialog with the owners and there have been a number of previous proposals for development on the site, none of which have been delivered to date. Action will be taken to re-engage with the owner of the property to encourage the owners to bring the site back into use.</p>	