

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 Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	How many affordable homes were built within the City Council boundaries compared to the Council target for each of the last 10 calendar years?																				
	Response: Please refer to Appendix.																					
2.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	How many Gloucester based persons are registered with Homeseeker Plus for each of the four priority bands of emergency, gold, silver or bronze? How does this compare to five years ago?																				
	Response:																					
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Band</th> <th colspan="2">Number of live applications</th> </tr> <tr> <th>31.12.23</th> <th>31.12.18</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Emergency</td> <td>46</td> <td>71</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gold</td> <td>318</td> <td>579</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Silver</td> <td>1,373</td> <td>1,558</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bronze</td> <td>2,878</td> <td>2,142</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>4,615</td> <td>4,350</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Band	Number of live applications		31.12.23	31.12.18	Emergency	46	71	Gold	318	579	Silver	1,373	1,558	Bronze	2,878	2,142	Total	4,615	4,350
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3.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council	The City Council has been awarded £11 million by the government towards redevelopment and regeneration of Eastgate Market and Greyfriars Quarter following an original application that the Liberal Democrat group also considered and supported.																				

		Can you confirm the deadline by when this funding must be spent?
	Response:	
	31 st March 2026	
4.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council	Could the Cabinet Member provide a timeline for the project to deliver the regeneration at Eastgate Market and Greyfriars Quarter, with specific information on how the Council intends to consult and engage with market traders, nearby residents, the public and all members of the Council?
	Response:	
	A development programme is currently in preparation. That programme will include specific information on consultation and engagement, together with the planning process, the development process etc. Once prepared, that programme will be shared with members.	
5.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Environment	The Council does NOT employ professional gardeners to help manage and tend important focal point gardens such as Wellington Parade Garden and Hillfield Gardens. Why?
	Response:	
	A decision was made by the Council in 2011/12 to replace seasonal bedding plants with bee friendly wildflowers and herbaceous and sustainable planting. As a result of these changes, and in order to reduce costs, the Council ceased to employ gardeners as part of the grounds maintenance contract.	
6.	From Councillor Trimnell to the Cabinet Member for Environment	Why didn't this Council provide any sandbags on the night of the flooding (Thursday 5 th January) to residents on Alney Island?
	Response:	
	It is Gloucester City Council policy not to provide sandbags for incidents of this type, as per the Cabinet decision of July 2021 and previous decision of 2008.	
7.	From Councillor Trimnell to the Cabinet Member for Environment	I visited Alney Island the night of the flooding and I was concerned to see leaks in the flood defence wall prior to it breaching the wall: a) Did Cllr Cook know about these leaks? b) What is going to be done about these leaks and what can now be done to reduce the risk of flooding in this area in the future?
	Response:	
	The flood defence wall asset at Alney Island is operated and maintained by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency carry out regular inspections to identify critical defects. Issues such as leaks would only become apparent when the asset is in use. Other water behind the defence arises from that which seeps through the ground and when water levels are as high as they were it is very difficult to keep this out.	

	<p>None of these leaks were causing major issues and the Environment Agency provided pumps on the afternoon of 4/1 to help remove this water from within the defended area.</p> <p>The Environment Agency will carry out post flood inspection of the defence and identify any work that needs to be carried out to ensure that the defence continues to operate as expected.</p> <p>Cllr Cook was made aware of small leaks to the wall when he visited Alney Island on 4th January 2024.</p>	
8.	From Councillor Trimnell to the Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>It has come to my attention that if the Environment Agency had a six-inch pump in the night of Thursday 4th January, which had been used on a previous occasion they could have kept the water out of people's homes, but this was not available this time. Please can Cllr Cook provide an explanation for why this wasn't available?</p>
Response:		
<p>The pumps would not have been effective against the volume of water from the River Severn and associated floodplain once the defences where breached. The pumps are there to primarily aid with recovery and drain the basin in which the area sits following the incident or when seepage is small.</p> <p>The pumps and operation are managed by the Environment Agency. Pumps were deployed by the Environment Agency on the afternoon of the 4/1/2024 including a 6-inch pump. These pumps were being operated by Environment Agency operatives right throughout the overtopping of the defence to try and help keep the water levels within the defended area as low as possible. However, the duration of the overtopping and not having anywhere to satisfactorily pump the water to, meant that unfortunately some homes were flooded.</p> <p>The Environment Agency resources where in high demand along with their assets as other locations where significantly flooded during this event.</p>		
9.	From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	<p>At both the Audit & Governance Committee and Full Council meetings in November a commitment was made that <i>'unaudited draft accounts (2021/22) would be published and available by the end of November 2023.'</i> Why has this not happened?</p>
Response:		
<p>End of November was our target date, however before we were in a position to publish the 2021/22 draft accounts, our external auditors asked us to prioritise their Value for Money assessments, so they were able to audit this element of the 2021/22 audit first. We will continue to work to publish the draft accounts ASAP.</p>		
10.	From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	<p>Are we still on course to publish 2022/2023 draft unaudited accounts before the May 2024 local elections?</p>
Response:		
<p>We are still working to publish the 2022/23 draft accounts before the May 2024 local elections.</p>		

11.	From Councillor Radley to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	When did planning enforcement last visit the Allstone Group site to investigate possible planning breaches?
<p>Response: Planning enforcement officers from the City Council visits sites (when required) to investigate reported breaches. We have no recent records of a site visit by a planning enforcement officer.</p>		
12.	From Councillor Radley to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	When did planning enforcement last engage with County Council planning colleagues relating to the planning enforcement of the Allstone Group site?
<p>Response: September 2023.</p>		
13.	From Councillor Radley to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	Could a `no wrong door' approach be taken so that planning enforcement teams at the City and County Councils can work together to better address cross-authority issues?
<p>Response: I think in principle this approach is a positive one and I have asked the team to explore this approach for the Allstone site.</p>		