

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd June 2014

Question 1

Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Beardsworth

Freedom of information requests from members of the public (even excluding those from other political parties) have seen an enormous jump during this administration. Figures show 220 FOI requests in the last full year of the last administration, and 388 FOI requests last year.

Does the significant increase demonstrate that this is not a transparent and open Council?

Response

The Council complies fully with the Freedom of Information legislation and welcomes any requests from members of the public.

**Cllr Mackintosh
Leader of the Council**

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Question 2

Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Beardsworth

Can the leader of the Council explain why a report from a reputable university is less important than no report at all from this Council?

Response

It is unclear what Cllr Beardsworth is talking about. No change there.

**Cllr Mackintosh
Leader of the Council**

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Question 3

Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Beardsworth

Whose decision was it to reopen Abington Street to traffic? The leader, the cabinet or the whole Conservative group?

Response

As Cllr Beardsworth is aware, the Cabinet made decisions on this at the meetings in July 2013 and December 2013 and they were part of the Budget meetings of Full Council. These decisions were based on a manifesto commitment on which all of the Conservative group was elected. Unlike the Liberal Democrats, we believe manifesto commitments are important.

**Cllr Mackintosh
Leader of the Council**

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Question 4

Question to Councillor Eldred from Councillor Glynane

It has been 18 months since the administration's ill considered attempt to sell the Sekemka statue, which subsequently embroiled the Council in a legal battle.

How much money was spent in the legal negotiations with the Marquis of Northampton regarding the specifics of the sale.

Response

The Administration is confident that the Council will achieve a very substantial capital receipt as a result of the sale of Sekhemka which will give us a fantastic opportunity to improve our museum service for the benefit of Northampton residents.

To get us to this position we have had to enter into commercial negotiations with Lord Northampton and in doing so, as one would expect, we have incurred legal costs of about £10,000.

**Cllr Eldred
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement**

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Question 5

Question to Councillor Eldred from Councillor Glynane

Can the administration assure this Council that the loss of the Sekemka statue will not risk the accreditation of the museum, and potentially cost it its status and a significant portion of its ongoing funding?

Response

During the last 18 months we have been proceeding in accordance with advice received from Arts Council England (ACE) and the Museums Association. We are currently preparing a detailed report concerning the circumstances of the sale which will be considered by the ACE accreditation panel. We expect to retain our status as an accredited museum.

**Cllr Eldred
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement**

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Question 6

Question to Councillor Hadland from Councillor Conroy

What is going to be the cost to the tax payer of re-positioning the virgin media cables that are running down the portion of Abington Street you're opening back to traffic?

Response

These costs are included in the overall budget for the re-opening of the middle section of Abington Street to traffic.

Cllr Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

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Question 7

Question to Councillor Hadland from Councillor Conroy

Has the Council made a final decision on where the Crick statue will be situated if Abington Street is reopened to traffic? If not, when is this decision expected?

Response

The statue will be located on Abington Street outside of Marks and Spencer. Work to move the statue is already underway.

Cllr Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning