

Rule 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 the 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 asked to:

- (1) Note the written questions submitted and corresponding responses.**
- (2) 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 Chambers-Dubus to the Cabinet Member for Environment	How many commissioned and fully operational CCTV cameras are currently available to be sited and used to in conjunction with fly-tipping in the City?
Response:		
The Enviro-crime team has 3 fully operational CCTV cameras to use for their ongoing investigations. A fourth one was recently taken out of use due damaged caused by vandalism. The team has now been given 9 CCTV cameras, which the police has recently decommissioned. Once these cameras are tested, they will be deployed as and when needed by the Enviro-crime team.		
2.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	The City Council didn't have insurance to cover the cost of recovery from a cyberattack, but the County Council does have such insurance. If the County Council can secure cyber recovery insurance why didn't the City Council do the same?
Response:		
In line with many other Councils across the country, City Council officers will consider insurance brokers' options and conclude whether products on offer provide sufficient value for money cover for the sorts of costs that councils might face. Officers consider that it is highly unlikely that any products procured would have provided value for money cover for the recovery costs that have been incurred by the Council since the cyber incident. Since the incident, the Managing Director has been discussing with the Local Government Association (LGA) and insurance providers ways to improve the products on offer on the insurance market for the Local Government sector to better meet Councils' risks and impacts. To that end he has been invited to join a meeting with Zurich and the LGA this Friday to share the Gloucester experience for the benefit of the wider sector.		

3.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	It is now six months since the cyberattack on the Council's ICT systems. Can you give me a date when the Planning Portal will be fully restored?
Response:		
The Planning Portal is a third party service by PortalPlanQuest Limited which is a joint venture between TerraQuest Solutions Limited and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. Applicants can use this service to submit planning applications to the council and these continue to be received and processed manually. Functionality related to viewing the progress of these applications will be available via our website later in the year.		
4.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	On the City Council website it says in relation to the cyber attack: <i>'We are currently unable to process applications to be entered on to the electoral register or changes to existing registrations'</i> . In what way has the cyberattack compromised the accuracy of the electoral register?
Response:		
It has been possible to restore the electoral register held by the council at the time of the cyber incident to the precise date of the incident i.e. there is no gap in the information because it has not been necessary to return to an earlier back up of the register. Any online applications to register made since the cyber incident are stored on the Government's IER Digital Service and will be processed once testing on the recovered system has been completed, along with any paper applications received, any changes, and any requests to be removed.		
While the register itself has been recovered intact, including details of all registered electors and the markers that tell us specific information about them, it has not been possible to recover images held outside the core database. As such, we will be writing to all our postal voters to ask them to complete a new application form, providing their date of birth and a signature specimen, to ensure they can vote by post at future elections. This exercise will also help us to get ahead of the curve when the requirement to reapply for a postal vote reduces from 5 years to 3 years in January 2024.		
5.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council	As the landlord of the Kings Walk Shopping Centre why did this council force the closure of Oaksey's the last independent fruit and vegetable shop in the city centre?
Response:		
The closure of Oaksey's is regrettable. The operator had not complied with their rental agreement, and as such their rental agreement was ended.		
Never-the-less, officers continue to attempt to engage with the operator to offer alternative accommodation.		

6.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council	<p>Does this Council support the people of Gloucester in eating a healthy diet?</p> <p>If yes, what plans does the Leader have to deliver an improved retail and restaurant offer to succeed with this objective?</p>
Response:		
<p>Yes, this Council does support the people of Gloucester in eating a healthy diet. Measures to help us succeed with this objective include:</p> <p>The Gloucester Local Plan (Policy C4) controls on hot food takeaways, placing restrictions on their location and proliferation.</p> <p>The Council as 'landlord' of premises in the City plays a role in ensuring the diverse range of dietary demands within the city are met.</p> <p>More broadly, the Council has a role to play in the ability of the people of Gloucester to participate in healthy lifestyles, for example through the planning of new development and the provision of leisure and recreation facilities.</p>		
7.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council	<p>The ground floor of Kings House is boarded up and unoccupied. It was formerly Chambers, a public house. With the construction of Kings Square nearing completion what plans does the council have to secure a suitable tenant to occupy the ground floor of this building?</p>
Response:		
<p>The ground floor of Kings House is currently leased to Greene King. The ground floor has not been open since the onset of Covid-19 restrictions. Officers are working with Greene King to reach a resolution for a suitable offer going forward, which maximises the use of this space within the newly reopened Kings Square. A meeting between officers and Greene King is taking place later this month.</p>		
8.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council	<p>Paragraph 3.5 of agenda item 11 suggests that staff working in the new hotel will be employed directly by the City Council. Will the majority of staff working in the new hotel be drawn from a local pool of city and county-based residents?</p>
Response:		
<p>We will work closely with the hotel operator to ensure that many job opportunities are offered to local and county-based residents with appropriate training put in place for the roles.</p>		
9.	From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	<p>In common with a lot of local authorities our 2020/21 financial accounts have still not been signed off by the auditors. What measures are we taking to ensure this is completed as soon as possible?</p>
Response:		

	<p>The Council continues to work with our external auditors Deloitte to complete the 2020/21 financial statements. The majority of the audit is completed, and we hoped to sign the accounts earlier in 2022. A recent CIPFA consultation into Infrastructure Assets, has resulted in Deloitte putting a moratorium on signing 2020/21 accounts, where Councils have material infrastructure assets. We are working with Deloitte around this consultation, both parties are aiming for the accounts to be signed by the next Audit and Governance committee in July 2022.</p>	
10.	From Councillor D Brown to the Leader of the Council	Is any effort being made, or planned, to reduce the nuisance(s) caused by seagulls in the city centre and across Gloucester?
	Response:	
	<p>Seagulls, or Herring Gulls and Lesser black backed Gulls as we have in Gloucester are protected by law. Therefore, it is illegal to injure the birds, eggs, and their nests without consent from Natural England.</p> <p>Natural England only issue licenses to allow interference with nests and eggs in very specific situations. The person applying for the license must be able to demonstrate that action is needed to preserve public health or public safety which require a significant amount of evidence for each individual case and only applies to the unique property affected. Gulls causing a nuisance do not fall into this category, specifically Natural England have advised a license won't be granted for problems involving bird noise, fouling and or property damage.</p> <p>Currently we are advising deterrence as the appropriate solution for long-term non-lethal control.</p> <p>We strongly urge all owners or occupiers of buildings that have or may attract roof-nesting gulls to add deterrent measures suitable to the individual building. Please refer to this leaflet for further information http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/1211/howtostopgullsnestingonyouroofadopted.pdf</p>	
11.	From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>The annual green waste invoice, which has just been sent out to residents, contains the following statement: <i>'Following a consultation, the council has decided not to operate the garden waste collection service in December and January'</i>.</p> <p>What form did this consultation take? When was it carried out? How many residents responded?</p>
	Response:	
	<p>The budget consultation was undertaken as a survey of local residents. It was hosted online and was advertised via the council's communications team on all channels.</p> <p>It was also advertised on the council's website under 'current consultations' - Current consultations - Current consultations - Gloucester City Council</p> <p>The consultation was also sent to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens Advice Bureau 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP's Office • GARAS • GL Communities • Gloucester City Homes • Gloucester Law Centre • NHS locally for wider cascade • DWP locally for wider cascade • Revenues and Benefits Service (Civica at the time) • DWP partnership for cascade to other agencies <p>The consultation was open from 06 December 2021 until 14 January 2022. 95 residents responded to the survey - specifically the question about garden waste sought residents opinions on the following:</p> <p>The City Council are considering changing our garden waste service to run for ten months a year, not running in December and January as evidence shows that very little garden waste is produced in those two months, with just 156 tonnes in January 2021, compared to 975 tonnes in June 2021. By changing the service to a ten month operation, the Council could achieve vital carbon savings. In addition, our teams could focus on collection of other household waste at a time of year which is traditionally busy for other domestic refuse collections.</p> <p>Would you support this change in service to contribute towards the City Council's carbon reduction target?</p> <p>77 respondents (82%) would support the change, 10 respondents would not be supportive of the change and 7 respondents were undecided.</p> <p>The consultation was Appendix 7 to the Budget Report in the Budget Council, held on 24 February 2022, and Appendix 6 Fees and Charges booklet details the price and period.</p>	
12.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	What are the key dates for submission of the outline planning application for the Podsmead regeneration scheme and how can residents make comments etc?
Response:		
<p>Residents living within the boundary of any planning application and those immediately adjacent to it will be notified in writing and advised how to make comments. Site notices and press notices will also be displayed. Residents have 21 days from the date of the notification to comment on planning applications.</p> <p>GCH have indicated that an application is likely to be submitted during the summer however this date is not confirmed and not in the control of the council.</p>		
13.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	What is the latest calculation for the loss of green space overall in the Podsmead regeneration scheme, and specifically on Scott Avenue?
Response:		
As no planning application has yet been received, these are all matters that should be directed to Gloucester City Homes.		

14.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	What measures are being introduced as part of the scheme to be eco-friendly and to increase biodiversity in the Podsmead ward?
Response:		
As no planning application has yet been received, these are all matters that should be directed to Gloucester City Homes.		
15.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	What is the total number of existing trees that will be removed, and what is the net gain in trees once the scheme is finished?
Response:		
As no planning application has yet been received, these are all matters that should be directed to Gloucester City Homes.		
16.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	What is the current calculation for the increase in the number of homes in Podsmead, and what is the overall increase in social housing as part of the scheme?
Response:		
As no planning application has yet been received, these are all matters that should be directed to Gloucester City Homes.		
17.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	What are the measures being taken to alleviate parking and traffic concerns?
Response:		
As no planning application has yet been received, these are all matters that should be directed to Gloucester City Homes.		
18.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	How much more cost-effective in general terms will the new homes likely be?
Response:		
As no planning application has yet been received, these are all matters that should be directed to Gloucester City Homes.		
19.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	What shops and facilities can you guarantee will be coming to Scott Avenue?
Response:		
As no planning application has yet been received, these are all matters that should be directed to Gloucester City Homes.		
20.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	What are the next steps in finally obtaining a pharmacy for Podsmead?

	Response:	
	This is not a matter for Gloucester City Council and should be taken up with Gloucestershire County Council.	
21.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure	At one point there were plans to expand into the building next to the Guildhall. Did anything come of these?
	Response:	
	Some explorative work was done to see whether the Guildhall could expand into the adjoining retail unit. However, there are considerable differences in floor levels above the ground floor, which makes joining the buildings a complex and costly option. It is considered that the costs outweigh the benefits and currently the council is seeking to commercially let the vacant building for the foreseeable future.	
22.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure	The recent continental market was not very well advertised. What was the reason for this?
	Response:	
	Markets and other 3 rd party activities that take place in the city are responsible for their own marketing and promotion. The city council will help promote activities such as the continental market if provided with relevant information and given enough notice, via the Visit Gloucester website.	
23.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Environment	The Council took part in No Mow May - what are some of the successes of the scheme and will we be expanding it in the future? Were there any learning points from the exercise?
	Response:	
	The Council did not take part in "No Mow May" and has continued to grass cut according to our contracted schedules. However we do have a number of ERDF funded sites (European Regional Development Fund), which are wild flower meadows across the whole city, these are cut less regularly to promote biodiversity. See below answer	
24.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Environment	What is being done in the city to increase habitats for bees, insects, and wildlife?
	Response:	
	As part of the ERDF 'Urban Greening' project, Gloucester City Council has planted many hectares of new wildflower meadow. In other areas we are leaving the existing grass to grow longer to increase the diversity of the sward and provide habitat for many animal species. We have also planted native shrubs, and many thousand native trees and bulbs.	