

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	Has the city council provided extra revenue support for the Aspire Trust over and above what was allocated in the 2023/24 budget, if so, how much extra has been promised to Aspire during this financial year?
	Response:	
	No additional support above the 23/24 budget has been provided. The Council is in discussion with Aspire to extend their contract and management fee. If agreed, a detailed report will be presented to Cabinet.	
2.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	<p>I see that the information commissioner's office has issued the council with a reprimand because of the December 2021 cyber-attack.</p> <p>The council was previously fined £100,000 for a data breach dating back to 2014.</p> <p>Are you relieved that on this occasion the council didn't get a fine and what has been the total cost of the cyber-attack recovery?</p>
	Response:	
	<p>We have been made aware of the decision by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to issue our council with a reprimand, this is one of a range of options available to them. This is the lowest sanction by the ICO and provides us confirmation that it will not be issuing either an enforcement notice or a fine.</p> <p>Prior to the cyber incident in December 2021 by an organised cyber-crime group, we had invested significantly in our security systems, testing and improving them and we had some of the most robust defences in our sector. I believe the decision by the ICO to only issue us with a reprimand recognises the efforts and steps we had taken as a Council to tackle and mitigate cyber risk.</p>	

	<p>But cyber criminals continue to create new ways to target systems, individuals and organisations, and unfortunately this was a very sophisticated and clever attack that overcame our defences.</p> <p>We take on board the findings of the ICO report and we are able to confirm that all of their recommendations either have been or will be met, as we continue to work tirelessly to rebuild and improve the IT systems and security, business continuity processes and training, which should be undertaken by everyone when asked to.</p> <p>Total recovery costs to date are estimated to be £870k (£142k Capital, £728k Revenue), the Council has received £250k grant funding and used the cyber reserve of £380k against these costs.</p>	
3.	<p>From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment</p>	<p>It's fantastic that due to the hard work of licensees, the city council and other stakeholders of Gloucester's night-time economy we have the purple flag.</p> <p>However, please can you tell me how the city council works with licensees and managers to ensure that people who work in the night-time economy have a safe journey home?'</p>
<p>Response:</p>		
<p>Having Purple Flag status for Gloucester is a fantastic achievement.</p> <p>Part of the criteria for the accreditation is that we have a safe and secure approach to help people get home safely as part of the night-time economy.</p> <p>Measures that the City Council with its Night Safe partners have put in place include the deployment of Night Safe Officers, Street Medics and agreements with taxi operators to ensure students from Hartpury get home safely if they encounter any problems. They are all readily available to help until the early hours of the morning.</p> <p>The City Council encourage licensees and all employees including SIA registered door staff to work together by supporting each other so that everyone gets home as safely as they can.</p> <p>Gloucester City Council host regular day/night safe meetings which is open to licensees and venue managers and is also attended by the chair of the Licensed Victuallers Association. This is a great platform to build positive working relationships to ensure that safety of staff as well as customers/visitors is always the top priority.</p>		
4.	<p>From Councillor J. Brown to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>At the launch of the Knife Angel on 1 February 2023, as the Sheriff and Deputy Mayor of Gloucester, and in the absence of the Mayor, I accepted for the City of Gloucester a large, rather heavy plaque with the following inscription: City Anti Violence Charter 2022 – To Renounce All Forms of Violence. This was presented by Clive Knowles of the British Ironwork Centre and the plaque is safely stored in the Eastgate offices. What plans have been made to display this plaque? What consideration has been given to displaying this in either the Eastgate</p>

		Centre or Kings Walk for Gloucester residents to view?
	Response:	
	The plaque will be displayed in the City and a number of sites are being considered as options including Eastgate Shopping Centre and Kings Walk.	
5.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	<p>The City Council Constitution Article 13.02 - states that contracts should be executed as follows:</p> <p>All contracts with a value exceeding £25,000 but not exceeding £50,000 shall be signed by the city council solicitor unless the council solicitor requires the contract to be sealed.</p> <p>Section 2: 4.2.10 For quotes and tenders above £25,000, instructing the council solicitor in writing to draft and approve the formal written contract terms and conditions that are to apply to the proposed contract.</p> <p>Why did the Community Team allow the London Road garden project to proceed without these 2 council constitution processes being followed which is a massive breach of safe guarding tax payers money?</p>
	Response:	
	The contract was based on a standard Landscape Institute contract, a full procurement process was completed signed off by the Corporate Director.	
6.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	<p>The City Council Constitution Section 3: Tendering and Quotation process states under section 3 sub section 5.1 states that contracts above £10k but under £50k must use the council e-tender system. The system will be used to select 3 suppliers at random. At least 3 written quotes will be invited unless agreed with the S151 officer and procurement adviser. With a value of £25k or above the contract must be advised on contract-finder using the e-tendering system. A formal written contract by the council solicitor must be used.</p> <p>Why did the Community Team allow the London Road garden project to proceed without following council tender protocol and ONLY 1 quotation/ tender being received which does not follow council protocol to get best value for money for tax payers?</p>
	Response:	
	The tender for the Wellington Parade Garden was advertised on 'Supplying the South West' portal and 6 requests for bids were sent out. In the case of this tender, only one compliant bid was received, and it was evaluated in line with the Council's process and accepted on its merit.	
7.	From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	You are paid around £10,000 extra, what is your community cabinet role and what does it involve day to day?

	<p>Response:</p> <p>The day-to-day role of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods involves overseeing policies related to the portfolio. The Cabinet Member is responsible for making recommendations, working with Service Managers and Corporate Directors to ensure that the Community Wellbeing Team functions effectively in serving the needs of the city. The Cabinet Member participates in budgeting and planning discussions, advocating for resources and initiatives that align with the goals and priorities of the portfolio. The Cabinet Member commissions and considers reports from appropriate Officers, and reports to the Council on decisions made, actions taken and progress within the portfolio. Additionally, the Cabinet Member consults with, and reports as required to the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He also contributes to the corporate development of the Council's policies and objectives through active engagement of Cabinet and works closely with relevant senior Officers of the Council to support the efficient management of the Council and to uphold high standards of performance and conduct, enabling Officers to exercise any powers delegated to them. At Full Council, the Cabinet member also answers relevant questions from Members.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member attends Cabinet briefings, Cabinet meetings, Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, partnership meetings, answers and facilitates the resolution of concerns raised by Officers, Members and residents from across the city, and conducts site visits on Council-funded and supported Community programmes and projects. The Cabinet Member also visits community groups and attends community events throughout the city.</p>	
8.	From Councillor Gravells to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>Against a national target of 93% of 1st class post being delivered within 24 hours, Gloucestershire, the latest figures show, only achieved 69.2%. Royal Mail tell me that they're unable to break that figure of 69% down into smaller areas, so there's no way of knowing what the figure is for Gloucester, let alone Abbeydale and Abbeymead. People tell me that in Abbeydale and Abbeymead they frequently only get one postal delivery a week, especially when their postie is away on holiday. I appreciate that most companies and private individuals are contacted these days by email, but there will be times when things have to be posted out. Will the Leader please talk to managers here at the city council to see if the late deliveries of some post to addresses in Gloucester is causing any difficulties for this Council or for any private individuals or businesses here in the city?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>I have frequent briefings from the Managing Director and other officers of the Council and they have not indicated to me any difficulties for the Council arising from the Royal Mail postal service.</p>	
9.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure	<p>How is the cataloguing of the museum's collections proceeding and is the catalogue available to view?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>As part of the 5-year programme to decant the former Folk museum, all 20,000+ objects will be catalogued. With 3.5 years remaining, the service is on track to</p>	

	<p>complete within the 5-year timeline. The Collections team are working in partnership with the Civic Trust to develop displays through loaned objects and the decant project is proceeding alongside their plans to develop the building into a community hub.</p> <p>Collections cataloguing is an ongoing process. A full review of the collection housed at the Museum of Gloucester is currently taking place. The service is investing in a new collections management system which will enable access to the collection online.</p>
10.	<p>From Councillor Conder to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</p> <p>The Tourist Information Centre in the City Museum has greatly diminished, is barely visible in its present location and poorly staffed.</p> <p>A vibrant Tourist Centre is essential for a city with such history. What plans does the Council have for improving its location, visibility to visitors, and its staffing?</p>
<p>Response:</p>	
<p>Cabinet received a paper for consideration on Wednesday 11th January 2023 proposing that the City Council no longer runs an official Tourist Information Centre in the city and that it would support all cultural/tourism venues that provide visitor information (known as a Tourist Information Point).</p> <p>The minutes from the meeting stated: “RESOLVED that the City Council supports the provision of all visitor information points across the city including visitor attractions, accommodation providers, transport hubs and digital information instead of one single Tourist Information Centre.”</p> <p>At present, the Council has no plans to reintroduce a sole use Tourist Information Centre, this would involve considerable investment and an ongoing revenue pressure. Demand for a physical Tourist Information Centre reduced significantly before the pandemic and the increased use of technology during and since the pandemic resulted in even fewer people visiting the Museum for tourist information – hence the cabinet agreement in January 2023. The Visit Gloucester website is increasing its number of unique visits and leaflets continue to be available at the Museum of Gloucester. Staff at the Museum continue to offer its visitors and visitors to the city a professional and informative service.</p>	
11.	<p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p> <p>At the audit and governance committee in July a report said: “The S106 Officer spreadsheet highlighted six agreements where the deadline for spending developers’ contributions (approximately £220k) had passed.”</p> <p>The council might have to return all or some of the £220,000 to the developers because of its failure to meet its legal obligation.</p> <p>Can you please list the six section 106 agreements and confirm how much of this money is safe in the council’s hands for it to spend as per the original agreements?</p>
<p>Response:</p>	

	<p>The audit report was revised to state – ‘five agreements where the deadline for spending developers’ contributions had passed’ approx. £180k.</p> <p>The five agreements were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hallmark Hotel • Blackbridge Allotments • Secunda Way • St Gobain • Travis Perkins <p>Officers are reviewing the agreements and spend to determine whether any funds were not allocated within the appropriate timeframe. This will be reported to Audit & Governance committee.</p> <p>All of the s106 agreements data are being transferred into Exacom, a specific software to manage s106 arrangements to facilitate their future management.</p>
12.	<p>From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p> <p>What is the city council’s policy on internal employment and fair recruitment/ diversity/ equality & inclusion?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>The City Council recruit internally and externally taking account of their legal obligations to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and their commitment to fair recruitment. All newly created roles / vacancies are advertised internally, with the exception of protected roles as a result of structural changes or displacement.</p> <p>There is a recruitment and selection policy with associated Management Guidance (available to recruiting managers on the Council’s staff intranet) which applies to both internal and external recruitment.</p>
13.	<p>From Councillor O’Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods</p> <p>What new parks have you created in 2023 and what new play equipment have you installed in Matson Ward?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>There have not been any new parks or playgrounds installed in Matson in 2023 as there has not been any new S106 funding to support this, however, we have spent £14,450 so far this financial year on repairs or replacement of existing play equipment in parks in the Matson and Robinswood area.</p>
14.	<p>From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</p> <p>Have any artefacts or artworks been disposed of recently? Have any pieces been lost?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>No artworks have been disposed of. As reported in previous Cabinet questions, 109 objects from the former Folk museum were disposed of in the summer of 2021 due to poor condition and this was fully documented.</p> <p>No artefacts have been lost – the collections review and cataloguing project will flag any concerns that will be raised at the appropriate level if needed.</p>
15.	<p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Have you secured funding to maintain the city protection officer patrols in the areas of Kingsholm adjacent to the city centre?</p> <p>You did promise me that you would try to secure funding to continue the patrols.</p> <p>Response:</p>

	Officers have been looking at options for how City Protection Officer patrols in the Kingsholm area could be continued, following the end of the previous funding. We have included Kingsholm patrols in a recent funding bid and expect to have news on the outcome of that bid in November.
16.	<p>From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p> <p>We are advised of the ethical code of conduct for members, what is the ethical code of conduct for council officers and what investigations are brought onto them if they have breached said code of conduct?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>Officers are expected to comply with the Employee Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 30 January 2020 and forms part of the Council's constitution. This Code of Conduct forms part of an Officer's contract of employment.</p> <p>If an allegation is received that an Officer has breached the Employee Code of Conduct (i.e. by way of a complaint, grievance, whistleblowers report, audit, or other review work) the matter would be investigated and further information sought. Dependent on the outcome of the investigation the matter may be managed under the Council disciplinary policy.</p>
17.	<p>From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods</p> <p>I am aware myself and Cllr Alastair Chambers have been heavily involved in design, meetings and site meetings for the Matson school lodge. What have you done for this as I noted you were pictured claiming the work?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>Thank you to the contributions made by you and Councillor Chambers. The question appears to be based on a misunderstanding, as on reviewing photos shared by Gloucester MP Richard Graham on Facebook, none of the individuals (including Vanessa Worrall of Together in Matson, Bert Mahoney of Matson Anglers, and myself), claimed credit for the work. This proposal is a collaborative effort among various stakeholders including community members, all of whom share the hope that it will eventually address some of our community's needs and concerns. Everyone involved has shown commitment to unity and collective success.</p> <p>I have been aware of the proposal since 2021 and have been to the site a few times. I was one of those approached by Together in Matson to formally endorse their application for the development of the School Lodge and its surroundings for family and community activities. Last year Cabinet formally accepted the proposal from Officers after carefully reviewing the details of the proposed project, including its objectives, scope and expected outcomes. Cabinet subsequently approved the proposal to dispose of the land adjacent to the School Lodge, Matson Lane, to Gloucester City Homes (GCH) for them to construct affordable housing, with GCH to transfer School Lodge in return for a lease to Together in Matson.</p>
18.	<p>From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</p> <p>What does the council plan to do about any collections which are not currently curated?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>There is an existing catalogue – as mentioned above, the collections team are in the process of carrying out an audit and inventory project across all the collections. Decisions regarding the collections will follow the processes and</p>

	<p>policies set out under our Accredited status (following SPECTRUM standards and the Museums Association Code of Ethics). Once the team are further into the inventory and the decant of the former Folk museum projects, they will start to relook at displays within the Museum. The collections team work with the programming team to run events that talk about the collections, both on display and behind the scenes.</p> <p>As part of this process, we are curating the first in-house collection-based exhibition since 2019 called 'Buttons, Badges & Blazers' - utilising the Museum of Gloucester costume collection which is due to run from the 21st October 2023 to the 7th January 2023.</p> <p>Funding has also been achieved to support the cataloguing of the city's archaeology collections which will rationalise existing collections and will provide a number of opportunities to engage with Gloucester's residents in the process.</p>
19.	<p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy</p> <p>Could you please list every planning enforcement action that is currently being processed by this council?</p> <p>Giving details of the planning breach, the enforcement, where it is in the legal process and when a conclusion is expected.</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>We are unable to give information on active enforcement cases in a public forum, as this may undermine or prejudice the outcome of any enforcement action. If you have a question about a specific case I would be happy to ask officers to brief you.</p>
20.	<p>From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p> <p>We are aware that the city Museum and Indoor Eastgate market have the dangerous and potentially fatal RAAC concrete within its fabrication and roof structure. As the school which collapsed had a charactered engineers report deeming it was safe and yet still the roof collapsed, how will Gloucester City Council ensure that the residents using the Museum and Eastgate market will be safe?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>A structural engineer has inspected the museum roof, and all other buildings that were constructed within the time frame that RAAC was used are scheduled to be inspected within the next week. He has assured us that there is no cause for concern in the museum at present. Once we receive the further reports, we will action any recommendations as a matter of urgency.</p>
21.	<p>From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods</p> <p>As community cabinet member, what Matson ward organisations have you personally visited in person as cabinet community member before September 2023 as we have received complaints that you have spent the majority of your time at one organisation.</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>By me spending the majority of my time at one organisation, I believe you are referring to the Redwell Centre. My collaboration with the Redwell Centre began in 2021 when they agreed to host the monthly healthcare initiative I introduced. The initiative involved specialist nurses – skin cancer, urology and respiratory specialists included - providing services to residents of Matson, Robinwood and</p>

	<p>White City. Among those who were seen were cancer patients and their carers who were signposted for support.</p> <p>I have maintained a fair approach in my interactions with our voluntary organisations. I have extended support to The Long Table, the Ewe Space, and the Redwell Centre when they sought assistance from the Warm Spaces Fund, personally visiting their premises. I have had the pleasure of attending events at the Phoenix Centre, including a Christmas Get-together, as well as being present at the Ewe Space with Matson Makers and Jigsaw during the King's Coronation celebration. Additionally, I have also participated in and provided some funding support to The Venture on their 40th Year Anniversary.</p> <p>I regularly attend the Matson, Robinswood and White City meetings and I was there and was involved in discussions over the proposed merger of Greenshaw Learning Trust and the Phoenix Centre Alliance which runs both Robinswood and Moat Schools. I have also attended the partnership meeting with a Public Health Team which looked at risky drinking and alcohol activity in Matson. The Team has agreed to offer a 60K funding support to the partnership for planned interventions.</p>	
22.	<p>From Councillor Field to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment</p>	<p>The weed clearance this year has been poor in my ward and others in the city. I still await the weed-clearing schedule for Podsmead that I requested. What are you doing to improve this service for future years?</p>
	<p>Response:</p>	
	<p>The wet weather during July and August and a subsequent shortage of trained staff at Ubico has affected the weed spraying schedule this year and it is unlikely we will be able to complete another blanket spray of the whole city this year. If Members can tell us where the worst weeds are in their wards, we can prioritise those areas.</p> <p>Ubico street cleaners have been tasked with knocking out weeds as they are reported and we are trialling several new street sweepers over the next month which have weed ripping equipment attached to them, in preparation for roll out of a more mechanised street cleaning service next year. The new machine once purchased should be able to clean 75% of Gloucester pavements and will reduce the amount of chemical we use over the next 3 years.</p>	
23.	<p>From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>What have you spent on Matson ward from April 2023 to Sept 2023 from the millions of pounds income the council get each year on community improvements?</p>
	<p>Response:</p>	
	<p>S106 funding is reducing in general due to the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It does not amount to millions and is not a regular source of income. We have not received any money for Matson recently, apart from the Hallmark Hotel funds which has been allocated to Matson Rugby Club for floodlighting.</p> <p>Since April 2022 the Council has invested £98,880 in grant funding to the Matson, Robinswood and White City area through a variety of funding streams.</p>	
24.	<p>From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p>	<p>What lessons will be learned from the sad demise of the Club at Tuffley Park, and what are the timetable and criteria for appointing a new leaseholder? Will</p>

		residents and the local member be consulted on the appointment, to ensure we have a community-based asset in Podsmead?
Response:		
<p>We will continue to monitor and work with any tenants that are experiencing hardship as we have always strived to do. The circumstances with this case were out of our control and we reacted in accordance with the clauses in the lease to recover the property.</p>		
<p>We are currently preparing the building for re-letting and will follow our newly approved community asset transfer policy where appropriate. The intention is to invite interested parties to start this process in early October, once landlord works have completed. Local councillors will be consulted when a shortlist of candidates has been created.</p>		