

Cabinet

Meeting date: 14 April 2026

Public Questions (5 total)

1. Question from Jamal Rahman to Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Realm, Councillor Izaak Tailford

The Pittville Pump Room is one of the most, if not the most important and recognisable building within Cheltenham and it is essential to the culture of Cheltenham Spa. With that being said, it is closed regularly due to constant repairs with no large restoration programme in sight. Will the Council and the Councillors for Pittville recognise the cultural and economically benefits of the full restoration of the Pittville Pump Room, and can we see it fully restored in the near future?

Cabinet Member response

Thank you for the question. The council recognises the importance of the Pittville Pump Rooms and the wider historical property portfolio. A property of this unique prestige, age, and size commands a good maintenance regime as well as investment to ensure it is well maintained and accessible to residents and visitors alike. The council's team of professional experienced building surveyors lead on ensuring this has happened and assist in planning ahead to ensure the building is preserved for future generations though reactive, planned maintenance and capital programmes of work.

We are very fortunate that within the team of building surveyors one of our surveyors holds an IHBC (Institute of Historic Building Conservation) qualification, a widely acknowledged and difficult to attain qualification that gives us an excellent insight into building conservation techniques and best practices, providing a robust foundation to decision making processes in relation to our historic stock.

The council is currently investing £250,000 in a widely reported floor strengthening programme which is due to complete before the end of Spring. Decision on Cheltenham's Pittville Pump Room upgrade - Gloucestershire Live. This will allow the use of a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) instead of scaffolding, to inspect the high-level ornate plasterwork and undertake works needed to preserve intricate features as well as enhancing visitor experience with the installation of a new ballroom floor to replace the previous floor which was worn and approaching end of life. In agreement with the building operator, The Cheltenham Trust, the building has been closed since January 2026 as this is one of their quieter times and

we were keen to minimise business interruption for weddings, functions and other events.

In recent years, the council has invested thousands of pounds of both planned and reactive budgets into maintaining the various roof structures which sit above this unique asset. This includes flat roof replacement works, works to the dome and replacement slates to the pitched roofs. Furthermore, we have undertaken external stonework repairs, procuring craftspeople who have worked alongside National Trust and the Historic Palaces, in recognition of the importance of this work.

In 2018, the council invested £40,000 into an external fabric redecoration programme, this included timber repairs to the external windows, doors and joinery, repair and redecoration of rainwater goods and metal railings around the site. In collaboration with colleagues within the CBC Conservation Team and through desktop and physical research we were able to change the shade of paintwork colour to one more in keeping with what would have been the original colour.

The property team commissioned building condition surveys during 2020 and 2022 and these form the backbone of wider restoration programmes. The condition surveys are due to be renewed in 2026/27 and provide us with up-to-date information needed to build our planned maintenance programmes and prioritise our spend. Our experienced team of building surveyors undertake regular asset condition surveys which are risk based and carried out quarterly for our historic stock. This helps to build our knowledge and understanding as well as forming a 'sense check' on the information we already hold set out in the higher-level condition surveys. Our compliance tasks and regular servicing regimes also help to form our decision-making process, and a number of workstreams and projects arise because of remedial actions needed to ensure compliance.

Although the majority of works are planned, as a result of these regular reviews, occasionally buildings require some unforeseen maintenance works that have not been planned for, especially in relation to our historic stock. In 2024 there was a short period of closure to allow for plasterwork repairs to be undertaken following a high-level plasterwork survey at the Pump Rooms. Despite surveys taking place every two years, on this occasion there were areas of plasterwork deemed too unsafe to reopen the building until these remedial works were complete. For our planned maintenance tasks and day to day repairs, we work closely with The Cheltenham Trust, to ensure these works do not impact on opening times, requiring contractors to undertake works out of hours. We rely on the operator to ensure the building is open as regularly as possible, in line with a shared vision to enhance the visitor experience in the wonderful buildings which make our town a such a special place. The recent, well-received, Pop-Up Café was a great way to achieve this and have the Pump Room open and accessible to the public.

Thank you for bearing with me with this detailed answer, but I hope it highlights the large range of restoration and maintenance works that have already happened or are

ongoing. The Pittville Pump Room is a fabulous asset for our town and for our region, and we will continue to protect it for future generations.

2. Question from Jamal Rahman to Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, Councillor Flo Clucas

Homelessness has increased in Cheltenham in the past few years, with most people being attracted to both the Town Centre and also public parks like Pittville Park. We've seen an increase of anti-social behaviour, harassment, public drinking etc within Pittville Park which shouldn't be promoted in an area that is so culturally important to Cheltenham and such a great place for people to gather. What are the Council doing to get the homeless the support they need, whilst protecting our beloved places?

Cabinet Member response

Thank you, Jamal Rahman, for your question.

I fully recognise the concerns you raise, and the impact that rough sleeping can have on public spaces. Cheltenham's parks and town centre are important community assets, and it is vital they remain safe, welcoming and accessible to all.

Homelessness, and rough sleeping in particular, are complex issues, often linked to a combination of factors, including mental ill-health, substance misuse and previous offending, with the root causes often going back to adverse childhood experiences.

Unfortunately, rough sleeping is a national challenge, with the estimated numbers of rough sleepers increasing again to a new peak for the UK in 2025.

Cheltenham is not immune to these challenges. Therefore, locally, we utilise a range of initiatives to reduce rough sleeping. These include access to:

- A county-wide commissioned 'Somewhere Safe to Stay hub' situated within Cheltenham for people who are rough sleeping. This is a direct-access, 'first-step' service providing short-term accommodation and support.
- A range of supported housing, from the County Council's commissioned Accommodation Based Support services for individuals with high support needs, through to lower-supported housing for individuals with fewer support needs.
- A dedicated number of self-contained 'Housing First' type homes within the Council's own housing stock, specifically for rough sleepers with multiple needs, and with support provided by the Council's housing management service, as well as Enhanced Housing Support Services, provided by P3 on our behalf.

In addition, we commission Julian House to provide Assertive Outreach Services in Cheltenham to work with rough sleepers and to encourage them to engage with relevant support and accommodation services.

We also jointly commission a multi-disciplinary team that works across the county to support individuals who are rough sleeping, or who are at high risk of rough sleeping, or who otherwise have complex mental ill-health, substance misuse and/or social care needs, and who struggle to engage with mainstream services. This team works alongside housing, support services and the wider health and social care services, seeking to prevent crises from arising and rough sleeping from occurring.

Just one rough sleeper in our town is one too many, and I encourage anyone who is concerned about a rough sleeper to report their concerns by visiting the following website: [StreetLink](#). The Streetlink service will then send these details through to Julian House to investigate and to begin engaging with that rough sleeper if they are not already known.

Despite our best efforts to support rough sleepers from the streets, sometimes it is necessary to use enforcement powers. The Council therefore works across different teams to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to tackling rough sleeping, calling upon enforcement action where there is clear evidence of anti-social behaviour, environmental harm or criminal activity, and working alongside our police services where necessary.

Rough sleeping continues to remain a challenging issue for the Council, but we remain committed to working with our partners to tackle this challenge by supporting vulnerable individuals, whilst also seeking to protect the spaces that are rightly valued by our communities.

3. Question from Emma Nelson to the Leader, Councillor Rowena Hay

Enclosed with our recent council tax bill is a CBC information sheet including reference to the Resident Survey stating 82% of local people are satisfied with Cheltenham as a place to live. This survey was carried out by Enventure Research 2025 and a final 76-page report was published in October. The report refers to a sample of 426 on-line and 1,100 respondents.

What proportion of the total number of residents that *could* have responded does the number of actual respondents (including on line) represent and what was the cost to CBC of commissioning Enventure Research to complete the work and report?

Cabinet Member response

Thank you for your question, Emma.

Responses to the Resident Survey were gathered through a representative survey and an online open access survey.

The representative survey was conducted to provide a sample that was broadly representative of Cheltenham. The nature of this element of the resident survey meant that no more than 1,100 residents could take part.

Whilst this number sounds small, the use of representative surveys is established practice. The purpose of a representative survey is to use a small, carefully chosen sample of people to accurately represent the characteristics of a larger population. This means the results collected from the sample (in this case 1,100 residents) will accurately reflect the results that would be achieved by interviewing the entire population.

Quotas for the representative survey were set on age, gender and area of Cheltenham, based on mid-year population estimates in 2022. The sample size of 1,100 respondents provided an accuracy of +/-2.9% at the 95% confidence interval. This means with a result of 50%, we can be 95% sure that if we interviewed all residents then the result would be between 47.1% and 52.9%.

The representative survey was conducted primarily using telephone interviews, but face-to-face interviews were also undertaken at various locations across Cheltenham town centre to ensure hard to reach residents were included, such as younger residents

.In order to achieve the required sample size of 1,100, Enventure Research will have contacted or tried to contact many more than 1,100 residents to find enough people willing to take part, who were of the right age, gender and geographic area to meet the parameters set by the quotas.

The online survey was an open access survey which everyone aged 16 and above who lived in the borough at the time could complete. It was promoted on the council's website and social media channels. This survey received 426 responses, which was an increase on the 246 responses received when the survey was run in 2022.

Information on the methodology can be found in the Resident Survey report, which is available on the council's website on the consultations page.

The cost to the council of commissioning Enventure Research to complete the work and the report was £23,750.

4. Question from Gill Hewlett to Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing, Culture and Public Realm, Councillor Izaak Tailford

Many thanks for your reply to my question at the last meeting regarding graffiti in the town - it was really helpful and I am only sorry that I was unable to be at the meeting

to follow it up. I particularly note the role played by Ubico, and your suggestion that I report graffiti so it can be logged and action requested; this is certainly something I will now do.

I would like to ask:

a) is graffiti ever removed without it reported by a member of the public? Do employees of Ubisco ever report graffiti? And,

b) how many incidences of graffiti have been logged in the last 6 months, and what were the timescales for removal of each? In fact, have all those logged been removed?

Cabinet Member response

Thank you for your follow-up question and for helping with reporting graffiti where you see it. It goes a long way into securing action, much like reporting potholes to the County Council Highways.

In answer to Part A, absolutely graffiti can be removed without a member of the public reporting it. Council officers, councillors and employees of Ubico can all report graffiti internally to get it on the system. Once on the system, it will be booked for removal by Ubico if on a public building, or if on privately owned buildings then alternative action will be taken such as issuing formal notices.

In answer to Part B, currently the officers who can access and present the detail are on annual leave, so I'd be happy to ask for this on their return and as workloads allow, to share at a later date.

5. Question from Gill Hewlett to Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control, Councillor Mike Collins

This week our MP, Max Wilkinson, was proud to have the government announce that the law would change to make all new builds more energy efficient by having solar panels as standard. Cheltenham is a town with many historic houses that are completely energy inefficient, particularly as windows and doors cannot be replaced cost effectively with modern solutions. I want to know what plans the council have to change the prohibitive planning restrictions to enable owners of regency properties to make energy efficient improvements to their properties and to thereby be in step with our MP?

Cabinet Member response

Thank you for your question.

The planning rules are not prohibitive in respect of energy improvement works to historic buildings; that is a mischaracterisation. Work to a listed or historic building must protect the historic significance and character of that building but this does not

mean that renewable energy infrastructure nor carbon efficiency works are prohibited, rather that a different approach must be taken.

Conservation Officers at the borough council work to HEAN 18 - Historic England Advice Note 18 (Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency). HEAN 18 is a positive and proactive document which sets out how certain energy and carbon efficiencies can be achieved without (or by minimising) harm to historic and/or listed buildings.

Proposals to undertake works to listed buildings must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In respect of the examples that you have given (solar panels and replacement windows), HEAN18 (and therefore Cheltenham Borough Council) is generally permissive of the installation of secondary glazing in historic buildings as an alternative to the installation of double glazing – this often outperforms double-glazing in respect of thermal performance in any case. Furthermore, the replacement of modern windows or those which do not contribute to the architectural or historic interest of a building, with appropriate double glazing is generally supported.

In respect of solar panels, we recognise that these can be acceptable in some cases on historic and/or listed buildings depending on the nature of the building and the positioning of the panels. Again, we follow the approach advocated by HEAN 18 which is generally supportive of solar panels if these are hidden from view by virtue of a shallow pitch roof for example, an intervening parapet wall or within a valley; there are many historic buildings in the borough with these characteristics. Even panels which *are* visible can be supported in many cases (typically Grade II listed buildings) if positioned on a roof slope of less-prominence or significance.

Our Planning team provide a comprehensive listed building pre-application service for anyone interested in improving the energy efficiency of their listed or historic building.