

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 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.

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 Sawyer to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure	What events are planned for Kings Square over the next 6 months?
	Response:	
	The following events are either confirmed or likely to be confirmed.	
	Date	Event
		Organisation
	Sat 13 May 2023	Polish Heritage Day
		Polish Association Gloucestershire & Polish Catholic Mission in Gloucester
	Sunday 14 May 2023	Filipino Heritage Day
		Filipino Association in Gloucester
	17th May and every Wednesday 3pm - 6pm for 25 weeks after (15th November)	Kings' Square Live!
		The Music Works
	June/ July/ August (3 dates) tbc	Summer Jams
		The Music Works
	Fri 16 set up - Sat 17 June Live	Ockham's Razor
		Strike A Light
	Saturday 1 July	Hi! Street Festival
		Emergency Exit Arts
	Saturday 22 July 2023	Three Choirs Festival Procession
		Three Choirs Festival
	2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd August	GAS Projects, The Music Works and Your Next Move event
		Soozy Roberts GAS Project
	Saturday 26 August	Gloucester Goes Retro
		GCC
	Saturday 23rd September	Westgate Arts Market
		Soozy Roberts GAS Project
	Saturday 18 November 2023	Gloucester Lantern Procession & Christmas Lights Switch-On
		GCC
	Saturday 18 November 2023	Tree of Light Switch On
		The Rotary Club
	Saturday 25 November 2023	Tree of Light (second Tree collection/entertainment day)
		The Rotary Club
	Saturday 9 December	Santa Fun Run - final collection/entertainment day
		The Rotary Club
	There are further events in discussion, that are yet to be confirmed for this period.	

2.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	The cabinet paper, agenda item 10, reports an unforeseen business rates charge of £234,000 on HKP warehouses. Could you explain why this £234,000 charge was unforeseen and what period does it relate to?
Response:		
The s44a exemption on the property expired in 2022/23, as a result the Council became liable for business rates. Since the report, the Council have vacated the property and submitted a new s44a. As a result, it is expected to receive a rebate of £148k from the £234k charge.		
3.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	The warehouses HKP have been marketed again after the 'previous buyer' failed to progress a project to convert the warehouses into a quality hotel? I understand the deadline for bids during the latest marketing exercise ended on the 31 st of March. How many bids has the Council received and for what purposes have bidders suggested using the warehouses for?
Response:		
<p>The marketing of the HKP Warehouses has attracted positive interest from a number of potential buyers and for a variety of end uses.</p> <p>For commercial reasons the tender period has been extended until mid-May. As the exercise is continuing it is not appropriate to provide the requested information at this time.</p>		
4.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	How much business rates has the council collected over the last ten years from the owners of the empty commercial buildings at 67/69 London Road? What should be the current annual business rates charge?
Response:		
No rates have been collected on these buildings because the rateable value over the last ten years has been zero.		
5.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	How much in business rates has the council collected over the last ten years from the owners of Spread Eagle Court? What should be the current annual business rates charge?
Response:		
The Council has collected £32,203 over the last ten years, the current business rates charge is zero.		
6.	From Councillor Field to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Where are we with regards to the adoption of the open spaces at Earls Park, Podsmead? These were inspected by the former Section 106 officer but found to be not up to adoptable standard at the time. There is a significant issue with maintenance of the site, including full waste bins and problems

		due to dog waste bags being left around the parks. This is being made worse by the lack of a Section 106 officer. What is being done about this?
Response:		
<p>An inspection of the Earls Park development was carried out on 23rd March at which a number of works still to be completed by the developer were identified. We are currently awaiting notification from the developer that these works have now been completed. We will then reinspect the site and confirm that all the green spaces have been built in accordance with the planning specifications prior to any adoption taking place.</p> <p>The developer is aware that the current number and type of bins that they have installed is inadequate and doesn't reflect the requirements of the approved plan. The developer remains responsible for the emptying of the bins until the Council has adopted the site.</p>		
7.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure	What commitments (financial, political, goodwill/donation in kind) has the council made so far towards the Blackbridge project, and what will it commit to in the future?
Response:		
<p>Financial support – Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (CCBS) received an allocation from the city's share of UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>The Council has also secured £1.6m funding to support the delivery of the scheme through S106 developer contributions from the former Civil Service Club site.</p> <p>Political support - Blackbridge has been allocated as a site for multi-use sports, physical activity and community hub, to include a full- sized 3G artificial surface, grass playing fields and a multi-use health and wellbeing facility.</p> <p>Managing Director and Leader attend meetings on the Sports Hub.</p> <p>In the future - subject to planning permissions being granted for the Sports Hub and subject to Gloucestershire County Council getting consent for outline residential development on their retained land, the council will take a transfer of land from the County Council and will then seek to lease this together with land already owned by the City Council to Blackbridge CCBS - subject to future Cabinet approval.</p>		
8.	From Councillor Radley to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	In 2010 Gloucester City conducted a detailed air quality assessment in the Myres Road area. However, residents have ongoing concerns regarding air quality. Could the air quality be reassessed?
Response:		
<p>Residents had contacted the City Council, in May & June 2022 with respect to dust emissions from Speedy Skips, those matters have been addressed through the quarterly liaison meeting at the Allstone Site, and no further complaints have been received since. With respect to traffic emissions the City Council can deploy air quality monitors at Myers Road for an initial survey period of six months.</p>		

	Based on the results obtained this would then determine whether any further (detailed) assessments are needed. The monitors would need to be placed in proximity to Residential Premises to determine exposure levels to traffic emissions, officers will liaise with residents for the most appropriate locations.	
9.	From Councillor Bowkett to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	A Cordon Sanitaire Evidence Study commissioned by Gloucester City Council in September 2019 of the Netheridge sewage treatment works run by Severn Trent Water recorded a number of odour complaints from residents in the surrounding area over a 10-year period. No attention however was paid in the Study to sewage outflows into the surrounding waterways from the Netheridge sewage treatment works. What data does the Council hold, or can gain access to, covering the same period of time, in relation to the dumping of sewage into surrounding waterways?
	Response:	
	The Study was conducted based on the impact of odour emissions and not sewage emissions from the site. The discharged wastewater is monitored by Severn Trent (Water Authority) they report directly to the Environment Agency (EA) who oversees water quality issues, including monitoring and regulation. Gloucester City Council does not monitor the water quality of watercourses.	
10.	From Councillor Bowkett to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	The Cordon Sanitaire Evidence Study revealed no particular upwards or downwards trend in odour levels. However, what has been the monthly trend for sewage outflows from 2008 until the present day?
	Response:	
	As stated in response to Q9 Gloucester City Council does not monitor the wastewater emissions, the data is available and has been published by the Environment Agency (EA) regarding the performance of storm overflows from the Water and Sewerage Companies (WaSC). This data is referred to as Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) and is a relatively new initiative where all storm overflows were installed with recording devices; these returns started in 2020.	
	There are three outflows at the Netheridge Site, treated water and two storm overflows. The data does not provide details of the water quality, only the duration and number of spills and discharges. It also does not contain the data relating to the actual treated discharge from the Netheridge site.	
11.	From Councillor Bowkett to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Is the council monitoring water cleanliness in brooks, streams, and rivers across the city in order to ensure that human health and the protection of city biodiversity are prioritised and protected? If so, how?
	Response:	
	River Quality is monitored by and is under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency.	

The City Council visually monitors the watercourses throughout Gloucester and sign-posts / liaises with the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water in relation to reported incidents.

There are many sources of pollution that can impact on watercourses.

This can include (but not limited to):

- runoff from rural sources (including agricultural), and urban areas,
- incorrect plumbing in homes and businesses causing sewage to run into rivers,
- poorly maintained septic tanks
- increased rainfall resulting in overwhelming the sewage systems (combined sewer overflows activated or flooding from sewers).

This is in addition to natural causes such as algae blooms from the impact of climate change.

Also as part of the planning process we ensure connections from extensions and new developments are “plumbed” to the correct sewer and increase the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) and increased blue/green infrastructure to manage runoff and water quality from developments.

In addition, climate change projects including restoring natural features such as wetlands and woodlands contribute to improved water quality.

Recent schemes include re-naturalising the concrete sections of urban watercourses (Natural Flood Management (NFM) in the headwaters of the Sud Brook and River Twyver).

12. From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy

As people may know by now I think the homeless processing is flawed, and this is from various charities and organisations that deal with homeless daily. So I would like to ask the Cabinet Member, and in fact to all councillors to spend an entire day trying to get put through the process, not telling anyone who you really are and seeing for ourselves how good or bad the experience is.

Response:

There are many diverse reasons why households and individuals become homeless and the council's statutory obligations for providing support to homeless households are complex. When officers support and assist residents who present to us as homeless, we are required to apply homelessness legislation and have regard to statutory guidance and relevant case law. If we disregard these requirements the council is at risk of legal challenge, and it is often the case therefore that we are restricted in how we may deliver our customer-facing process.

During 2022/23 just under 1,250 new homelessness cases were opened by the team – equivalent to 5 new cases opened on every working day of the year. The Housing Service works tirelessly to prevent homelessness wherever possible, working with individuals and families who find themselves in stressful

	<p>circumstances who are often, understandably, at a point of crisis. This is challenging but essential work for many residents each year that is undertaken with dedication and professionalism. I do not agree that councillors pretending to be homeless and contacting officers would be a good use of officer resource, as it would merely waste officer's time that would be better spent assisting those residents who unfortunately are in need of our assistance. I would however be pleased to hear from Councillors, customers and partners if they feel that there are improvements that can be made to our processes and procedures that are in place to deliver the service.</p>	
13.	<p>From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p>	<p>I have an organisation ready and willing to open a 24 hour a day shelter with training room anybody can book 3 meals away beds showers and access to help not only with homeless, but also help with benefits and access to Internet for job searches etc, my question is would Council be willing to give a property for this project in town or somewhere near with funding for 2 years to see if this is viable?</p>
<p>Response:</p>		
<p>I'm not aware that there have been any conversations with officers regarding the feasibility of this proposal and consequently we are unable to consider what council support may be appropriate at this time. I will be pleased to hear from any potential partners who would like to feed back to us, and Members are also welcome to talk to officers directly regarding potential new initiatives.</p>		