

Paragraph 12.01 of Part 4 of the Rules of Procedure contained within the City Council's Constitution provides that a Member of the Council may submit up to five written questions 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.

Council is recommended to

- (a) Note the written questions submitted and corresponding responses.
- (b) Note the supplementary questions and corresponding responses delivered verbally within the 45 minutes available for Questions by Members.

No.	Question from/to	Question
1.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	<p>The agreement to sell HKP warehouses to the Dowdeswell Group Ltd doesn't seem to have been concluded.</p> <p>An exchange of contracts and a planning application for a new hotel were expected by now.</p> <p>What's gone wrong?</p>
	Response:	
	<p>Discussions have continued with Dowdeswell Group Limited following their successful competitive bid to acquire HKP Warehouses.</p> <p>Clearly conditions have changed since Dowdeswell Group's successful bid, with the Covid pandemic and inflation impacting the market.</p> <p>Whilst there is no legal Agreement in place between the Council and Dowdeswell Group Limited, we have continued to diligently attempt to bring forward viable options to proceed.</p>	
2.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	When is work going to start on the upgrade of the railway station subway and what is the expected completion date?
	Response:	
	<p>Great Western Railway (GWR) are responsible for the station subway works. GWR have awarded a contract to a construction company to undertake the works. Work (both on the underpass and station forecourt) is due to commence in January 2023 with full completion in September 2023.</p>	
3.	From Councillor Pullen to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Can the Leader of the Council confirm a comment that he made during a recent visit to Gloucester Feed The Hungry "That he felt the project was not really necessary".
	Response:	

	<p>Neither I, nor my deputy who was also there, recall the words quoted, but they may have been misquoted from a larger discussion surrounding inequalities, with the point being that in a world with fewer inequalities, organisations such as Gloucester Feed the Hungry would not be necessary.</p> <p>As it is, GFTH does extremely good and valued work in the city.</p>	
4.	From Councillor Pullen to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	Can the Cabinet Member for Communities & Neighbourhoods give an update on the development of the Gloucester Warm Places Scheme so far.
	Response:	
	<p>A list of Warm Spaces have been published on the City Council Website with the Site Location, What's on Offer and Contact details, there is a fund available to support the extended use of existing premises that we are developing to become available soon, in addition to this a window poster (multi Lingual) would be made available for each participating premises.</p> <p>https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/community-living/warm-spaces/</p>	
5.	From Councillor Castle to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	<p>As part of a new development, a bond is held as a retention until a housing estate is handed over to the City Council</p> <p>Can you please let me know:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the City Council valuation of Estcourt Close development (Ref: Planning Application Ref: Bishops College, Estcourt Close, Gloucester GL1 3LR, Scholars Place - 16/00631/38) that was used in the calculation of the bond 2. What is the Bond value, that the council currently hold. Which is awaiting release.
	Response:	
	<p>Gloucester City Council does not hold any bonds in respect of the 16/00631/FUL Estcourt Close development. Bonding as regards any dedication agreement in respect of the estate roads will have been a matter for Gloucestershire County Council</p>	
6.	From Councillor Conder to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	<p>How many affordable houses have been delivered in the last five years, from April 2017 to March 2022?</p> <p>What is the anticipated number needed in the next five years?</p>
	Response:	
	<p>In the period from April 2017 to March 2022 886 affordable homes were delivered in Gloucester.</p> <p>We have a current performance target to support/enable the delivery of 234 affordable homes every year which would deliver 1,170 affordable homes during the next 5 years. It should be noted that the delivery of affordable homes can be impacted by the economic climate, the conditions in the housing market, and legislative change.</p>	
7.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Leader of the Council and	Why did the council give 'yet again' a false response at the last full council to my question 16 when I and raised concerns about an asbestos fly

	Cabinet Member for Environment	tipping incident that remained for a year. I asked what was being done to ensure the safety of the public in this regard. The Council noted that the waste Councillor A. Chambers was referring to was well away from public walking routes, and asbestos waste needed careful removal and specialists to undertake the work which the council was arranging?
	Response:	
	When this matter (asbestos) was reported to the City Council, it was passed on to Urbaser, our contractor at the time. They, in turn, passed it on to a specialist contractor for safe removal. Unfortunately, prior to the removal taking place, Ubico had taken over the Council contract and information relating to this removal was not passed on to them, hence the delay in their following up on that instruction.	
	In terms of the location where the asbestos was found, the Enforcement Officer who attended the site to investigate this matter has confirmed that the asbestos was found amongst a large fly tip down an embankment at the entrance of Green Farm (off Winnycroft Lane). He also confirmed that there is no public footpath at either side of the road in Winnycroft Lane.	
8.	From Councillor Sawyer to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	Are there still enough sponsors for the Homes for Ukraine scheme in Gloucester or are any refugees presenting as homeless?
	Response:	
	There are currently over 300 sponsors who have expressed an interest in providing accommodation in Gloucester as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. While this number may fluctuate over time we are confident that where Ukrainian guests are displaced from Homes for Ukraine accommodation there is likely to be alternative accommodation available to them. To date we have had a small number of Ukrainian guests who have been displaced from their accommodation and we have been able to rematch them to new sponsors within a couple of days.	
9.	From Councillor D. Brown to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	The City Council mobile phone app "MyGloucester" was highly recommended in discussions at the recent 6-month Ubico update / review. Where can I find a working version of this app to install on my City Council mobile?
	Response:	
	There is no app available for "My Gloucester" that can be installed onto a mobile phone. The "My Gloucester" portal is currently only available as a device-agnostic web page, accessible from our website. The Granicus software provider that drives "My Gloucester" is exploring creating an app for mobile phones but at this current time an app is not available.	
10.	From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	What progress has been made with regards to the setting up of Warm Hubs this Winter?
	Response:	
	A list of Warm Spaces have been published on the City Council Website with the Site Location, What's on Offer and Contact details, there is a fund available to support the extended use of existing premises that we are developing to become	

	available soon, in addition to this a window poster (multi Lingual) would be made available for each participating premises. https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/community-living/warm-spaces/	
11.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	Can we have an update on the Podsmead Regeneration scheme?
	Response:	
	Officers maintain contact with Gloucester City Homes to keep abreast of its progress with the regeneration of the Podsmead estate. A report is due to be submitted to Cabinet on 7 December in relation to the transfer of property assets to GCH to facilitate the scheme. The Council awaits the submission of an Outline Planning application for the estate.	
12.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	What work still needs to be done to fully restore the council's IT systems following the December 2021 cyber attack and how much of this work, still to do, is it going to cost the council in both revenue and capital finance terms?
	Response:	
	We have completed 90% of the required IT restoration actions over the past eleven months, taking the opportunity to bring forward migration of key business systems to the cloud which increases security and resilience of Council IT infrastructure.	
	Work is now concentrating on the implementation of the final elements of the Network redesign which will further enhance all the security elements we have been building out since the incident, and the re-population of data into the restored systems.	
	We do not have a final estimate on costs, however costs are been kept to a minimum whilst still delivering the security and transformation the Council requires.	
13.	From Councillor Pullen to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Why was the council's One Legal Team unable to bring prosecutions against car owners parked on the grass at The Lannett within the specified six month period?
	Response:	
	There were delays in the investigation and preparation of the evidence that meant the investigator was unable to provide sufficient evidence, within the six-month time limit, to enable a prosecution to be commenced.	
	To avoid such situations from occurring again, monthly meetings between Enforcement Officers and One Legal lawyers are now organised, whereby all prosecution files are reviewed periodically until they are lodged at court.	
	Based on this experience, the Enviro-crime team has also developed a proforma for such cases, so that if an Officer needs to undertake a similar investigation in the future, an established case management process can be followed.	
14.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	Why did the city council on the 29/09/22 In response to a supplementary question from myself Councillor A. Chambers relating to question 7, advise that 'the redevelopment of the Rose Garden on London Road had been completed, however

		officers had waited for the (August 2022) dry spell to be over before planting'?
	Response:	
	The redevelopment of the site had been completed, however due to the extensive period of drought, some plants had not survived. Once weather conditions had improved, additional planting to replenish those lost was arranged by officers in partnership with Emerging Futures (local charity) and their volunteers. The garden was opened to the public on 28th October 2022.	
15.	From Councillor Sawyer to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	The Council is currently struggling to recruit new staff. Has the council applied to be part of the LGA's national graduate development programme or is it already part of it?
	Response:	
	Gloucester City Council is part of the LGA's National Graduate Development Programme and is hosting a graduate on a 2-year placement which commenced in October 2022.	
16.	From Councillor D. Brown to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	Gloucester City Council has made a commitment to the wider Armed Forces Community Covenant and has a good record of support as itemised at Cabinet in November 2020. Has this good record continued and are there any addition highlights?
	Response:	
	<p>Our District Council partners in addition to Gloucestershire County Council continue to work together to improve how councils can collaborate as a network, with a particular focus on -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying where contributions can be made to the South-West Regional Development Project. Obtaining a better understanding of the needs of children and young people in the armed forces community. Understanding our workforces better in terms of their connection to the armed forces. Aligning our services and sharing resources to increase the support available to veterans and their families <p>Also we have formed connections with charities, organisations and other agencies to discover how the council can work in partnership to better support the armed forces community. Most notably, this has included: Walking With The Wounded, SSAFA (Soldiers, Seamen, Airmen and their Families Association), Gloucester Community Networking and the Occupational Therapy team at Gloucestershire NHS Trust. Through these connections, the Council officers are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the mental health of injured veterans by matching them into meaningful volunteering opportunities Help integrate veterans and their families into their local community through community building activities Enhance the support of SSAFA and the Occupational Therapists by linking them to other resources and services such as the Community Wellbeing Agents who have access to schemes such as exercise on referral at GL1 Leisure Centre 	
17.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure	As I write, there is a continental market in setting up in Gloucester city centre. Was this publicised at all?
	Response:	

	<p>The Festival and Events team authorised this event going ahead on the basis that the third party (R&R Events) booker promotes their own event sufficiently. We requested this event to be promoted through the Visit Gloucester channels and social media and as far as we can tell this was not done.</p> <p>After every such event, a review meeting is organised where key partners (including Gloucester BID) and ourselves are able to reflect on every aspect of the markets to understand whether all the desired outcomes were met.</p> <p>If we conclude in our review that event promotion and communication has not been done sufficiently by the event booker (as agreed prior to the event), we will consider cancelling future events with the booker.</p>	
18.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	How many members staff have left the employment of the city council within the last twelve months and how many of them had an exit interview to determine their reasons for moving on?
	Response:	
	During the period 1/11/2021- 31/10/2022, 52 members of staff left the Council. Of those 52, 15 members of staff had an exit interview. Exit interviews are voluntary and whilst all staff who leave are offered an exit interview, it is entirely a decision for the individual as to whether they accept the Council's offer. We continue to encourage staff to accept the offer of an exit interview and have recently revised our process to proactively book an exit interview for the individual who is departing and hope that this will improve our exit interview take-up rate.	
19.	From Councillor Pullen to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	Why is the Council's official postal address in Pershore?
	Response:	
	As communicated in the July Members' Bulletin, following the office move to Eastgate Shopping Centre, all post is directed to a digital mail scanning facility to be opened, scanned and subsequently circulated via email to the addressee. The facility is based in Pershore, hence the address. The digital mail service ensures that post is circulated quickly, usually within a day of receipt.	
20.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	Why are freedom of information answers and responses from the city council repeatedly being returned with incorrect and inaccurate information, and it has taken myself several freedom of information requests on the same question to finally get to the correct answers. These answers were only provided following the FOI team issuing several incorrect answers before hand.
	Response:	
	As far as I am aware, there is no evidence that the council is repeatedly providing incorrect and inaccurate information in responses to FOI requests, which are issued by the Business Support Team on receipt of information from the relevant service. In relation to the request mentioned in the question, I understand that Councillor A. Chambers received a thorough internal review of one revised request and was subsequently advised which information wasn't accessible due to the cyber incident and which information was accessible and could be provided.	

21.	From Councillor D. Brown to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	HM Prison Gloucester closed in March 2013 with less than 3 months notice from the Justice Secretary Chris Grayling. This site was sold to City & Country in December 2014 and a Planning application was granted (for 3 years) in January 2018. Is there any news on when development of this important central site will begin?
Response:		
Officers remain in contact with City and Country to try and facilitate development. Officers have introduced a number of potential development partners to City and Country, but none of these introductions have led to development to date. Whilst officers will continue engagement with City and Country, it is likely that the current economic climate will make imminent development challenging.		
22.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Could the cabinet member please provide me with his planned schedule for clearing the autumn leaves in Kingsholm & Wotton?
Response:		
The schedule has been provided via email and is available to other Councillors on request.		
23.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	In my opinion there are some excellent officers in the waste and fly tipping team, the hierarchy above these officers at senior management level are not taking fly tipping waste and the build up of rubbish seriously where it is causing a 'real threat to the Gloucester public lives'. What new processes will the city council senior management team bring in... to ensure real waste issues are taken seriously.
Response:		
<p>Officers at all levels within the Council treat fly-tipping crimes seriously.</p> <p>Prior to 2021, enforcement of enviro-crimes (within the public realm) at the City Council was only conducted on an ad-hoc basis and different aspects of it were handled by various teams/services. In June 2021, an in-house team within the City Centre Management service was formed, dedicated solely to tackle and address waste related offences across the City. This team consists of two permanent Senior Officers supported by temporary officers working on specific projects with external funding.</p> <p>The team have been collectively working on a number of projects since they started, including the Barton and Tredworth Focused Project and dealing with an illegal waste site, as well as dealing with 'day to day' waste related issues reported to the Council</p> <p>The Barton and Tredworth Project includes collaborative working between the Council's Waste and Recycling Team, Private Sector Housing Team, Community Wellbeing Team and the Environmental Crime Team. In November 2021, the enviro crime team conducted a large scale survey, door knocking on over 100 properties to gather information on how people manage their waste. This enabled the team to target enforcement and education going forward.</p>		

In July 2022, as part of the Barton and Tredworth project, the Enviro-crime team, alongside the waste and recycling team, conducted a waste receptacle project initially focusing on this ward. The teams have collectively engaged with over 2000 households, focusing on educating residents on the council's waste policy and using enforcement notices for the few who have not complied.

The two senior Enviro-crime Officers has also been tackling the ongoing problems at an illegal waste site. This included monthly taskforce meetings with various departments such as planning, neighbouring authorities and the Environment Agency. One senior Officer has been working closely with One Legal on this project and has subsequently issued 2 waste carriers with documentation requests and served 2 waste clearance notices to offenders. A court process is currently ongoing.

Following strengthening relationships with the police to enhance this work, the team was able to secure 6 extra CCTV cameras for use in the City. These cameras will act as a deterrent in hotspot areas as well as allowing the team to serve penalty notices quickly and efficiently on offenders who commit offences in vehicles, where the vehicle registration is visible.

The following table identifies the number of FPNs issued by the in-house team and the amount received in fines between April 2021- July 2022. Please note that this does not demonstrate the true amount to be recovered due to the fact that many offenders have entered into payment plans.

Year	No of FPN Issued	Amount
2021	61	£3380
2022	97	£6030

It should be noted that the number of FPNs issued reflects only a small proportion of the work being carried out as, on average, for every 4 investigations carried out, 1 FPN is issued

For those FPNs that go unpaid, a final warning letter is sent, and this has proven to be effective in receiving additional payments. For repeat offenders or aggravated matters such as fly tipping for profit, the team are aiming to take these to court.

In addition, the Council is in the process of recruiting a new manager to coordinate the work across the Enviro Crime team and the Waste and Recycling team further. The enviro crime team will continue to work closely with Private Sector Housing team and the Community Wellbeing team to continue to make the tackling of environmental crime and waste related offences a priority as well as look at addressing underlying causes.

Given the number of fixed penalty notices issued coupled with a commitment to long term projects and collaborative working with both internal and external partners, it shows a sustained and successful approach to tackle environmental crime which will be continued.

24. From Councillor A. Chambers to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment

Will the Council undertake to publish the full report from the upcoming Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge on the Council's website as has happened on previous occasions?

	Response:
	That is the Administration's intention.