

FURTHER RESPONSE TO A QUESTION AND ACTION ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL

Question Asked at Meeting	Response Given at Meeting	Further Response
<p data-bbox="192 344 775 416">Councillor Belben to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development</p> <p data-bbox="192 448 775 887">At July's Council, there was a written question as to why the Queen's Square fountains jets had been out of order for some time. In your reply you stated that not only would the works on site be completed by the end of September but regularly meetings were being held with contractors to see if the works programme could be reduced. Here we are in the middle of October (having had unexceptional warm weather) and still the fountain jets are not working. Please can you provide an explanation?</p> <p data-bbox="192 919 775 1054">You also said the council did not delay the work by taking any legal action against the contractors. What are the costs to date of fixing the fountain please?</p>	<p data-bbox="775 344 1379 416">Councillor Nawaz, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development</p> <p data-bbox="775 448 1379 719">You may have seen the area is now cordoned off and repair work is in progress. There have been supply chain issues for the fountain parts, and although now procured it was resulted in some slippage in the timescale. I regularly receive updates on progress and all contractors are working to complete.</p> <p data-bbox="775 919 1379 991">I'm afraid I do not have the figures but I will investigate and respond to you.</p>	<p data-bbox="1379 344 2047 616">The ability to award the tender for these works was linked to the assessment of whether there may be a case to recover repair costs from the original Queens Square contractor and or Thames Water. The advice was that until that position was clear, the Council needed to hold off from completing the repair / refit to the plant room.</p> <p data-bbox="1379 632 2047 831">The investigation highlighted that the flood was likely to have been caused by a build-up of fat deposits in the wider waste-water system owned by Thames Water. These blockages backed up and eventually caused the flood in the plant room.</p> <p data-bbox="1379 847 2047 1324">The estimated cost of the repair and plant room replacement is £170,000 inclusive of design fees. Given the scale of the repair works, it was appropriate to fully explore potential options to recover costs from the contractor and / or Thames Water. Following collation of evidence and review by external legal advisers, it was apparent that pursuing a case against the contractor or Thames Water was likely to be costly, extremely difficult to prove and could have necessitated holding off undertaking any repair works until that was fully resolved (and no time frame could be given for such a claim). Within this context, the agreed approach was for the</p>

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		<p>Council to progress the repair / reinstatement directly.</p> <p>Work has been progressing on site to repair the Fountains. Unfortunately, the control panel has been discontinued and it has taken longer to source a suitable alternative. This has now been resolved and the original dates for the contractors work on site have been rescheduled. This was somewhat complicated however by the need to sequence the three different contractors, Volts Electrical, Edburtons and Fountains Direct. The majority of the remaining works are now with Fountains Direct. They are now making good progress and expect the works to be completed in the near future.</p>