

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 Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>I understand that the construction of The Forum is proceeding to schedule.</p> <p>Could you please confirm what the total spend will be and how this will be funded, and whether that is from council borrowing or capital injection from external or internal sources?</p> <p>Please also advise on the tenancies agreed and work in progress to secure tenants in the unfilled sections of The Forum.</p>
<p>Response:</p> <p>I am unable to confirm in public what the estimated total spend on the Forum is anticipated to be at this stage, because providing this information would compromise the commercial position of the council.</p> <p>The scheme is being funded through a combination of capital receipts, council borrowing and Levelling Up Round 1 Grant Funding.</p> <p>In terms of tenancies, to date we have entered into agreements with Hotel Indigo for the new hotel, Q-Park for the new car park and Reef Group for c.30,000sq.ft. of commercial space within the office element of the development. This is approximately 71% of the development let, before construction has completed.</p> <p>We are in advanced discussions with a number of other interested parties for other elements of the office space, but for commercial reasons we are unable to share information about these discussions at this time. The remaining office space is being actively marketed.</p> <p>With regards to the wider redevelopment of the Kings Quarter, the council have successfully completed the new Kings Square, 19 residential apartments and a new retail store occupied by Tesco. We have secured the former Chambers pub</p>		

	<p>and we are currently marketing this to new occupiers, and upgrade works have recently been completed at Kings Walk.</p> <p>I am also delighted to see the progress being made at the new University of Gloucestershire City Centre Campus, the new 25 affordable residential apartments under construction by GCH and the upgrades taking place at the railway station, all of which have benefitted from the support of the City Council.</p> <p>The level of investment taking place within the Kings Quarter area of the city centre is testament to the foresight of this council, all of which has enjoyed cross party support.</p>	
2.	<p>From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>Roots Coffee & Community CIC has sadly announced they will close this wonderful community facility in the heart of Kingsholm on the 10th February.</p> <p>There was a public meeting at St Catharine's Church on the 15th of January where 150 people attended including Angela Conder and myself. Another 50 attended online.</p> <p>It was announced that a small group of individuals were working on a rescue bid.</p> <p>The council has helped in the past. Will you positively consider practical and financial help to the Roots Rescue group if they so request?</p>
<p>Response:</p>		
<p>The City Council has a good working relationship with the management of Roots and they have expressed their appreciation of all the support we have given them over the years, not just financial.</p> <p>Officers have met with Roots to discuss the challenges they are facing: the support they are looking for as a priority isn't necessarily financial, rather they are seeking a robust business plan to get them back on an even keel and expand the community ownership and then to consider short term funding.</p> <p>We have given an offer of support, along with Feeding Gloucestershire, however we are unable to commit to further financial support at this point in time. We will make them aware of funding opportunities locally and nationally and continue to work with them to help them seek any funding opportunities.</p>		
3.	<p>From Councillor Pullen to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment</p>	<p>Is the Leader happy with the design, layout and location of the proposed Covid Memorial?</p>
<p>Response:</p>		
<p>The location of the memorial is an ideal one; it is a quieter part of the park, in front of one of the entrances and this area is going to be enhanced by the improvement works to the park which will be completed, in readiness for green flag judging, in May 2024. These improvements include refurbished toilets, repairs to the swiss cottage and a Gloucester City scene mural painted on the wall adjacent to it.</p>		

	<p>Despite previously being discussed at Overview & Scrutiny Committee with positive feedback, the memorial idea was not very well received by some Members recently and subsequently an alternative proposal will be put to the community groups in the park at their next meeting. The new proposal will replace the 8 stones with a circle of 8 ornamental trees, a centre stone (plaque) made from granite will explain what it is. A seat and interpretation board will explain the memorial.</p>	
4.	<p>From Councillor Pullen to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment</p>	<p>Why is it taking so long to develop the Climate Change Action Plan and when will it be finalised?</p>
<p>Response:</p> <p>The Council's partnership with WSP was announced in April 2023 and their work began on the Climate Change Strategy in May 2023. Both officers and members of the Climate Change Member Working Group participated in workshops and were consulted throughout the process. The substantive Strategy was finalised in early December 2023. The draft Climate Change Strategy is scheduled to be taken to Cabinet on 07.02.24 and Full Council on 21.03.24.</p>		
5.	<p>From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</p>	<p>Why can't the council convert empty commercial properties into emergency accommodation, that way they would have an income and no expensive hotel costs?</p>
<p>Response:</p> <p>Using vacant commercial units as emergency residential accommodation is challenging for a number of reasons. Aside from the costs associated with converting the accommodation to meet the appropriate regulatory requirements, the change of use may require a planning permission. It is also often the case in multi-let commercial buildings that there are often specific clauses in other leases that restrict occupation of the commercial units, and that may prevent any change to residential use. Some commercial buildings may also not afford access during evenings and other periods when the building is closed. In addition, there are complications arising from the application of business rates, and if a commercial unit were to be converted to provide residential accommodation, there could be further costs associated with returning the unit to commercial use at some point in the future.</p> <p>It is therefore the view of the administration that commercial property is in general unlikely to provide high quality emergency residential accommodation due to the inherent constraints. If owners of commercial property would like to explore conversion to housing, we would urge them to apply for pre-planning advice on the individual scheme.</p>		
6.	<p>From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Why is there a property in Abbeydale being converted to house for immigrants, and not the people from Gloucester that could do with emergency accommodation?</p>
<p>Response:</p> <p>The building you refer to – which is owned and managed by Gloucestershire County Council – is being used to provide a short-term assessment and enabling setting for refugees leaving Home Office accommodation in Gloucestershire following a positive decision on their asylum case. The use of the building in this way by the county council will ensure that these refugees are supported to integrate into the community through developing learning and skills that will enable them to secure appropriate accommodation and employment to avoid them potentially sleeping rough in Gloucester.</p>		

7.	From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	Can you confirm that when the Eastgate Market moves out of the existing market hall into the Eastgate Shopping Centre that there will be no changes to the terms and conditions of stall holders?
Response:		
All commercial tenancies are subject to change and reasonable modernisation on renewal. The current market licences are 12 month licences and can be reviewed annually. Any changes are always negotiated with any tenant and this will be no different.		
8.	From Councillor Conder to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Noting that the Leader of the Council has recently agreed that £35,000 from Section 106 money will be spent on Hillfield Gardens, can we have a final statement of the allocation of Section 106 monies from the Glevum Green development in Kingsholm? ie how much is the total sum? Of the total, how much has been allocated to Kingsholm and what percentage of the total is that?
Response:		
The Section 106 funding received from the development of the former Civil Service club included; £1,626,000 Sports Mitigation contribution for the loss of the existing sports facilities at the Civil Service Club; £150,000 for improvements to Sebert Street play area; and £420,000 for the provision of sports facilities across the City. The total sum received was £2,196,000. The sports mitigation contribution (£1,626,000) has been allocated to the Blackbridge Sports Hub as stipulated in the Section 106 agreement. The open space contribution has been allocated to improvements to the play area at Sebert Street (£150,000). The contribution for the improvement of sports facilities across the City (£420,000) has been allocated to: The Council's Pitch Improvement Grant Scheme (£100,000); The renovation of the Oval tennis courts (£40,000); A Fitness Trail or other community capital works in Kingsholm (£35,000 – now allocated to path refurbishment in Hillfield Gardens); youth fitness equipment at Gloucester Park – Bakers Field (£45,000); and a contribution towards a BMX track at Armscroft Park (£200,000). Of the total received £185,000 has been committed to projects within Kingsholm; this figure represents 8.5% of the total or 32.5% of the total excluding the sports mitigation money (£1,626,000) which was specified for the development of the Blackbridge Sports Hub under the terms of the Section 106 agreement.		
9.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	<p>Following several polls I have put out to Gloucester Residents. The Poll that came back with the highest votes was:</p> <p>British Military Veterans to be housed first, then Gloucester Residents, with illegal immigrants last.</p> <p>Will Gloucester City Council look to follow the residents favourable option. And house our British military first and Gloucester residents?</p>
Response:		
British military veterans are given favourable terms within the HomeseekerPlus policy, as well as being supported by a range of other specialist organisations who work with veterans in Gloucester.		

	<p>The allocation of social housing provided by housing associations in Gloucester is detailed in the council's housing allocation policy – the HomeseekerPlus policy. The HomeseekerPlus policy - which has been adopted by the councils in partnership with all other Gloucester districts and West Oxfordshire District Council is a choice-based lettings scheme that is predicated on those households in the greatest need having the greatest priority for social housing with four priority bands – Emergency, Gold, Silver, and Bronze.</p> <p>The HomeseekerPlus policy clearly sets out the priority for allocations as well as eligibility and qualification for being allocated social housing as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 10 sets out in detail the eligibility requirements. • Section 11 sets out in detail the qualification criteria. • Paragraph 15.6 sets out that armed forces veterans are considered to have a local connection to a district of their choice in addition to other positive policy freedoms for armed forces veterans and their families. • Section 23 sets out in detail the criteria for banding decisions. <p>Migrants who do not have a legal right to remain in the country are <u>not</u> eligible for an allocation of social housing.</p>	
10.	From Councillor Field to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	What protections against unwanted development are afforded to Tuffley Park? Will it be considered for the Fields in Trust register?
	<p>Response:</p> <p>Tuffley Park, like other public open space within the city, is protected from development to alternative uses, in part or in whole, by a provision within the City Plan (Policy C3). The Government's National Policy Planning Framework (Paragraph 97) also ensures a similar level of protection to public open spaces. Although there are some exceptions to these provisions they would not currently apply in the case of Tuffley Park. The park is also offered further protection in respect of the wildflower areas, which were created with grant funding from the European Union, and must be maintained in their current form for a minimum of 7 years. It is not envisaged that there is any present threat of development at Tuffley Park which would justify the use of Council resource on pursuing Fields in Trust registration.</p>	
11.	From Councillor Dr Trimnell to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	The deterioration of the council's finances this financial year has led to the administration desperately looking for savings. What reassurance can you give to our staff that their livelihoods are not at risk?
	<p>Response:</p> <p>Local Government finance continues to be challenging for all Councils. This Council has just published a draft balanced budget for 2024/25 which will be debated in February. The Council will continue to look for ways to increase productivity and deliver any needed savings, and would always treat compulsory redundancies as a last resort.</p>	
12.	From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	A recent BBC analysis revealed that Gloucester City Council had debts of £102m. This equates to £769 per person in the city.
	<p>Do you consider this to be too high or about right?</p> <p>Response:</p>	

	<p>As per the article, Gloucester was reported as 206th in the country. The level of borrowing that the Council has is commensurate with the regeneration activities that the Council is undertaking to improve and support the long term well-being of the City.</p> <p>The levels of debt both now and in the future are monitored and reviewed regularly with the Treasury Management Strategy and Quarterly Reporting documents presented to the Audit & Governance Committee.</p> <p>I consider this to be the right amount of debt in light of the investment in the regeneration of the City and the benefits this will bring to city residents and businesses.</p>	
13.	From Councillor Wilson to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	How much does it currently cost to service this debt?
	Response:	
	The cost of servicing this debt is fixed at £2.6 million annually over the life of the individual loans, this forms part of the Councils annual revenue budget. <p>Levels of debt are reported in the Treasury Management updates provided quarterly to the Audit and Governance committee.</p>	
14.	From Councillor Castle to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	When are the Christmas light in Gloucester City centre going to be taken down?
	Response:	
	The tree was scheduled for removal on Friday 12 th January but the contractor has not been able to attend this year citing problems with resourcing. Council officers have therefore looked to safely fell and remove the tree using our own skilled teams. The high level lighting is in the process of being taken down and moved to storage and should only take a couple more weeks. Repairs to some of the lights were identified and as a result they were left insitu so that the storage facility could be cleared to enable sufficient space for those repairs to take place over the coming year, in time for reinstallation later in 2024. The lights are usually taken down over a 3 week period starting in the second week of January. This is now scheduled for week commencing 22 nd January.	
15.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	When does your administration plan to complete the council's audited accounts for the financial years of 2021/22 and 2022/23?
		Could the cabinet member also explain the reason behind the delay in completing these accounts.
	Response:	
	The Council is subject to the national delays regarding certification of statement of accounts, 65% of Councils' 2021/22 accounts remain unaudited as at November 2023. <p>In addition to the national certification issues, the Council has had the additional challenge of rebuilding its financial system following the cyber attack and rehydrating the finance system with all of the manual transactions before the finance team were able to start to generate the financial statements.</p>	

	I have committed for the first set of unaudited accounts to be published by the end of January and the second set in time for questions at March Council, prior to the pre-election period and the local elections.	
16.	From Councillor Pullen to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	How much has been spent on associated costs in keeping Herbert, Kimberly and Phillpotts warehouses empty since the council moved its offices out? Please include costs such as running costs, security, maintenance, repair and staffing.
	Response:	
	Day to day running costs are fairly minor as the staff that look after the premises are already employed by the Council across our estate and include checks as part of their broader daily remit. Everything that can be turned off has been, so those costs are minimal. Business rates are included with North Warehouse and as it is vacant, a section 44a certificate has been in place to help with relief on this element of the Docks buildings we own. The only isolated cost we have for HKP is the Docks service charge which currently stands at £61,874.16 for the 2023 service charge year.	
17.	From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	There are CIC city providers that allude to helping the homeless of Gloucester city and I am concerned about the treatment of some rough sleepers. What checks will the city council do to ensure the homeless are not being mistreated?
	Response:	
	If you have specific concerns relating to organisations operating in Gloucester, then these should be raised either with the appropriate governance organisation (for example the Charity Commission) or with council officers. Similarly, if you are aware of specific concerns regarding the 'treatment' of one of more rough sleepers please raise these direct with council officers, or the police if appropriate. Alternatively, you can signpost individuals sleeping rough to discuss directly with the countywide outreach and support service who engage with rough sleepers on a regular basis.	
18.	From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	What is the council doing to prevent the rear of North Warehouse in the docks being used as a car park?
	Response:	
	Physical barriers are being installed at the end of January 2024. They were scheduled for installation in December, however the Canals and Rivers Trust requested a delay so that they could use the quayside for their on land machinery required for dredging the North end of the main basin.	
19.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	Anti Social street drinking in Gloucester city centre has increased substantially, what is the cabinet member for communities going to do about it?
	Response:	
	Gloucester City Council adopts a engage, support and enforce approach to street based anti-social behaviour in City Centre such as street drinking. This approach acknowledges that these issues require a multi-agency partnership approach to ensure vulnerable individuals who require support are offered it at every opportunity and that enforcement action is only considered where engagement has been exhausted and behaviours continue to impact on others negatively. The City Council commissions a service through Gloucester BID to	

	<p>provide an 'on-street' presence through City Protection Officers (CPOs) who are the first responders to these issues. The CPOs engage with individuals engaging in these behaviours and will make necessary referrals to key partners such as P3, Change Grow Live and Streetlink. This engagement and offer of support will continue but should negative behaviours continue, individuals will receive warnings and/or have their alcohol removed by either CPOs or in partnership with the Police.</p> <p>An example of this 'no tolerance' approach was the recent Operation Ebrus, which was set up by the City Council in partnership with the police and City Protection Officers to address issues with anti-social street drinking. An intensive on-street presence by multi agency officers engaging with individuals and removing alcohol sent a very clear message to individuals who continued to ignore warnings and were negatively impacting others within the City Centre. This was a highly publicised and successful operation which is detailed more in the below link: Crackdown on Gloucester street drinking deemed a 'success' - BBC News</p> <p>Where individuals were and continue to be identified by partners to be causing alarm, harassment and distress they are referred to our dedicated anti-social behaviour (ASB) partnership, Solace. Solace investigate and take action where there is significant risk to victims or communities. The team have obtained multiple anti-social behaviour injunctions against individuals due to their continued and significant behaviours citywide. These anti-social behaviour injunctions are just one civil tool available to us, through the partnership, used where appropriate to control the behaviours of individuals impacting on others. Between January 2023 – January 2024 , Solace have investigated 59 high risk cases associated with on-street behaviours.</p>	
20.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	What is the timeline for installing a new tenant at The Club at Tuffley Park?
	<p>Response: The closing date for applications is the end of January through the Community Asset Transfer policy process. The intention is to appoint someone before May elections and the ward Councillor is welcome to be a part of the selection process.</p>	
21.	From Councillor Dr Trimnell to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	Please can you publicly confirm that the barriers to stop the unauthorised parking behind North Warehouse and in front of the the Main Basin are still scheduled to be erected by the end of this month (January 2024)?
	<p>Response: Yes.</p>	
22.	From Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure	<p>GL1 Leisure Centre and Oxstalls Sports Park suffered dramatic closures on the financial collapse of Aspire Trust.</p> <p>The sports facilities have now reopened with an interim provider.</p> <p>Could the cabinet member provide an update on progress being made so far to secure a long-term</p>

provider for these important sports facilities to include a project timeline?

Response:

The procurement of a new provider is progressing. Considerable preparatory works have been undertaken over the past 2 years following a Leisure options appraisal including:

- Jan 2023 – Detailed costed Condition Surveys undertaken of the leisure facilities
- Feb – April – Works commenced on gathering information for the tender specification
- May 2023 – the Gloucester Sports and Physical Activity Strategy 2023-2028 was published
- June – Sept 2023 – Development of Procurement strategy and Risk Allocation matrix
- December 2023 – an announcement was posted to alert leisure operators of the tender opportunity

The next steps are:

- Feb 2024 – formal invitation to tender will be published
- March 2024 – a ‘bidders day’ will be held to show potential operators the facilities and show the opportunity
- Feb – April – will be a period for the contractors to develop their bids and ask for clarifications should that be necessary
- April – May – Initial Tenders and Qualifying documentation submissions due
- July – Final tenders: Submitted
- August – Final tenders: Assessed
- September – Contract awarded
- Oct – Dec 2024 - Mobilisation period for operator
- Jan 2025 - Commencement of new contract

23. From Councillor Pullen to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

How much has the council spent on external consultants so far this financial year? Please include detail of each consultancy purpose and costs.

Response:

External Consultants provide specialist skills which are not always required full time and hence engaging with consultants is often the most cost-effective way of delivering projects for the Council and hence value for money for residents.

Total spend is £491k made up of:

Archaeological services	£12k
Blackbridge Land Valuation	£ 1k
CCTV Review Report	£ 3k
City Plan Graphic Design	£ 4k
Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan	£82k
Common Land Consultation	£ 5k
Commonplace Engagement Hub	£ 4k
Cremator replacement report	£ 2k
Ecological Reviews	£ 1k
Environmental Protection Certificates	£ 1k
GL1 Appraisal	£ 2k
Gloucester Growth Strategy drafting	£ 7k
Health & Safety documentation review	£ 5k

	Homeless Reviews	£ 7k																				
	Housing and Homelessness Partnership Review	£ 6k																				
	Independent Review of Circumstances	£19k																				
	IT Security Review	£12k																				
	IT Systems Integration	£34k																				
	IT Systems Support	£148k																				
	Land Charges Highways Consultations	£ 16k																				
	Landscape Consultancy	£ 5k																				
	Lease Renewals	£ 44k																				
	Leisure Contract Procurement	£ 43k																				
	LVA Review	£ 1k																				
	Marketing and Evaluation process Hempsted Meadows	£ 2k																				
	Preparation of Asset Management Strategy	£ 11k																				
	S106 Review	£ 7k																				
	SUDS Ponds Maintenance	£ 4k																				
	Survey inspection of the Westgate Range	£ 2k																				
	Translation/Interpretation	£4k																				
24.	From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	Please provide a list of all City Council owned properties that the city council provide free rent or charge a nominal reduced rent fee to (please include charities/ CIC etc) include the due diligence the City Council undertakes when providing companies including CICs with Council owned properties free of charge or for a nominal?																				
	Response: This is commercially sensitive information.																					
25.	From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	How much has the council spent on outsourced services so far this financial year? Please include detail of each contract.																				
	Response: Outsourcing provides access to a range of skills and expertise and is often the best way of delivering services with expertise and hence driving value for money for the Council and Gloucester residents. The Council has spent £9.7 million on outsourced services, the biggest element of this is the £7.5 million paid to Ubico for the provision of the Waste & Recycling Service. The full analysis is:																					
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Shared Services:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Communications Support</td> <td>£82k</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Human Resources</td> <td>£95k</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Internal Audit</td> <td>£81k</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Occupational Health</td> <td>£4k</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Payroll</td> <td>£28k</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Finance Systems Support</td> <td>£24k</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Recycling Commodities Sales</td> <td>£90k</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Building Control</td> <td>£28k</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Legal Services</td> <td>£273k</td> </tr> </table>		Shared Services:		• Communications Support	£82k	• Human Resources	£95k	• Internal Audit	£81k	• Occupational Health	£4k	• Payroll	£28k	• Finance Systems Support	£24k	• Recycling Commodities Sales	£90k	• Building Control	£28k	• Legal Services	£273k
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring Officer 	£50k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste & Recycling Service 	£7,481k
	Other:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking 	£283k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Support Work 	£13k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Enforcement Services 	£44k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contaminated Waste Removal 	£2k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contaminated Land Work 	£7k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Permitting 	£4k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stray Dog Services 	£6k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pest Control 	£14k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debt Recovery 	£75k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countryside Service Management 	£10k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Film Programming 	£2k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Works in Default 	£16k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Afghan Resettlement 	£165k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness Outreach 	£225k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness Hubs 	£81k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe Spaces Lost Rent 	£12k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Housing Support Service 	£231k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mail Services 	£8k
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail Property Management 	£300k
26.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>I have noted that the council are looking to reduce the group leaders councillor allowance by more than half. This huge deduction of over 50%.</p> <p>Would the cabinet member agree that by reducing the group leaders allowance by so much would mean they are not able to offer as much time and dedication in holding the city council and administration to account, therefore leading to unfair and unbalanced democracy in our city?</p>
	Response:	
	<p>My understanding is that the proposal, which has been made by the Independent Remuneration Panel to the Council, seeks to change the structure of allowance payments for Opposition Group Leader and Deputy Group Leader allowances to replace the current two opposition Group limit with a scheme that enables the payment of such allowances to any number of political Groups on the Council. The Panel has recommended that the allowance is made up of an equal element to recognise the equal contribution of post holders to the good governance of the Council and a second element that is based on the proportion of seats held by the Group, with three bands proposed. When added to the equal element, none of the bands proposed equate to a 50% reduction to the current allowance; the highest band represents an increase and the middle band is equivalent to the current allowance. Only Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders of Groups with 5 Members or fewer would receive an allowance that is less than the current allowance; however, under the current scheme they may not have received an allowance at all if there were two other larger Groups, so I consider this a positive change. I understand that the General Purposes Committee recommended the proposals to Council unamended and I am also content to support them.</p>	
27.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for	The council is likely to be transferring some land at Podsmead to GCH for the regeneration scheme.

Performance and Resources	How will the scheme give benefit back to this council and its residents, to compensate for the loss of this land, in terms of environmental, economic, social benefits, etc?
<p>Response:</p> <p>The agreement by the Council to transfer open space at Podsmead to Gloucester City Homes is a major step forward in delivering one of our long-held promises to bring investment and regeneration to the estate.</p> <p>Subject to securing planning permission, the development would see the construction of up to 177 new affordable homes as well as new retail, recreation and community facilities built along with enhanced areas of open space including a park and play area.</p> <p>The land would be sold to Gloucester City Homes at below market value as part of the council's contribution to the scheme.</p> <p>Among the benefits for residents are a revamped shopping area on Podsmead Road and a clearer pedestrian route linking Tuffley and Bristol Road to make it safer for people walking to school and accessing local sports pitches and parks.</p> <p>The development will honour the council's commitment to the environment and to addressing climate change by minimising energy usage in the construction methods and in the energy efficiency of the new homes.</p> <p>The development will also have a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) that takes account of biodiversity, water quality and flooding.</p>	
28. From Councillor Dr Trimnell to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Since being elected back in March 2023, I have found it frustrating that when making requests to the county's highway's team that more often than not my email doesn't get acknowledged let alone acted upon, please can the Leader of this Council tell me what can he do to improve the communication between members of this Council and that of the Gloucestershire County Council's Highway's department?
<p>Response:</p> <p>Highways is obviously a Gloucestershire County Council function and not the city council's role. That said, I have asked the highways team at the County Council for their advice. They recommend that all non urgent enquiries to the highways team are made via the Fix My Street reporting system FixMyStreet (gloucestershire.gov.uk) - this will ensure that all enquiries are captured, acknowledged as well as passed to the most appropriate officer to answer that enquiry. Emergency highways issues should be raised via the 08000 514 514 number and this is answered 24hrs, just bear with us in busy time such as the recent floods but we will get to you</p> <p>County Council officers have expressed their disappointment that your emails have not had a response. They have offered to investigate the matter further and offer you the opportunity to meet the Local Highways Manager for your area so better working relationships are developed. Should you wish to take this offer up, I will provide you with relevant contact details outside of this meeting.</p>	

29.	From Councillor Hilton to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Could you confirm how much money was allocated to the Fleece Hotel regeneration project from the government's Levelling Up scheme and how this funding has been allocated?
Response:		
<p>The initial Levelling Up grant fund allowance for the Fleece hotel was c.£6.3m. This was due to be spent by 31st March 2024 and was based on the development of the site by Dowdeswell Group. As you know, that interest fell away in early 2023. It then became evident that we would be unable to secure a new partner and deliver on the commitments made to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in our Levelling Up bid in the time available.</p> <p>With the agreement of DLUHC, we have reallocated this funding to the University of Gloucestershire City Centre Campus and the Forge (part of the Forum).</p> <p>We are now working with a new potential partner for the development of the Fleece Hotel and I hope to bring a recommendation on that to Cabinet in March. The Council will make a contribution to the development of the Fleece and will seek grant funding to further support its development.</p>		
30.	From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	Please can the Cabinet Member explain if the CIC that operates smiles cafe in a council owned building has been given a date when they need to vacate the building?
Response:		
They have a lease which expires in June 2024 with no automatic right to renew. No negotiations to extend this have been entered into and given the pending elections this year it is considered appropriate for any renewal negotiations to be pushed back until after the elections.		
31.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>With all the recent city council failures, such as market Gloucester, the huge financial City Council loss at The Club at Tuffley, the several millions of pounds of city council residents money lost at GL1 sports centre, the £1million pound loss of public residents money for the city council cyber attack where the council has been reprimanded as well as the closure of Longsmith Carpark for poor maintenance leading to safety concerns and loss of hundreds of thousands of pounds of parking income and now the very late financial accounts still not being released to the public..</p> <p>Would the cabinet member agree that management changes are needed at senior levels at the City Council?</p>
Response:		
No.		
32.	From Councillor Dr Trimmell to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Many have and continue to witness including myself an increase in the number of vehicles using the gate streets in the evenings often visiting takeaway premises and increasing the hazard to pedestrians who are also using the streets, please can the Leader of this Council tell me what action can be taken to stop this escalation of vehicles from

		happening when the barrier goes down in the evening?
	Response:	
	<p>Enforcement of Parking Regulations on the Gate Streets is a County Council function. Parking on the Gate Streets is not permitted at any time, but Parking Enforcement Officers (employed by County Council) are not in operation at night. At our (City) request, an element of evening enforcement has started to take place on the gate streets, which has proven very effective (as and when enforcement takes place). However, due to limited resources, County Council is only able to deploy Enforcement Offices on a limited number of evenings.</p> <p>We have since make another request to the Gloucestershire County Council Parking Team to increase the frequency of enforcement in the evening and they are currently trying to find a way to accommodate our request.</p>	
33.	From Councillor A. Chambers to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment	Has there been several fires at Eastern Avenue Úbico site over the course of the last 18 months?
	Response:	
	<p>Following the transfer to Ubico, the safe systems of work were reviewed, and additional mitigations were put in place around the baling process. Since April 2022 when Ubico took over there has been 8 events involving fire within the baling system, two of which required the fire service to attend site.</p> <p>Following these two fires, the incidents were investigated, and further mitigations were put in place including additional formal training, monthly 'dry runs', regular observations from the health and safety team and increased picking of the inflammable material from the sorting line prior to baling. Since the updating of the SSOW there have been 3 flash events (small fires) inside the baler and the fire service has not been required to attend.</p> <p>Risk of fire is an industry wide issue in the sort and baling of steel and is associated normally with aerosols that have not been completely emptied. The waste industry is constantly trying to tackle the problem via public information, influencing legislation, and consultation with manufacturers. The Council regularly runs social media and website communications around the safe recycling of batteries and aerosols, which tend to be the biggest contributing factors in baler fires. The Environment Agency makes regular visits to Eastern Avenue to check that adequate risk assessments and SSOW (safe systems of work) are in place.</p>	