

Overview and Scrutiny

29 September 2025

Member questions

Preventative Maintenance on Council assets and Community Leased Buildings

1. Question from Councillor Chris Day to Louise Eite and Paul Jones

(p10) How frequently are properties assessed as lowest risk inspected?

Response:

Lowest risk properties are inspected on a 6 monthly basis, moderate 3 monthly and high risk properties vary from weekly to monthly.

Frequency is under constant review, especially for properties where we see an increase in reactive workload, anti-social behaviour and vandalism or where an incident has occurred that requires careful monitoring.

2. Question from Councillor Chris Day to Louise Eite and Paul Jones

(p13) Action 1: Monitoring regime of buildings leased to third parties. Can April 2026 deadline be brought forward? This has (correctly in my opinion) been identified as a High Priority but April 2026 is 6 months away.

Response:

Work has already commenced, tenants with compliance obligations have been written to and this will be followed up in the coming months as we start to have more capacity within the team.

The property team are meeting early October to discuss this further and to start planning ahead.

Furthermore, we have identified a need for a full time compliance officer, this role is currently being graded by the HR team with a view to advertisement before the end of October. This role will have full responsibility for the inspection of leased property stock, including a regime of physical property inspections and the inspection and due diligence in relation to compliance paperwork. This will ensure tenants are meeting the obligations of their leases and keeping our buildings safe for all users.

We may be able to bring the deadline forwards once we have recruited for the above post. We can provide further updates as we progress if this would offer further assurance.

Why, historically, haven't all properties leased to third parties been inspected to ensure tenants are complying with their leases and identify potential issues at an early stage? Landlord inspections appear to be a recommended industry practice.

Response:

This has happened but hasn't been formalised. The Estates Team have close liaison with tenants, inspections have been undertaken on an ad-hoc basis but haven't been recorded. We are implementing a more formal inspection regime in the coming months.

3. Question from Councillor Chris Day to Louise Eite and Paul Jones

(p14) Am I correct that Action 2: Production of a five-year planned maintenance programme means maintenance work under that plan will only commence in budget year 2027/28 at the earliest?

Response:

The current property condition surveys will be 5 years old during the financial year 2026/2027.

The property team are starting to prepare the draft planned maintenance programme for the financial year 26/27, included in the programme will be renewal of condition survey reports.

It is vital that the condition surveys are factually accurate and budget costs for items of repair/ replacement are as up to date as possible especially taking into account the recent high construction inflation that the industry has been subjected to.

We are starting to find that our existing condition surveys are looking very dated and whilst surveyors site knowledge of these sites provides a 'sense check' it is important that the condition surveys are renewed before we start to plan ahead at any length.

Furthermore, 5 years is long time in local government especially with all the proposed changes surrounding LGR. I think we would be in a much better position to start planning during 27/28 as the proposals for a 5 years maintenance plan will be that much more accurate, that is not to say that planning won't take place beforehand it just won't be formalised.

4. Question from Councillor Chris Day to Louise Eite and Paul Jones

(p23 & p31-32) Is it possible for Planned Maintenance Programme 2022/23 & 2025/26 data to be provided in same format as for other years i.e. split between Priority 1, Priority 2, and Priority 3 items?

Response:

The property team only ever undertake the Priority 1 works during any given financial year due to budget constraints. Therefore, the items in the other columns are not

relevant for those financial years you refer to. The team do however try to ensure that anything in P2 column that doesn't quite warrant P1 priority is prioritised for the following financial year.

5. Question from Councillor Chris Day to Louise Eite and Paul Jones

(p17-30) The annual Planned Maintenance Programme schedules appear to be budgeted rather than actual spend figures? If they are budgeted, is it possible to provide figures for how much was actually spent for each year excluding 2025/26. A total spend value for each year is fine, there's no need for a line by line analysis.

Response:

2020-21:	£488,806
2021-22:	£576,685
2022-23:	£403,384
2023-24:	£473,982
2024-25:	£357,243

6. Question from Councillor Chris Day to Louise Eite and Paul Jones

(p37) The value of Community Assets per the Asset Management Strategy document is £32.71m but only £148k per the Statement of Accounts for the reference year (2020/21). The value of Community Assets per the 2024/25 draft accounts is £319k. What is the reason for the difference in the figures –e.g. inclusion of assets included in other categories in statement of accounts, different valuation methodology applied, other reasons?

Response:

The Asset Management Strategy section on Community Assets referred to includes the statement "*This is different to the categorisation of community assets in our Statement of Accounts*".

The Statement of Accounts has a narrower definition as to what is regarded as a "*Community Asset*", namely Allotments, parks and gardens and playgrounds/fields.

The Asset Management Strategy includes a much broader definition, which also includes Pavilions, Community Centres and Allotments.

7. Question from Harry Booty (co-optee) to Louise Eite and Paul Jones

What has been the unplanned maintenance spend in the last 3 financial years?

Response:

22-23: £955,925

23-24: £1,068,460

24-25: £1,231,600

8. Question from Harry Booty (co-optee) to Louise Eite and Paul Jones

What processes are in place to assure value for money in the specific works/ services commissioned? e.g. how can OSC be assured that the cost spent on a specific item or activity is an active and fair valuation of that activity?

Response:

For all works where surveyors deem the value to be over £1000 we informally obtain two quotations from contractors. The only exception is where works are H&S related and/ or affect site operations/ business continuity, in this instance we may direct award for low value works. For all other works we follow the procurement guidelines set.

Most recently the Property Team have collaborated with the Housing Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) to undertake reactive works 'in-house' rather than using external contractors. This further supports best value and allows closer control, management and monitoring of works being undertaken. In order to avoid overwhelming the service we are sending over properties in batches which consist of 3 phases over a 12-18 month period.

9. Question from Harry Booty (co-optee) to Louise Eite and Paul Jones

What is the assessment on how the works completed/ planned to date reflect against delivery of the 2022-2027 Asset Management Strategy?

Response:

Planned maintenance programmes have been delivered on task and within budget wherever possible in previous years. The only exception will be the financial year 25-26 where we may need to postpone several of the planned works projects due to changes within the team. We are not presently at full capacity but hope that will change in the coming months as we continue to recruit.

Working with limited resource in the past few months the team focus has been Health & Safety and Compliance.

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Member questions

Flood Risk Management and Prevention

Questions from Councillor Chris Day to Drainage and Flood Risk Engineer

Question 1:

What is the split of the Team's time spent on different categories of activity such as: responding as Consultee on Planning Applications, Emergency Planning, Consenting & Enforcement Activity etc? (Officers can split time between headings they believe best reflect the workload of the department)

Question 2:

What powers does CBC have to compel landowners to act to mitigate flooding risks, for example, enforcing riparian owners responsibilities?

Response

See estimate below of averaged time spent, based on a combined total of 50.5 contracted hours per week (2 officers). This is an averaged estimate as activities such as emergency response vary and will usually be zero hours when it is dry and a significant proportion of the week when flooding is forecast.

Planning, consenting and enforcement	35%
Asset management	20%
Flood alleviation schemes	15%
Public enquires, FOI and CON29 land charges	15%
Community engagement (including flood warden scheme)	5%
Emergency response	5%
Other (team meetings, training etc.)	5%

Gloucestershire County Council (the lead local flood authority) have delegated consenting and enforcement on ordinary watercourses to CBC (the latest three-year contract agreement is due to expire April 2026 and will likely be offered for renewal). CBC can therefore engage with, or enforce, private riparian landowners to undertake their duties if it is felt that a flood risk is being caused by lack of maintenance. In most cases these situations are resolved by negotiation (written and verbal) and

landowners undertake the requested maintenance work. The Environment Agency are responsible for enforcement and permits on main rivers.

Questions from Councillor Jackie Chelin to Drainage and Flood Risk Engineer

Question 1:

Considering all the different parties / organisations involved in efforts at flood risk mitigation it is not surprising that there can be some confusion/frustration about who is/are ultimately responsible for any given issue. I know of a couple of situations that have been ongoing for quite some time without being yet being fixed. I think this is partly because it is unclear who has the authority (or time/capacity/expertise) to resolve them and perhaps also because priorities change (especially owing to extreme weather incidents!). This can look, to residents, as if there is not a will to resolve their problem and that the “buck is being passed”.

What systems are in place to help councillors/residents to navigate the system, e.g. what triage (and response) mechanisms are in place, how are they monitored and how are enquirers kept informed of progress?

Response

Councillors and residents should refer to our [who does what](#) leaflet in the first instance to report issues directly to the relevant authority. It is recognised there will be cases where it is still not obvious who to report to and we can assist with this step if councillors or residents are unsure flooding@cheltenham.gov.uk

At CBC if a report received is relevant to us (CBC land/asset or an issue on an ordinary watercourse) we log the issue in our enquiries spreadsheet and keep the reporter(s) updated. Where reports we receive are for the attention of another authority we will forward to them and let the reporter(s) know that we have done this so they can obtain updates from the relevant authority. In some instances, we will offer our support/local advice to the other authorities, but we do not have the resource or budget to be taking on other authorities' responsibilities, including providing updates to the public on their behalf (especially as we will not have full knowledge of the asset).

For ongoing local issues such as those mentioned we can raise these specific items at RMA meetings if requested by councillors and provide feedback on the update we receive.

Question 2:

What is the crisis command structure in the event of a 2007-style flood?

Response

Responders attend flood advisory service (FAS) meetings with [the Local Resilience Forum](#) when flooding is forecast and depending on the scale and nature of the event tactical command group (TCG) meetings will be called before, during and after events. A gold (strategic)-silver (tactical)-bronze (operational) command structure is used. The CBC emergency planning team attend FAS and TCG meetings with other category 1 responders and will attend gold strategic meetings where required.

Questions from Harry Booty (co-optee) to Drainage and Flood Risk Engineer

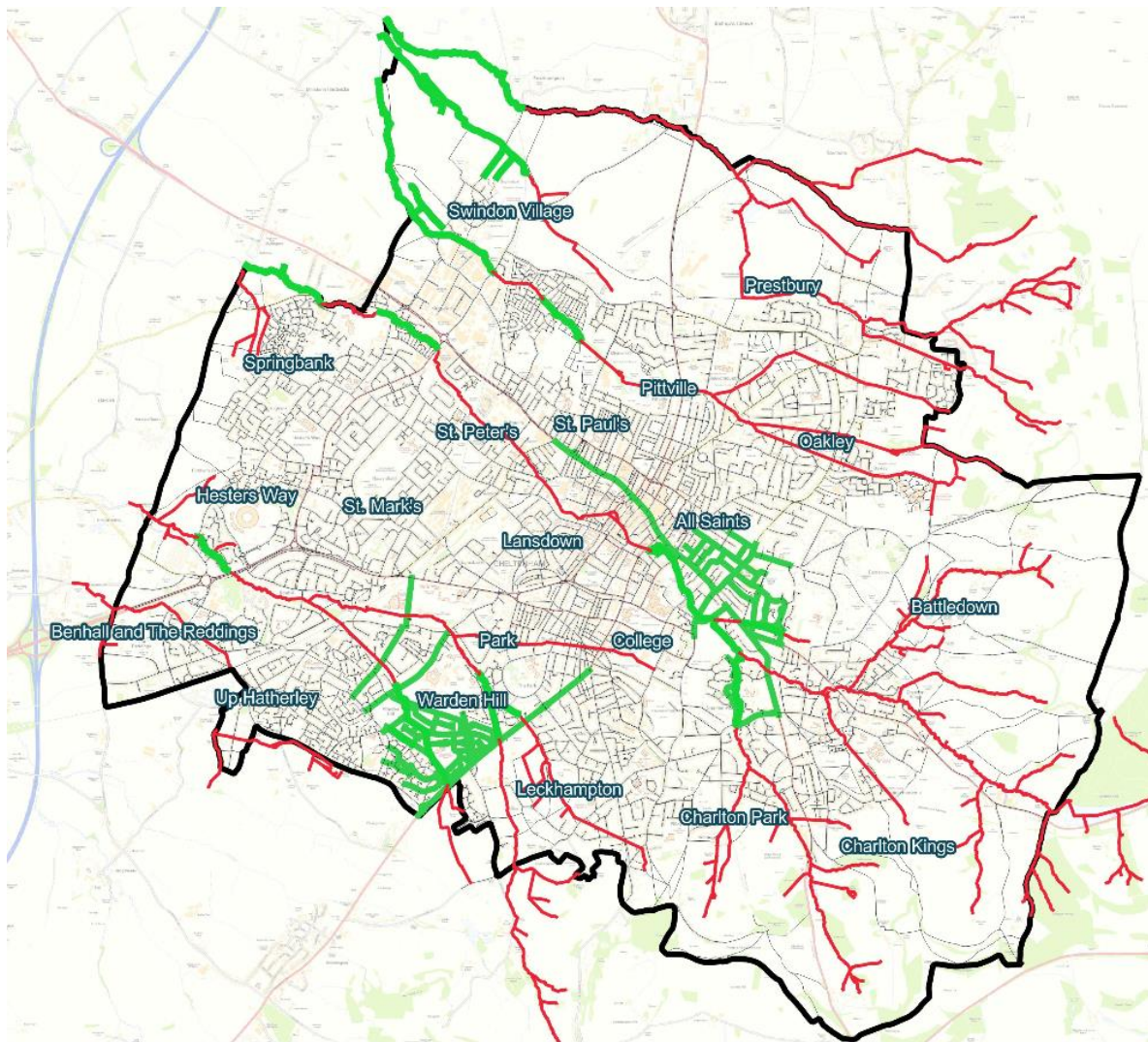
Question 1:

Re item 3.8 - is there a current gap in the voluntary flood warden network, and what, if any, risk does this pose?

Response

There are numerous gaps across the Borough where we do not have flood warden coverage. The map below shows rivers and roads covered by flood wardens (green), with rivers/streams in red not currently covered by a flood warden. We are therefore always looking to grow the network, and this year we have a specific target to onboard at least four new flood wardens.

As flood wardens are voluntary and act primarily as a communication channel (i.e. they are not operational staff who are relied on to always be available) it is not a necessity to have a flood warden everywhere, but the more coverage there is the more resilient communities will be. The [description of flood warden tasks](#) details how flood wardens make their community more resilient to flood risk.



Question 2:

Noted that lots of organisations are involved here, and the reference to comms/ guidance at item 4.2 is welcome. However, can I check if any thought has been given to a "tell us once" system? i.e. instead of instructing people about which specific person/ team to contact, creating a team/ structure that facilitates anybody in the flood "group" being able to quickly share information internally, whoever is the first to receive it?

Response

I am not aware of any discussions for such a system and whilst I would love to see such a system in place I am not sure how this would actually be implemented and funded given that all the authorities operate at different geographical scales (Borough, Countywide, Severn Trent region, Nationally (Environment Agency)), are a mix of public and private entities, and are funded differently. But with advances in mapping technology and AI it feels like such a system could be implemented if there was a commitment.

Some existing systems such as [fixmystreet](#) forward reports to the relevant council and the [Flood online reporting tool](#) (non-emergency reports) is shared across all authorities.

It should be noted that if reports are made to the wrong authority they are forwarded internally, particularly during flood events when the authorities are in close verbal communication (see response to question 3), but there are less points of potential communication failure when reports are made directly to the correct authority in the first instance.

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Member question

1. Question from Harry Booty (co-optee) to Vice Chair Jackie Chelin

This may be a learning point for me, but could it be explained how the interaction with other committees (e.g. HOSC, economic strategy) works? are these updates included for awareness or do they operationally/ practically impact CBC business, and thereby the work or the output of the CBC OSC?

Response:

There are three Gloucestershire-wide committees/panels to which borough councillors are appointed to represent the community's views, contribute to policy development, scrutinize decisions, and ensure efficient and accountable governance. These are for areas for which the borough has no direct responsibility, but which impact on residents. Our representatives feedback on activities to O&S and also can raise concerns in these fora on behalf of O&S

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