

FULL COUNCIL – 25 MARCH 2010

No.	Question from/to	Question	Response																																						
1	Councillor P. McLellan to Leader of the Council (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture)	“At the January Council meeting I suggested that the Council do some research into why some local shopping centres like Hucclecote Road are successful and others do not do so well. This to see what lessons can be learned to help the struggling areas - has any work been done and if not will the Cabinet Member ask officers to look into these matters?”	“Officers are currently preparing to undertake a piece of research work over the summer on the health of local centres. This will form part of the evidence base for the ongoing preparation of the Joint Core Strategy development plan document. This will be undertaken through a Town Centre Health Check process which will examine the current range of shops and services that exist in the centres, vacancy rates, local pedestrian counts and other physical elements of the centres. While this will provide an indicative assessment of the centre in terms of the physical aspects, different techniques will be required to understand people’s usage and perception of centres. It is therefore being investigated as to whether the physical survey element of the Health Checks could be complemented by some qualitative assessment via consultation with local representative groups. Officers are currently looking at opportunities to engage with particular representative groups and/or community forums to undertake this element of the research.”																																						
2	Councillor P. McLellan to Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>“Can the Cabinet Member give an early indication in relation to the new waste and recycling service in the following areas:</p> <p>a. How much waste went to landfill in February compared to January?</p> <p>b. How many tonnes of food waste were collected in January?</p> <p>c. How many complaints were there in February about missed collections?”</p>	<p>“a. In the region of 2800 tonnes went to landfill in January, in February this reduced significantly to 1700 tonnes of waste.</p> <p>b. The food waste collection commenced on 1st February 2010 where 302 tonnes of food waste was collected in these 4 weeks.</p> <p>c.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1317 1018 2130 1214"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Missed Collections</th> <th colspan="2">Daily Average Week 1 & 2</th> <th colspan="2">Daily Average Week 3 & 4</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Residual</td> <td>65</td> <td>1.1</td> <td>34</td> <td>0.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food Waste</td> <td>30</td> <td>0.2</td> <td>29</td> <td>0.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recycling</td> <td>33</td> <td>0.4</td> <td>30</td> <td>0.3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>□ The first two weeks in March has seen a continued reduction in missed collections as highlighted in the table below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1317 1305 2130 1497"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Missed Collections</th> <th colspan="2">Daily Average Week 1 & 2 March 2010</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Residual</td> <td>19</td> <td>0.03</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food Waste</td> <td>18</td> <td>0.03</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recycling</td> <td>19</td> <td>0.03</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Missed Collections	Daily Average Week 1 & 2		Daily Average Week 3 & 4		Number	%	Number	%	Residual	65	1.1	34	0.6	Food Waste	30	0.2	29	0.2	Recycling	33	0.4	30	0.3	Missed Collections	Daily Average Week 1 & 2 March 2010		Number	%	Residual	19	0.03	Food Waste	18	0.03	Recycling	19	0.03
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			<p>Analysis of missed collections</p> <p>There were a number of teething problems with regard to missed collections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Initially some streets were not recorded on the round lists and were therefore missed. There was also a case of human error where a driver misread the information. These issues have been resolved. ❑ There has been a change in the time of collections for many residents, which, although referred to in literature delivered to households, has caused some confusion with residents. For example, where residents used to have an afternoon collection they may not have presented bins by 7:00am as requested and therefore missed a morning collection. Conversely, some residents have been reporting missed collections before the crews arrive on their street. ❑ Some residents may have established custom and practice with regard to placement of their bins, which may be over and above the policy of collection from the edge of the highway. Wherever practicable we will continue to provide the same level of service, although this continuity may be disrupted due to the change of rounds and crews.”
3	Councillor P. McLellan to Leader of the Council (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture)	“There are sites in Gloucester which are bona vacantia and theoretically under the control of the Government Treasury Solicitor. Can the Cabinet Member advise of the number of identified sites in the City? When problems arise on these sites such as hazardous walls etc who has responsibility for rectifying the problems?”	<p>“If an estate is bona vacantia it is under the control of the Treasury Solicitor. The fact it is bona vacantia means there has been no successor either by will or the intestacy laws, so there is no easily discovered owner. The Treasury Solicitor then undertakes the administration of the estate, on behalf of the Crown.</p> <p>I am unaware of how many sites in Gloucester are bona vacantia, although there is a list of some of the more recent ones on the bonavacantia.gov.uk website.</p> <p>The liability in theory lies with the Crown, in whom property rests if there is no owner, although there are some areas of Crown Immunity and the possibility of disclaimer of onerous property. Depending on the type of issue the Council may need to carry out work in default, and put a charge on the Land Charges Register in case the property is sold to recover the money.”</p>

4	Councillor Field to the Leader of the Council	“Why is your administration proposing to delete from the corporate plan the measures and targets for delivery against the cultural strategy’s action plan?”	<p>“The Cultural Strategy “indicator” was not a very effective measure. The Cultural Strategy has a very wide remit and the workstreams do not lend themselves to precise metrics. As a result reporting tended to involve lengthy narrative and I have also reported progress, at length, to Councillor Field through written questions.</p> <p>Having taken stock of the importance of the Cultural Strategy and reflected the major tasks, projects and actions in the Corporate Plan I reached the conclusion that a different form of reporting would be better.</p> <p>The Cultural Strategy will now be subject to a full annual progress report to Cabinet with a half-year highlight update. This will give greater focus on the strategy and progress under the workstreams. It will also provide a useful platform for developing the 2017 City of Culture bid.”</p>
5	Councillor Field to Cabinet Member for Environment	“How will the efficiency savings on the streetcare contract that were contained in the budget be achieved?”	<p>“Enterprise has already been working with the Council to plan the efficiencies savings earmarked in the budget, and the majority of the saving has been achieved by procuring a beneficial lease package for the new collection vehicles. We will continue to work together to achieve the remaining savings required for 2010/11 and to plan for future efficiencies.”</p>
6	Councillor Field to Cabinet Member for Heritage and Leisure	“How will the city museums achieve the extra income they need, as outlined in the budget?”	<p>“The Corporate Director of Regeneration and the Group Manager (Cultural Services) are leading a major review of the Museum service. This will identify a wide range of savings, efficiencies and new income to achieve the three year money plan targets for 2011/12 onwards. The project is at its early stages and it would be premature to speculate on the components of the savings.</p> <p>However, a full report on the proposals will be presented to Cabinet later this year. Staff have been fully consulted and are enthusiastic about transforming the service to be more cost effective and sustainable.”</p>

7	Councillor Field to Cabinet Member for Environment	“The collection of refuse on Oxford Street, Kingsholm, is a mess, quite literally. Bags of rubbish and pieces of litter are strewn over the road and pavement. Several councillors, including myself, have reported this problem. Will the Cabinet Member undertake to look at this issue and resolve it?”	“Officers have identified a small number of properties in Oxford Street that have had issues with storage of refuse and recyclates on their property prior to collection, that have come to light following the introduction of the new service. The Neighbourhood Management Team are working with landlords and residents to agree a solution. We have always recognised that a “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate for all properties and there are areas of the city where a bespoke solution is required as part of phase 2 of the service.”
8	Councillor Field to Cabinet Member for Environment	“I notice that the pedestrian crossing button under the railway bridge at Worcester Street has not been 'pigeon-proofed', unlike the rest of the bridge, with the result that there is pigeon muck on the crossing button and pavement. Will the Cabinet Member please give an assurance that this work will be carried out?”	"As I informed Councillor Field in my written response to his question at Council in January the pedestrian crossing equipment is owned and maintained by Gloucestershire Highways and officers have raised this with the County Council to request that further bird proofing be installed. Whilst I cannot give assurances that work to the crossing equipment will be completed, the Highways Stakeholder Manager for Gloucester, Nick Peters, has undertaken to respond to Councillor Field directly with regard to this matter."
9	Councillor Whittaker to Leader of the Council (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture)	“Following the cancellation of the Tall Ships Festival, can the Cabinet Member assure us that an equivalent section of the city’s calendar is put aside to showcase the wonderful asset we have in the Docks basin?”	<p>“It is with great regret that the Tall Ships Festival has been postponed for 2010, but the level of building work and restriction of movement around the Docks site would have created safety issues and would have impacted on the quality and appearance of the event.</p> <p>It will prove very difficult to schedule any major event of a similar duration and size around the waterside itself for at least the next twelve months. This is the approximate length of time that has been granted for works on the exterior of Merchant's Quay, and this work will mean blocking off access around the perimeter of the old shopping centre, taking the waterside pathway completely out of action from the 'swing bridge' corner of the site right down to the edge of the Dr Fosters pub.</p>

			<p>Hoardings around the site will also restrict the size of the exit from the swing bridge to a width that will not be able to tolerate large numbers of people without creating queues on the bridge, which would create an unacceptable and unsafe weight issue.</p> <p>However, the team at Marketing Gloucester Ltd are working on utilising areas of the Docks away from the main basin for Christmas activities at the end of the year, by which time the linkages work and development of the 'performance area' outside the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum will have been completed.</p> <p>The same team are also already working on bringing the Tall Ships Festival back again to the Docks for the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May next year."</p>
10	Councillor Whittaker to Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>"Having served as chair of the Task and Finish Group on waste and recycling, I had hoped that our group had foreseen all problems likely to emerge from the new kerbside waste and recycling collection service. It is therefore alarming that the public's perception on whether biodegradable starch food waste bin liners are permissible or not has caused considerable confusion and consternation.</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member assure this Council that a consistent, clear message will be given to all citizens on what is and is not allowed lining food waste bins?"</p>	<p>"The Council's message to residents has been clear and unfaltering regarding the lining of food caddies. All correspondence to residents, from the outset of the scheme, has clearly specified that food caddies should only be lined with paper or paper compostable bags. This message has been reinforced through press releases, City Life Magazine in December 09 and briefing notes sent to all Members in February and March 10.</p> <p>The Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group supported the principle of only lining food caddies with paper or nothing at all and this stance has not changed. This message also features on the Home Page of the City Council's web site and can be found in the frequently asked questions and general information section relating to food caddies on the waste and recycling link from the Home Page.</p>

			<p>Enquiries to the Contact Centre regarding the use of biodegradable liners have been minimal and residents are choosing to line their caddies with paper or not line them at all as they are easily cleaned and as a result the quality of our food waste sent for processing has been excellent ensuring that the food waste remains uncontaminated and therefore out of landfill.</p> <p>I do recognize that with the introduction of any new service, especially one on this scale, there is a need for ongoing publicity and we will continue to stress the importance of lining food caddies with paper and the benefits this brings, both in terms of the quality of the food waste and the amount of waste diverted from landfill.”</p>
11	Councillor Whittaker to Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	<p>“After four years on this Council, it is noticeable that the use of public questions by citizens is scant. Following my imminent departure due to climate change commitments nationally, I would still like to be able to continue my input of ideas. There are many others in our fair city who have ideas too, but nowhere to present them for consideration. Will the Leader consider putting to Council that ‘Public Questions’ becomes ‘Public Questions and Positive Suggestions’ to Council. This may encourage ideas to be submitted from the general public and result in possible actions that may prove valuable to this Council’s productivity.”</p>	<p>“I think the Member is right to highlight the importance of the Public Question Time agenda item on the Council and Committee agendas as this item actively demonstrates the Council’s commitment to include members of the public in the democratic and decision making process. I would also actively encourage him or any other member of the public to use this agenda item in the future to ask a question as part of the democratic process. It may also be the case that through asking a question a member of the public may be able to submit a positive suggestion. I would also highlight to the Member the other ways in which the public can get involved in the democratic process at the Council and this includes the submissions of petitions and deputations and the Councillor Call for Action process.</p> <p>Finally, I would draw the Councillor’s attention to the latest issue of City Life which highlights the ‘You Talked – We Listened’ campaign and demonstrates how the City Council has proactively reacted to the priorities and suggestions of the general public and advises the public on how to get involved with the various consultation which we carry out. The Council is always open to suggestions from the public and I would encourage any member of the public to contact the Council if they have a suggestion.”</p>