

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 |
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| 1. | From Councillor S. Chambers to the Cabinet Member for Housing | I note that you currently work as Homeseeker plus coordinator at Tewkesbury borough council and the Homeseeker policy is one of your responsibilities within your cabinet portfolio here at Gloucester. How do you intend on managing this conflict of interest? |
| | Response: | |
| | On the 1st May 2024 I changed jobs and the homeseekerplus coordinator role and responsibilities reverted back to the lead authority which is the Forest of Dean District Council. I no longer have any dealings with the role and therefore no conflict of interest. | |
| 2. | From Councillor S. Chambers to Cabinet Member for Environment | Following the report of another fly tip on Naas Lane this morning will the cabinet member look at installing temporary cameras to help catch and deter the culprits. |
| | Response: | |
| | The Enviro-crime team currently consists of only two officers, so they must prioritise their time and resources to address problems that are most likely to deliver results and reduce waste-related issues. Cameras can effectively capture fly-tipping offenses, but they require significant resources to install and analyse. | |
| | We use a third-party contractor to relocate cameras, which incurs substantial costs. Once an offence is recorded, it takes several hours for an officer to review the footage and identify the offender. | |
| | With just two officers, this is not always feasible for every fly-tipping incident, which is why prioritisation is necessary. If the problem persists on Naas Lane and the team considers CCTV a viable solution, a camera can be temporarily installed there. Please continue to report incidences of fly-tipping to the council. | |
| 3. | From Councillor Pullen to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration | Could the Leader please give an update on progress towards the proposed sale of Gloucestershire Airport? |
| | Response: | |

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| | <p>The Liberal Democrat manifesto ‘Putting the Heart back into Gloucester’ on which we won the local elections states that the council will “continue support for Gloucestershire Airport to remain an important aviation and high-tech business hub that provides for locally based skilled employment”.</p> <p>The administration has been considering the option to put the airport up for sale or not and we are now carrying our investigations into the pros and cons in order to make such a decision, that has included a visit to the airport to meet the senior management.</p> | |
| 4. | From Councillor Pullen to the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement | It is understood that The Gateway (Customer Services) is to move to the Eastgate Centre. Exactly where will it be located, how will the public access the service and what days and times will it be open? |
| <p>Response:</p> | | |
| <p>A members update was issued on 10 July 2024 to confirm that Gloucester City Council’s appointment area moved from The Gateway to Eastgate Shopping Centre earlier this month.</p> <p>Pre-booked face-to-face appointments for council services are being held at the new facility located on the first floor of the Eastgate shopping centre, opposite the main council offices, from Monday 15 July.</p> <p>The Gateway previously allowed residents to arrange to see staff if their query could not be resolved over the phone or by email. Residents will be informed of the new location should they require a face-to-face appointment.</p> <p>The new appointment area will offer the same service as The Gateway. The space will include a dedicated appointment area with two private rooms and a bank of hot desks. There will be pre-bookable appointments available initially on a Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon with some flexibility for services to book appointments outside of these times, should they be required. The move will make it easier for those residents that require a face-to-face appointment with closer parking, lift access, and a more central location nearer public transport hubs, as well as making it easier for officers to support more complex customer queries, and is set to save taxpayers around £80,000 annually in reduced running costs.</p> <p>Since the pandemic, the appointment system brought in to reduce waiting times has seen the need for a large appointment area fall, as demand for face-to-face appointments has dropped sharply.</p> <p>The majority of residents who contact the council say they prefer to do it over the phone, online or by email, with just 81 face to face appointments being booked out of a potential 600 available slots since May 2023, and only 68 appointments being attended.</p> <p>The change has also improved the service for both staff and residents, with the number of reports of abuse towards staff reduced, and improved customer confidentiality.</p> <p>The public will continue to have access to a direct dial free telephone in the lobby area of The Gateway at this time whilst a telephone pod for the new location is being installed. This new freephone will be located under the stairs on the ground floor of Eastgate shopping centre, to provide a level of privacy</p> | | |

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| | <p>for those using it. This telephone will enable the public to access services during the times of Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Fri 9am – 5pm and Wed 10am – 5pm.</p> <p>The new appointment area will be signposted within the shopping centre.</p> | |
| 5. | <p>From Councillor A. Chambers to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources</p> | <p>Can the City council immediately release the missing accounts that they have held from the public for every year that the accounts have not been made public? The public have a right to know the financial position.</p> |
| <p>Response:</p> <p>The financial position of the Council has been reported quarterly to O&S and the Cabinet via the Financial Monitoring and Outturn reports, most recently at the Overview & Scrutiny Meeting of 1st July 2024. Although previously promised before the local elections, the knock-on effect of the cyber-attack has led to a significant quantum of data having to be re-populated into the financial systems to allow for the completion of the formal financial statements of the Council for the years 2022-23 and 2023-24. The 2022-23 financial statements will be published for the September A&G Committee with the 2023-24 to follow.</p> | | |
| 6. | <p>From Councillor A. Chambers to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources</p> | <p>Can the city council immediately disclose as public interest exactly how much of tax payers money was lost at the club at Tuffley?:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lost/unpaid rent 2. Lost utilities 3. Damages to the building which require works 4. Required roof repairs 5. Legal costs 6. Cost of lost rent payments of the building being empty for last year 7. Lost council tax payments for the duration and since the building has been empty/ 8. any other lost costs/ <p>N.B Please separate all associated costs listed above with reference numbers 1 to 8 for identifying costs</p> |
| <p>Response:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lost/unpaid rent: £43,388.15 2. Lost utilities: £62,330.83 3. Damages to the building which require works: £5,000 approximately 4. Required roof repairs: £25,000-£50,000 (to be confirmed once a full specification has been received) 5. Legal costs: within the overall budget resource for legal services provided to the Council by One Legal 6. Cost of lost rent payments of the building being empty for last year £9,000 7. Lost council tax payments for the duration and since the building has been empty. £0 <p>No Council tax is payable on a commercial premises.</p> <p>The tenant received full Small Business Rate Relief until 31/03/23. Then the ratable value increased and he had a charge to pay, although he didn't make any payments. The charge would have been £600 for the previous financial year. This was then calculated pro-rata when he vacated in August 2023. The balance</p> | | |

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| | was reduced to £221.31. The Council obtained a liability order from the Magistrates Court for this debt which added £60 costs. | |
| 8. | From Councillor Millard to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure | Does the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure agree that the cost of entry to the recent Tall Ships Festival was far too expensive for many families in Gloucester and prevented them from attending this event? |
| Response: | | |
| <p>Some of the feedback received by the council suggests that the cost of entry proved too expensive for some people.</p> <p>We are living in a cost-of-living crisis which, alongside the rise in prices for consumers, means that providing these large-scale events for free or minimal entry price becomes increasingly difficult. Since the pandemic, event infrastructure costs have increased exponentially, whilst funding and sponsorship have at best remained at a standstill. Many festivals and large-scale events across the country are being cancelled with organisers ceasing operations entirely.</p> <p>Tall Ships Festival has very high base costs to run even a basic version of the event and without a financial foundation of statutory, charitable, or private funding, it would have been irresponsible to run the event without a method for recouping costs as bringing the production of the event in-house for the first time meant that Gloucester City Council was in effect the event's underwriter. The production timescale was short, so alternative funding sources were not available to offset costs.</p> <p>To run the event at all, Officers determined that paid ticketed entry was the only possible model that could cover event overheads. It is important to note that this paid entry model is not a money-making exercise but a loss-minimising one. This is not an entirely new model – organisers of Tall Ships Festival charged for entry on previous occasions, sometimes just for access to ships, sometimes for access to the site.</p> <p>Prices sought to balance affordability with income generation that could meet the cost of staging the event. It should be noted that children aged six and below could attend for free, meaning families with young children could pay as little as £14 for entry. In comparison to other day festivals and family experiences, Tall Ships Festival's ticket spread was priced as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PuttPutt Social Gloucester – 9 holes of crazy golf for 1 adult and 3 kids: £24.50 • McDonalds - order of 2 happy meals and 2 big macs delivered: £25.92 • Three Counties Food Festival – basic day family ticket (sessions in addition): £31 • Tall Ships Festival – starting family price (1 adult, 3 U18s (not inc. U6s) – ships additional): £32.30 • Nathan Evans (Tall Ships headliner) at The Garage – 4 tickets to single gig: £60 • 2000 Trees Festival (Cheltenham) – 4 day tickets (1 adult, 3 U13s): £95 • App Fest (Tewkesbury) – family day ticket: £100 <p>There is much to learn from the Council's first experience of producing this event in house and officers are preparing a detailed analysis including customer and</p> | | |

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| | <p>resident feedback to provide recommendations on running future similar events. It is right that we always look to improve, and we can assume that any price will always be a barrier to some. To address this, the culture team are actively looking at targeted access schemes, which could include offering free tickets through community groups and charities, and discounted tickets through schemes such as Blue Light Card, NUS and Days Out Guide. These will be announced as they launch. The next Tall Ships event/programmes will be held in 2027 to celebrate the bicentenary of Gloucester Docks. This longer production period will enable the Council to diversify the bicentenary's funding.</p> | |
| 9. | <p>From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</p> | <p>How is the disabled parks motion progressing that the independents moved for all Gloucester City Parks to be all inclusive by 2026?</p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>The motion referred to by Cllr O'Donnell was passed in March this year and requested the city council to establish a city-wide play strategy which pledges to provide large, well equipped, and accessible play areas for all children of all abilities by December 2026, with a commitment that inclusivity be at the heart of all future playground design.</p> <p>The Council has committed to establishing this play strategy by December 2026 - it will form part of the new Open Spaces Strategy which is due to be adopted in 2026 after the current one ends. In the meantime, any new play areas due for development before December 2026 will incorporate elements of inclusivity.</p> <p>Development of the new Open Spaces Strategy, which will include this play strategy, will commence in 2025 – it's an extensive piece of work and will involve a review of all our existing policies and procedures.</p> | |
| 10. | <p>From Councillor James to the Cabinet Member for Environment</p> | <p>Why are Council contractors UBICO unable to produce a weed spraying schedule for 2024, despite this being available in previous years?</p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>We have never been able to produce an accurate weed spraying schedule because the service is weather dependent. Normally we would carry out the first spray at the end of March/early April, but the wet and windy weather in both April and May prevented that happening this year. Spraying commenced in May and Ubico were making good progress with some staff working overtime at weekends.</p> <p>Unfortunately there was some more rain at the start of July so this delayed things slightly again.</p> <p>I will be pushing to get the weeds cleared and the streets looking tidy again as soon as possible.</p> | |
| 11. | <p>From Councillor Bell to the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement</p> | <p>In Tuffley & Grange, young and old struggle to get doctors appointments and have to travel far to get medical access and treatment. Can Gloucester city council look into discussions with Gloucestershire County Council, NHS and other relevant stake holders to consider a new doctor's surgery at Tuffley & Grange?</p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>The City Council does not have direct influence on the provision of additional GP services however, we will ask that this matter is discussed at the September</p> | |

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| | <p>Integrated Locality Partnership Meeting (ILPs). Gloucester ILP is a partnership comprising of the City Council, NHS, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, housing, and communities, aimed at bringing services together and planning how they are delivered to local populations.</p> <p>Just to note: Aspen Medical Practice at 38 Warwick Avenue, Grange, GL4 0SL, is currently accepting new patients and residents are asked to contact them at 01452 337733 for appointments.</p> | |
| 12. | From Councillor Marshall to the Cabinet Member for Environment | <p>Does the Cabinet Member for Environment agree that the fly tipping in Barton and Tredworth is completely out of control?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Although Barton and Tredworth has the highest reported fly-tipping issues among all wards, the problem remains manageable and is definitely not 'out of control.' Several factors explain the high number of incidents: 95% of the properties in the ward lack off-road parking facilities and approximately 20% of the properties do not have a frontage, opening directly onto the pavement. This means that storing excess waste on the property is not straightforward for many households in the ward.</p> <p>Compared to other wards, Barton and Tredworth has the fewest cars per household, making residents less likely to transport excess waste to the Household Recycling Centre. Additionally, it is the most populated ward in the city, leading to a proportionally higher number of fly-tipping incidents per household. The ward also has a high level of transient residents, necessitating continuous education and empowerment efforts on waste management.</p> <p>Resources are allocated accordingly to address these issues. For instance, despite the enviro-crime team having only two officers, each officer spends one day a week on the ground proactively identifying waste-related issues, rather than waiting for incidents to be reported via the Contact Centre. A significant portion of these two days is dedicated to this ward.</p> <p>In summary, while the issue is challenging due to the reasons provided, it is certainly not out of control at this stage.</p> |
| 13. | From Councillor Gravells to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources | <p>As I was unable to obtain answers to these questions about the events which led to the closure of The Club at Tuffley Park at the recent O&S Committee mtg , please can the Cabinet Member respond to the following questions here?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What were the final arrears run up by the previous tenant please ? 2. And between which dates? 3. How much has been recovered so far? 4. What sort of financial deposit were we holding when the tenancy began? 5. How much of that deposit is still held by the council? 6. Was the property taken back in the same condition as it was when it was first let? 7. Who at the council was aware that the Club was in financial difficulties and when? |

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| | | 8. And was the status of the Tenant – i.e. a Ltd Co? a Sole Trader? |
| | Response: | |
| | 1. What were the final arrears run up by the previous tenant please? Rent arrears were £43,388.15. | |
| | 2. And between which dates? 21/06/2021 to 23/06/2023. | |
| | 3. How much has been recovered so far? None so far: the arrears are partially covered under the Coronavirus Act limiting our ability to take action. | |
| | 4. What sort of financial deposit were we holding when the tenancy began? None | |
| | 5. How much of that deposit is still held by the council? Not Applicable | |
| | 6. Was the property taken back in the same condition as it was when it was first let? A series of improvements were made by the tenant during his occupation. | |
| | 7. Who at the council was aware that the Club was in financial difficulties and when? The first contact was the tenant refusing to engage with Asset Management staff when demands for rent were sent and not paid. | |
| | 8. And was the status of the Tenant – i.e. a Ltd Co? a Sole Trader? It is a Community Interest Company (CIC) | |
| 14. | From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Cabinet Member for Environment | Recently there has been an increase of complaints about dog waste bins not being emptied and being left until overflowing. Why has this started happening so much? |
| | Response: | |
| | In the first quarter of 2023 we received seven complaints about overflowing litter and dog bins, but in the same quarter of 2024 we did not receive any. | |
| | It is important if a complaint is being made by residents it is recorded through Customer Services and logged centrally. This will allow us to monitor and improve the service. | |
| | All our litter and dog waste bins are now digitally mapped, and emptying crews are recording whether they are empty, half full, full or overflowing. This greater level of information will allow us to improve the service and make better use of available resources. | |
| 15. | From Councillor Miller to the Cabinet Member for Environment | Given the benefits that outside activity, exercise and fresh air can bestow to people's mental and physical health will you be supporting 'Love Parks' week which runs from 24 th July-2 nd Aug? How? |
| | Response: | |
| | We are very proud of our parks in Gloucester and we should love them all year round! | |

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| | <p>Gloucester Park has recently secured Green Flag status which is thanks to hard work from council staff, partners, volunteers and residents.</p> <p>I am very supportive of Love Parks Week and will be happy to attend anything that I am able to. The council will be promoting the week via its social media channels and on its website. We are also running a poster competition in Gloucester primary schools, on an anti-littering theme. The two best designs will be made up into posters to go up in our parks, and there are a number of prizes for the winners. Our aim is to spread the message that littering is not ok, is bad for wildlife and the environment in general, and is not acceptable in Gloucester.</p> | |
| 16. | <p>From Councillor Lewis to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration</p> | <p>With the proposed role of Cabinet Advisor for special projects, don't you agree it is the right for the people of Gloucester to be able to ask questions of that person, as they are paying for the post-holder to receive an allowance?</p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>It will be for Council to determine whether a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) is payable for the role. In proposing that an allowance is payable, the Independent Remuneration Panel, whose views the Council is required to have regard to, has recommended that the post-holder does not answer public questions because it is not a Cabinet position and has no decision-making powers. This is also consistent with the Council's Constitution, which states that only Cabinet Members and Chairs of Committees are expected to answer questions from Councillors or the public. There are a number of other Member roles that receive an SRA, but are not required to answer questions in a public forum.</p> <p>The General Purposes Committee has recommended to Council that the postholder report periodically to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> | |
| 17. | <p>From Councillor Brooker to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</p> | <p>How did the Tall Ships Festival do this year?</p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>The aim of this year's Tall Ships Festival was to celebrate Gloucester's global connections as a port while addressing feedback from previous festivals that the event content was lacklustre. The approach was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the cultural programme to appeal to a wider audience focusing on a live music and performance programme and the offer for families. • Generate enough income through ticket sales to meet costs since the council had committed to underwriting the cost of the event. • Launch a new brand for the festival alongside a wide-ranging marketing and communications campaign to introduce the festival to a larger audience across the West of England. <p>On the aim of broadening the audience and programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees were able to enjoy more than fifty available performances and experiences from nationally and internationally recognised artists, as well as some of the best local emerging artists who featured on the Crane Stage. • Over 17,000 people attended the festival. Of these, over 25% of tickets were for attendees under 18 and over 50% of attendees were families, suggesting there is a sizeable appetite for a high-quality version of Tall Ships Festival with a stronger cultural line-up. <p>On the financial position and economic impact:</p> | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The festival's income and expenditure position is still being reconciled with invoices and remittances coming in. The final position should be able to be reported in early Autumn. • The ticket sale pattern was broadly in line with the post-pandemic industry norm of late booking, with a huge number of sales in the final two weeks and over the festival weekend. • There were significant visitor economy benefits to running this event. Footfall measured at key attractions including Gloucester Quays, Eastgate Shopping Centre and Kings Walk show an average 25% increase compared to the same period in 2023. <p>On the new brand and marketing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer feedback was very positive about the colours, icons, website, social media content, flags and banners. This brand will form the foundation for brand development as we move towards the 200th anniversary of Gloucester Docks in 2027. • We achieved fantastic press coverage for the city with photo stories in regional and national newspapers and live TV broadcasts from the BBC and ITV West Country. The PR campaign produced over 9 million opportunities to see the city and event. • The marketing campaign reached nearly 2 million people across our region, placing ads and posts for a high-quality Gloucester-focused event in front of a market of interested potential visitors. Events like these are important to changing perceptions of Gloucester, giving us great scope for attracting bigger audiences to other city events, to our visitor economy businesses, and our cultural organisations' programmes. | |
| 18. | From Councillor Patel to the Cabinet Member for Environment | Has the council scrapped the weeding schedule for the city? If not, can the schedule be provided to myself and all the other members as soon as possible please? |
| | Response: | |
| | It is not possible to provide a schedule for weed spraying as it is a weather dependent service. Normally we would begin at the end of March/early April but this year spraying was unable to commence until the 21 st May due to the wet and windy weather in April and May. For this reason it is impossible to produce an accurate schedule for the service. | |
| 19. | From Councillor Walker to the Cabinet Member for Environment | As a new Councillor for Abbeydale residents are very concerned that litter is not collected before overgrown grass is mown. This oversight leads to chopped up litter being spread over a wide area. Can I be assured that litter will be collected first before future mowings? |
| | Response: | |
| | Grass is cut by either a tractor or ride on mowers. This year, the grass has grown quickly due to warm, wet conditions, making litter difficult to see when the grass is so long. | |
| | We ask all operatives to do the best they can to avoid cutting up litter and if complaints are received, we will deploy a crew to litter pick. | |
| 20. | From Councillor Pullen to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration | Will the Leader revert back to verbal questions at council and cabinet meetings and rescind the requirement for both members and the public to put written questions forward in advance of meetings? |
| | Response: | |

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| | <p>In my capacity as Chair of the General Purposes Committee, I invited members of that Committee to put forward suggestions for changes to the Constitution at its meeting on Monday 15 July. Proposals for changes to the current rules around questions at Council and Cabinet meetings were put forward and this proposal is being debated at the Council meeting on 18th July.</p> | |
| 21. | <p>From Councillor A. Chambers to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources</p> | <p>Will the city council please stop providing alcohol, Prosecco, noseco served in champagne flutes and buffet banquettes to the city councillors during a cost of living crisis paid for by the Gloucester tax payer?</p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>Yes. Although this was not a decision I made, the event this question refers to was a one-off training session for new members to give them the opportunity to meet and liaise with council officers in an informal setting. There are no plans to hold any similar events in the future and I do not expect Prosecco to be served at any other council functions.</p> | |
| 22. | <p>From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement</p> | <p>How is the night shelter motion progressing that the independents moved for all Gloucester City to have a night shelter?</p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>The motion agreed by Council on 16 November 2023 sought that officers work with partners to provide a night shelter to help meet the needs of rough sleepers.</p> <p>Every night during the month of March 2024, the council in partnership with the Cavern provided open access accommodation to all rough sleepers in Gloucester. This was funded through additional DLUHC (now MHCLG) grant funding specifically for this purpose. The take up for this trial approach from rough sleepers has provided useful data to measure whether the offer of open access accommodation may in the future provide positive outcomes for individuals alongside the continuing Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) accommodation that is provided during periods of severe weather including extreme cold winter weather. The information is being reviewed and further options considered, including the development of plans to establish instant access provision in a broader range of accommodation types (such as shared properties or single unit properties).</p> <p>Where individuals sleeping rough are considered to be in priority need (as set out in the relevant legislation) the council has obligations to provide accommodation and therefore these individuals will have been offered accommodation by the council.</p> <p>The council continues to provide a range of support and other interventions to assist rough sleepers access housing opportunities and move away from the street, and ending rough sleeping remains a key priority for the council moving forward.</p> | |
| 23. | <p>From Councillor Bell to the Cabinet Member for Planning</p> | <p>The Whaddon housing development is causing great concern with regards to the planning aspect to Tuffley & Grange. We as residents are against it. As it's such a major development, which will cause a variety of local issues mainly traffic problems, such as congestion, can there be a public consultation in partnership with Stroud District Council to discuss these concerns?</p> |

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| | <p>Response:</p> <p>Stroud District Council are the planning authority for the application on this site. Gloucester City Council have been consulted on this application and submitted an objection on 11 March 2024, with the reason for the objection being traffic impacts. As this is a live planning application it would not be appropriate for the City Council to undertake public consultation in partnership with Stroud District Council, as to do so may interfere with a statutory process. However, this application is still 'live' and people are currently able to comment on it. The planning reference is S.23/2428/OUT and yourself and other residents can raise your concerns in writing to Stroud District Council.</p> | |
| 24. | <p>From Councillor Gravells Cabinet Member for Environment</p> | <p>At a council meeting earlier this year, I was told that "The Council is currently identifying and mapping open spaces under its management. Once this process has been completed mapping information will be available for ward members to access. This will include distinguishing hedges owned by the authority and those managed by the City Council on behalf of the County council".</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member please,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me when this mapping exercise began, and when will it be completed by please, if it's not completed already? • Confirm that this exercise is looking at all the paths, cyclepaths, open spaces, and so on, so that the public and councillors will know easily and accurately which areas and paths and cycle paths etc will be maintained by the city council and the county council on a regular ongoing basis, i.e. how frequently. • In Abbeydale and in Abbeymead this is an issue which is raised frequently by members of the public with the area's four councillors. Hopefully this exercise will make it very clear once and for all, which council - city or county - is responsible for keeping the paths and cyclepaths clear and passable, clear of overgrowth and other obstructions, so that the paths and cycle paths will be passable and easy to walk through or cycle along in these two great areas of Gloucester. At the moment, with this continuous long spell of rain, the hedges and brambles are growing like crazy and need a lot of attention and cutting back. Is the Cabinet Member happy to attend a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny committee please, along with Ubico, and City council staff, to share with the Councillors on the Scrutiny Committee how the grounds maintenance contract is being monitored and |

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| | | what the Key Performance Indicators are revealing please? |
| | Response: | |
| | <p>The digital mapping exercise started in October 2020 and was completed in 2021 in time for the transition to Ubico in 2022. The purpose was to identify the land ownership of Gloucester City Council, Gloucester City Homes and Gloucestershire County Council to enable the services delivered by the Council for these other agencies to be appropriately costed and resourced. The initial mapping exercise to complete this project is complete but the mapping is continually updated as new information is provided such as adopted land on new developments.</p> <p>The mapping focuses on areas which require ground maintenance services including trees, hedges, bushes and grass. It identifies the cutting or maintenance schedules for each area mapped.</p> <p>Currently the information is available to Customer Services, Ubico and the Open Spaces Team. The ambition is to enable use of simplified maps for members and the public but there is no timeline for that functionality at the moment.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member is happy to attend O&S to discuss this work should the Committee decide that would be useful.</p> | |
| 25. | From Councillor Chambers-Dubus to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources | Who is responsible for maintaining the flower beds and carpark around North Warehouse? |
| | Response: | |
| | The Council is, and a contractor has been engaged to quote for the summer maintenance works with a view for works being completed by the end of July 2024. | |
| 26. | From Councillor Lewis to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration | Do you as leader that it is your duty to attend civic events as the other leaders going back hundreds of years, and can you give the people of Gloucester the assurance that you will do your duty in this regard? |
| | Response: | |
| | <p>The executive arrangements, which created the leader and cabinet model was the result of the Local Government Act 2000. It is therefore not hundreds of years old as you suggest.</p> <p>Under this model my main responsibilities are to deal with the political and executive leadership of this council, which I intend to do to the best of my ability.</p> <p>Civic leadership lies with the Mayor and Sheriff.</p> | |
| 27. | From Councillor Patel to the Cabinet Member for Environment | <p>At the council meeting on 25th January 2024, the leader of the council raised an important motion on tackling the rise in graffiti/tagging problem across the city.</p> <p>It was agreed that the current policy on dealing with graffiti would be reviewed. Almost 6 months on, can the leader please provide a progress update on the review?</p> |
| | Response: | |

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| | <p>For clarity, it should be noted that the Leader was the Leader of the Opposition when this motion was proposed.</p> <p>The Council recognises that there is a need to update our approach to dealing with graffiti within the city, and following the motion has reviewed the current provision.</p> <p>Currently, the aim is to clear graffiti as quickly as possible, but we must bear in mind the restrictions associated with private premises. If the graffiti is offensive, it can be removed the same day if reported before 1pm on a working day.</p> <p>Offensive graffiti is any wording or imagery that causes offense such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • racial • offensive language • religiously insulting, or inciting in nature • hate statements • graphically explicit images of a sexual or violent nature <p>Officers are considering what other methods can be used in addition to the current provision, by investigating what is in place at neighbouring districts and other regional examples. To date, officers have not progressed conversations outside of the organisation due to restrictions that are in place during the two recent pre-election periods.</p> <p>Follow-up meetings will be scheduled based on availability over the coming weeks. I intend to drive this issue forward as one of my priorities, and will be investigating all available means of improving the service.</p> | |
| 28. | From Councillor A. Chambers to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration | Will the Leader take to General Purposes Committee the request to re-instate the verbal off the cuff questions to the full city council meetings as they promised they would over and over again last year when in opposition? |
| Response: | | |
| In my capacity as Chair of the General Purposes Committee, I invited members of that Committee to put forward suggestions for changes to the Constitution at its meeting on Monday 15 July. Proposals for changes to the current rules around questions at Council and Cabinet meetings were put forward and this proposal is being debated at the Council meeting on 18 th July. | | |
| 29. | From Councillor O'Donnell to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure | Will Gloucester city council look to make savings of city council rented buildings to sub letting providers so that culture and media that the city council does in house can be managed better to make a profit instead of the significant loss the city council makes on offerings such as the Guild Hall and Black Friars which loses the residents to Gloucester City Council approximately £600,000 a year even after income generated and grants and funds are taken into account? |
| Response: | | |
| The Council's position on this hasn't changed since this was raised in the budget review in February. The Council has no current plans to outsource the running of cultural venues like Gloucester Guildhall and Blackfriars Priory to external providers. The Council continues to follow the recommendations of the Culture and Leisure Management Options Appraisal brought to Cabinet in May 2022 that | | |

recommended culture services should remain an in-house service, and that leisure services should be tendered out to a multi-site operator.

Whilst running cultural venues results in a cost to the Council, this should not be viewed as a loss. The Council makes a budget allowance to invest in culture in the city to make it a great place to live, work and study, and enrich people's lives.

This investment in culture results in:

- 50+ directly employed jobs
- support for many cultural organisations and creative projects in the city
- 1000+ events either supported and/or directly delivered
- over 750,000 objects managed in the city's museum collection
- hundreds of thousands of audience members and participants in cultural activity with all of the wellbeing, mental health and community cohesion benefit that activity brings.
- economic impact. Nationally, every pound invested in culture results in over £5 delivered back to the wider economy, through hospitality, accommodation, tourism and other sectors.
- additional government investment in and statutory funding for Gloucester, for example
 - Successful bid to Levelling Up Round 3 for the Greyfriars Quarter which has a cultural focus
 - Gloucester's status as an Arts Council England Priority Place, increasing the number of National Portfolio Organisations in the city from 1 to 4 from April 2023. In 2023-24, the total value of grants awarded by Arts Council England to individuals and organisations in Gloucester was £2,517,311.

In fact, Blackfriars Priory is currently on a positive financial trajectory in line with its business plan and is projected to make a net profit by 2027-28. In addition to this, the venue is owned by English Heritage and leased to the Council, the terms of which prevent it from being sub-let to another entity.

Gloucester Guildhall is an Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), receiving annual funding of £250,000, which is not transferable to another provider. The new business plan for the Guildhall brought to Cabinet yesterday sets out our goals for the next 5 years, the first of which is to reduce the percentage of turnover provided by GCC as subsidy. The venue makes a significant contribution to the city's cultural sector and our communities, especially since becoming an NPO, which supports the development of participation and engagement activities for families with young children, young people aged 18-25, over 50s and displaced communities.

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| 30. | From Councillor Bell to the Cabinet Member for Environment | Tuffley & Grange needs to be provided a weed & litter pick time table. Residents are annoyed at the grass and weed work that is adhoc. Strimmers cut the grass and leave large sections for the lawn mower and vice versa. It means the grass areas never look tidy. They are either strimmed but not lawn mowed or lawn mowed and not strimmed. Please could you provide such a time table? |
| Response: | | |
| Grass cutting is carried out by the ride on mowers on a 15-20 day cycle and strimming only takes place twice a year. This is in accordance with the contract. For this reason, cutting and strimming will never be perfectly synchronised. | | |

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| | <p>Litter picking takes place once a fortnight in most areas. In areas of higher footfall, the frequency is increased according to need and available resource.</p> <p>Weed spraying is underway in the city and crews are making good progress now. This service is weather dependant and cannot take place during wet or windy weather which is why any schedule would not be accurate and is not provided. The service did not start until June this year due to the adverse weather conditions in April and May. If residents wish to know whether their area has been sprayed this information is available.</p> | |
| 31. | <p>From Councillor Gravells Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources</p> | <p>Earlier this year I was told: “The current parking orders for our car parks only allow for vehicles to be unoccupied..... to enable motorhomes to be occupied in our car parks overnight we would need to change permissions from a car park to a campsite and this would require additional planning approvals and a change to the car park orders”.</p> <p>In the light of this will the new Cabinet member be prepared please to review that ruling, with a view to making it easier and more welcoming for visitors in motorhomes to visit Gloucester and stay overnight for a few days to visit not just the city, but the great neighbouring towns and villages right here on our doorstep. I’m sure this would increase the number of visitors to Gloucester quite a bit, and that would be beneficial to our city’s businesses, small and large. And can the Cabinet member find a legal way to achieve this please which avoids reclassifying a car park as a camp site which I was told would need to happen, and which sounds bonkers to me!</p> |
| | <p>Response: A review of the parking orders is anticipated to take place by the end of 2024 for a variety of items.</p> | |
| 32. | <p>From Councillor Lewis to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration</p> | <p>At what stage are the plans for the new market at and have the traders been consulted yet?</p> |
| | <p>Response: The new administration has been supportive of the Greyfriars Regeneration Project (which includes a new market) since its inception.</p> <p>As you will recall, Gloucester City Council were ‘provisionally awarded’ levelling up grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) for regeneration works in the Greyfriars Quarter (including the development of a new market) in November 2023. However, those funds were not confirmed until late May 2024. Subsequently, the pre-election period associated with the national election has further prolonged the award.</p> <p>This regeneration project is heavily reliant on grant funding, and without confirmation of funding the scheme has not advanced at the pace we had hoped. Now the general election is over we are engaging with officials at Ministry of</p> | |

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| | Housing, Communities and Local Government. We hope to be in a position soon to confirm a timetable for delivery, which will include a plan for stakeholder engagement. | |
| 33. | From Councillor Patel to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources | Have the council's accounts for 2021/2022 been signed off yet. If not can you provide a firm timeframe please? |
| | Response: | |
| | No – the financial statements for 2021/2022 have been published and are available on the Council's website. Auditor sign off of the accounts is subject to the backstop agreement which was delayed as a result of the recent national election. The backstop agreement proposed a September deadline, however this was subject to parliamentary approval and was dropped as a result of the dissolution of Parliament in May. Whether the backstop agreement gets reinstated is now subject to the new Government's plans, and we are working with our external auditors to resolve this situation. | |
| 34. | From Councillor O'Donnell to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources | Will Gloucester city council look to make savings of city council Tax and offer this money back as a rebate to the city council residents as the on going increase of council tax during a cost of living crisis is not fair nor acceptable. |
| | Response: | |
| | We will always work hard to find savings and increase council income. With respect to council tax rates however, our biggest obstacle is the Local Government Financial Settlement which assumes Councils raise Council Tax to the maximum allowed. Failure to do so would reduce the Council's core spending power and limit the funds available to deliver services to residents in both the current and future years. This would ultimately cost local taxpayers more. | |
| | The Council operates a Council Tax support scheme for those residents who need help paying their Council Tax. | |
| 35. | From Councillor Bell to the Cabinet Member for Environment | I've had emails already about dog bins in Emerald Close. What will the city council do about the dog bin issue where bins are either full too quickly or not enough bins servicing the areas. Can an audit of bins including dog bins be carried out in Tuffley Grange as it's causing upset and concern for many residents? |
| | Response: | |
| | This is already underway. Our litter and dog bins in the city are digitally mapped now, and Ubico staff are able to record whether the bin is half full, full or overflowing on emptying. Ubico will be able to adjust the emptying frequencies accordingly. This level of information will allow better use of resource and allow us to remove or move bins which are not being used to more suitable locations. Once the digital integration programme is complete Council staff will have access to real time information from the Ubico system. | |
| 36. | From Councillor Gravells Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources | When will the contract for a long-term operator of the market and car boot site at Hempsted Meadows be tendered and are the council putting any plans in place to make the parking areas at Hempsted Meadows more usable in the wetter winter months? |
| | Response: | |

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| | <p>A review of the entire site is currently underway to encompass all users of the site and that is why the opportunity has not yet come to the open market. This is anticipated to be undertaken by late August / early September.</p> <p>It is however not a tender for contract exercise, it will be marketed as a property transaction and a lease granted.</p> | |
| 37. | From Councillor Lewis to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration | On your recent visit to the airport you were shown what a dire state the management is in. Will you confirm now that you will actually agree with your colleagues in Cheltenham that looking to sell the airport is in the council best interests? |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>The Liberal Democrat manifesto '<i>Putting the Heart back into Gloucester</i>' on which we won the local elections states that the council will "continue support for Gloucestershire Airport to remain an important aviation and high-tech business hub that provides for locally based skilled employment".</p> <p>The administration has been considering the option to put the airport up for sale or not and we are now carrying our investigations into the pros and cons in order to make such a decision, that has included a visit to the airport to meet the senior management.</p> | |
| 38. | From Councillor Patel to the Cabinet Member for Environment | Which team(s) are responsible for the planning and satisfactory completion of the street deep cleans in Barton & Tredworth? |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>There is a designated list of deep clean streets and they are programmed into the service schedule by the street cleaning team at Ubico. During deep cleans Ubico Supervisors are on site to supervise so a good standard should be expected.</p> | |
| 39. | From Councillor O'Donnell to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration | Will Gloucester city council look to keep members motions at 2 per councillor or will they reinstate no limit to motions, otherwise the voice of the residents is muted, curtailed and reduced? Which means that our city councils democracy is watered down so that the residents have no voice, no progress of our city and the role of the city councillor is nearly void and obsolete. |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>The Constitution states that each Member can move or second a maximum of three motions at each Council meeting. In my capacity as Chair of the General Purposes Committee, I invited members of that Committee to put forward suggestions for changes to the Constitution at its meeting on Monday 15 July. While the Committee discussed ways to improve notices of motion, the subject of limits on motions was not put forward as an area to review.</p> | |
| 40. | From Councillor Bell to the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement | I've had emails already about street lights in Emerald Close. What will the city council do about the street light issue where it's too dark and lights often go out frequently. Can the city council liaise with highways and county council for action to the street lights in Tuffley Grange as it's causing upset and concern for many elderly residents which also leads to anti-social behaviour? |
| | <p>Response:</p> | |

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| | <p>In the first instance the City Council in collaboration with the County Council would advise all residents to continue to use the Fix My Street link on the county Council's Website to report issues about street lighting:</p> <p>https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/</p> <p>The Community Safety Team also gathers information with respect to how safe residents feel in their neighbourhoods through an online survey hosted on the Council's commonplace platform. Using the link below we invite residents to let us know their views which includes issues around safety and street lighting:</p> <p>https://yourgloucester.commonplace.is/</p> <p>This information will be used to support bids for additional (grant) funding with respect to safety infrastructure in our communities.</p> | |
| 41. | From Councillor Lewis to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration | Can you please tell me where you are getting the funding for the three extra allowances relating to Cabinet? |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>It is the responsibility of Council to set remuneration. Additional allowances will be dealt with as an in-year pressure and then included in future Money Plans.</p> | |
| 42. | From Councillor Patel to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration | When will the new administration's 2024-28 Council Plan be ready for sighting by Councillors and the people of Gloucester? |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>Work will commence on a new Council Plan, guided by the Liberal Democrat manifesto: 'Putting the heart back into Gloucester', imminently. I anticipate that a draft plan will be approved by Cabinet for public consultation in the Autumn, with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee invited to comment on the plan as part of the formal consultation process before Council is asked to approve the plan in the new year. This follows a similar timeline to previous Council Plans.</p> | |