

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 Hyman to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure	Would you consider outsourcing in respect of Marketing Gloucester and Aspire have proved unsuccessful and these services are best undertaken in-house?
	Response:	
	The advice from expert consultants SLC is that the Leisure Management market is most effectively and economically delivered by third party operators rather than by the council. This is the approach that the council has taken and will continue to take as it procures a new provider. The in-house option was demonstrated in the Options Appraisal presented to Cabinet in 2022 to be the most costly to the council taxpayers.	
2.	From Councillor Hyman to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure	At the extraordinary Council meeting concerning Aspire, you stated that the Council does not have a legal responsibility to provide leisure facilities. Can you assure me that there is no intention by the Administration to cut our contribution to leisure and sport services in Gloucester or dispense with the service entirely?
	Response:	
	The response given at council was a factual one: the council does not have a statutory duty to provide leisure services. However, the council has no intention to cease providing leisure services. The commitment to continue with the provision is demonstrated in the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2023-2028 which shows the benefits sport and leisure facilities have in supporting the community's health and well-being.	
3.	From Councillor Trimnell to the Cabinet Member for Environment	Please can the relevant Cabinet Member tell me why it is taking so long to re-open St Mary De Crypt churchyard to members of the public?

	Response:	
	All the vegetation cutbacks, as well as the waste removal have been completed. The delay for the re-opening of the churchyard to members of the public has been caused by the time it has taken for the printing company to have the signs (advising the public of the opening hours) produced. The signs were collected on Monday 6 th November. Once Asset Management is in possession of the signs, the churchyard will re-open within the next 24 hours.	
4.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Environment	The autumn leaves are now falling and starting to cover the footways and roads across my ward. Can the Cabinet Member please provide me with a schedule for clearing the debris from the streets and open spaces in Kingsholm and Wotton?
	Response:	
	We are working on the digitisation of our street cleaning service currently, which will include schedules. In the meantime Ubico have put together this schedule for the Autumn 23 leafing period (Appendix 1). Days not scheduled will be used to deal with ad-hoc urgent requests.	
5.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	In relation agenda item 9, how many housing units would the Council need to acquire to remove the necessity to provide hotel accommodation for the current cohort of homeless families and individuals now in the City of Gloucester?
	Response:	
	The number of households accommodated in hotels is set out in paragraph 3.13 of the report. This number is fluid as households move into permanent housing solutions and others present to the council as homeless on a daily basis, however it does provide an indication of the scale of the current challenge. The exact number of acquisitions required to help us address the need will depend on the available properties, their size, and their configuration.	
6.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	Over ten years ago Severn Trent Water carried out major improvements to the drainage system in Kingsholm and lower Westgate Street area of the city. This seems to have resolved the flash flooding in the area. Has the Environment Agency updated its flood risk assessment since the completion of Severn Trent's drainage improvements, in particular along St Catherine Street?
	Response:	
	The works carried out by Severn Trent Water would have aimed to reduce the risk of flooding from the combined sewer system. In this area the combined sewers take rainfall run-off from the roads and impermeable areas in addition to the domestic and commercial foul elements to the Netheridge wastewater treatment works. The sewer system, however, would not impact on river/ tidal flooding on which the Environment Agency flood zone maps are based.	

	<p>In essence the river and tidal flood zones would remain the same. The works to the combined sewers in this area would theoretically reduce the level of surcharge in the sewer system, consequently reducing the level of flooding from sewers but it would not impact on the fluvial and tidal flooding extents from the rivers.</p>	
7.	<p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Environment</p>	<p>When will the 12 panel Gloucester Window be installed at the bus station?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>All 12 panels are currently in production. These are due to be completed by the end of November with an installation programme to be agreed by end of the year.</p>	
8.	<p>From Councillor Castle to the Cabinet Member for Environment</p>	<p>There has been a couple of large trees cut down due to disease on Estcourt Road. In the future when large trees have to be removed would you consider having the tree trunk of the tree, made into a tree sculpture? Could a tree sculpture trail be part of city centre regeneration project?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>Trees on Estcourt Road belong to the Highways department, as do the majority of trees on roadside verges.</p> <p>Some diseases destroy the trunk and would be unsuitable for carving as would some species of tree. The cost of transportation to move the trunks whole rather than cut them down at the roadside is likely to be prohibitive. We would need to commission an artist by tender arrangement for which there would also be a significant cost implication. It may be a project to involve Gloucester Wildlife Trust in, as they already have a sculpture trail on Robinswood Hill, so will have some experience to share.</p>	
9.	<p>From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p>	<p>What is our current borrowing to income ratio?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>Our current borrowing to income ratio is 13.1%</p>	
10.	<p>From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p>	<p>According to the LGA: 'When a council sets a balanced budget at the beginning of the year, by law its Chief Financial Officer must certify that it has sufficient reserves to cover it.'</p> <p>Given that our General Fund has been depleted in the first quarter of the current financial year, how close are we to issuing a S114 notice?</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>As noted in the Q1 Financial Monitoring report, the Council is facing significant cost pressures across Housing, Planning and Leisure services. These are national issues which are impacting Councils across the Country. At this stage,</p>	

<p>Gloucester has reserves available to cover the forecast cost pressures outlined in our Q1 monitoring report.</p>

<p>Officers are working to mitigate these cost pressures both for the current and future years to ensure the Council can continue to set a balanced budget.</p>
