

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 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 1. | From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources | What were the council tax and business rate collection rates for each quarter of 2022 to date and how do they compare with the same period in 2021? <i>(Please provide a year-on-year answer with each quarter.)</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Response: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>The recovery process has been delayed for the 2022/23 charge year for council tax cases in arrears due to the cyber incident and because of the additional demands made of the service relating to the Energy Rebate Scheme.</p> <p>Initial steps to recover business rate arrears began at the end of August 2022 and will see the council make its first application for liability orders at the November court hearing.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Council Tax</th> <th colspan="3">Business Rates</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Q1</th> <th>Q2</th> <th></th> <th>Q1</th> <th>Q2</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>28.57%</td> <td>55.88%</td> <td>2021/22</td> <td>26%</td> <td>51.57%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>26.70%</td> <td>53.42%</td> <td>2022/23</td> <td>23.40%</td> <td>54.28%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Difference</td> <td>-1.87%</td> <td>-2.46%</td> <td>Difference</td> <td>-2.60%</td> <td>+2.71%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | Council Tax | | | Business Rates | | | | Q1 | Q2 | | Q1 | Q2 | 2021/22 | 28.57% | 55.88% | 2021/22 | 26% | 51.57% | 2022/23 | 26.70% | 53.42% | 2022/23 | 23.40% | 54.28% | Difference | -1.87% | -2.46% | Difference | -2.60% | +2.71% |
| Council Tax | | | Business Rates | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Q1 | Q2 | | Q1 | Q2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2021/22 | 28.57% | 55.88% | 2021/22 | 26% | 51.57% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 2. | From Councillor A. Chambers to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment | How much of the Council's allocation of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and Welcome Back Fund did it spend and how was it used? <i>(Detailed answer please showing amounts and exactly where each amount was spent)</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | Response: The Council was allocated £230,270 by the Government within its Reopening the High Street fund and Welcome Back Fund. As the attached appendix details, a total of £168,795.93 was claimed. | |
| 3. | From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure | Please can you advise the timings and operation for the Christmas lights in the city centre and other areas controlled by the city council? |
| | Response: 1. 5PM – 11PM Sunday to Thursday 2. 7AM – 2AM Friday and Saturday | |
| 4. | From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure | Richard Graham recently posted online that the Museum will expand taking over the library space, is this true? |
| | Response: No, however discussions are underway between the city council and the county council to explore this idea. Any decision to expand the Museum would require a detailed business case before expanding the footprint of the Museum. | |
| 5. | From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources | Please can you advise what happens if someone sends a letter to the offices at Eastgate Street, what will happen to the letter? |
| | Response: The Eastgate office address does not have a working postbox, is not set up as a delivery address within the Royal Mail postal system and is not publicised by the Council as a postal address. Any attempt to address an item of mail to this office is likely to be Returned to Sender by Royal Mail or redirected to the Council's postal address in Pershore. It is very rare for there to be any physical attempt to deliver post to the office. If an attempt is made, an officer will answer the door, take the item and either give it directly to the relevant team if present, or to Business Support for forwarding on via the digital mail service. | |
| 6. | From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods | There have been some teething problems in creating the Wellington Parade Garden on London Road. It's been redesigned after comprehensive public consultation into a form that should encourage pedestrian movements though it and discourage street drinkers congregating there day after day. Could the cabinet member please give me an assurance that the snagging problems will be resolved, with extra care being given to allowing the shrubs, trees and other plants to become well established in the garden? |

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| | <p>Response:</p> <p>The redevelopment of the site has been completed. The garden was officially opened and available to the public on the 28th October 2022. Assurances can be given that the snagging problems are being resolved, the shrubs, trees and other plants are being cared for allowing them to become well established in the garden. We are working with Emerging Futures CiC who are currently litter picking as and when required. They are also going to be painting the fence and repairing the fire damaged area. Volunteers will also be planting bulbs to bring some colour to the area for Spring 2023 as well as ongoing upkeep of existing planting.</p> | |
| 7. | <p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy</p> | <p>Could the cabinet members please publish the precise reasons why Gloucester City Homes has abandoned a similar regeneration scheme in Matson that involved the offloading of recreational open space to GCH for the housing company to build on?</p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>Gloucester City Homes recently advised the Council that it no longer intends to pursue the comprehensive regeneration of the Matson estate, owing to the difficult financial viability of the scheme and the availability of sites to enable the development to proceed. It will, however, continue to invest in the creation of new homes within the estate. The company recently advised its residents that 3 new homes were completed earlier this year at Badminton Road on land that had previously attracted frequent fly-tipping and work has started to develop 10 new homes on the old pub site, transforming the area next to Matson shops into new affordable housing. The company also continues to pursue permission to regenerate the land around the Matson fishing lake into 9 new homes and transform the old lodge into a community venue</p> <p>The company has also informed residents recently of its intention to roll out an extensive programme across the city to improve the environmental performance of its worst performing homes. This includes plans to invest over £4 million in improving the energy efficiency of existing homes in Matson, as part of an overall £12 million investment across Gloucester. This will result in all homes achieving an energy efficiency rating of at least band C and importantly will reduce heating costs.</p> <p>I share Cllr Hilton's concerns that the company has stepped back from an estate-wide regeneration programme for now, and I will continue to liaise closely with their Chief Executive, Board and staff to encourage and work with them to look for opportunities of revisiting the extensive plans that have been prepared over the past few years.</p> | |
| 8. | <p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy</p> | <p>Looking at GCH's proposal for Podsmead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many GCH rented homes will be demolished? • How many new residential dwelling will built for market sale? • How many new residential dwellings |

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| | | <p>will be built for social rent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many new residential dwellings will be built for shared equity use? • How many properties, whether residential units, community units or retail units are planned to be built on recreational land at Podsmead that is currently in ownership of GCC, by GCH? |
| Response: | | |
| <p>Until an application for Planning Permission is received we are unaware of the exact numbers and types of homes being proposed by Gloucester City Homes. The application will then be subject to the normal planning process.</p> | | |
| 9. | <p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy</p> | <p>In total, how much recreational land in acreage is planned to be transferred from the ownership of Gloucester City Council to Gloucester City Homes Ltd?</p> |
| Response: | | |
| <p>The report on the agenda this evening on this subject includes reference to three sites within the Podsmead estate and which are currently used for recreation. It is proposed that authority is given to officers to enter negotiations with GCH over the sale of those sites with the intention of developing them for housing and commercial and community facilities. These three sites total 4.9 acres.</p> | | |
| 10. | <p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy</p> | <p>Could the cabinet member tell me whether the Podsmead project to demolish existing housing stock and build new affordable homes on land owned by GCH is viable without the contribution of recreational land at Scott Avenue, which is currently in the ownership of GCC?</p> |
| Response: | | |
| <p>Cabinet is considering at this meeting a report that requests authority to enter into negotiations with Gloucester City Homes over the terms of the land sale of sites in Podsmead. The actual terms of the sale, including the number of homes, the proportion of affordable homes to be provided and the remuneration that the Council will receive for the sites, will not be discussed at this evening's meeting, and a further report will be submitted to Cabinet in due course. This subsequent report will seek the authority of the Council to dispose of the sites, based upon the terms agreed, and informed by a viability appraisal of the sites and the development proposed.</p> | | |