

COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

At 7.00 pm

in the

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, MAIDENHEAD,

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

PART I

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
5.	<u>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</u> Written responses	3 - 8

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a) Ed Wilson of Clewer and Dedworth West ward will ask the following question of Councillor Cannon, Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Parking:

Does the Lead Member agree with many Windsor residents and business owners that the reintroduction of discounted parking for residents will enable the town to bounce back from the economic impact of the COVID 19 pandemic?

Written response: Offering a discounted parking scheme for residents could assist with the bounce back of town centres and will encourage residents to shop locally which helps support the local economy, creates jobs and boosts local communities. I therefore remain committed to the introduction of a new residents discounted parking scheme and one will be introduced, as soon as it is financially responsible to do so, so the residents and businesses can benefit from it.

b) Ed Wilson of Clewer and Dedworth West ward will ask the following question of Councillor Clark, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity:

Can the Lead Member advise what repairs and maintenance have been conducted at the Elizabeth Bridge and the Windsor Bridge in the past 5 years and at what cost?

Written response: The project to extend the life of Queen Elizabeth Bridge in Windsor was completed in July 2021. We carried out essential repairs and improvements to the bridge on the A332 Royal Windsor Way to future-proof the structure. Investment in the 1960s-built bridge was necessary due to corrosion of some of the steel components over time. It is part of a major arterial route in and out of the historic town of Windsor, as well as a key link to the M4 over the River Thames, so keeping it in good working order was crucial for the borough's road users, those visiting and others passing through.

The project demonstrated the council's commitment to investing in our ongoing highways maintenance and improvement programme, ensuring our roads are in a safe and usable condition for everyone. The main element of the work involved the replacement of the 20 tie rods. These hold down the back of the two shore sections of the bridge and allow the central span to extend out over the water. The project also included concrete repairs, expansion joints and waterproofing the structure. The work was carried out through contractor VolkerHighways, and its sister business VolkerLaser at a cost of £2.1 million

The pedestrianised bridge between Windsor and Eton has not had any significant structural works only small rectification of defects such as replacing bollards etc, we are waiting for the exact costs from Volker Highways.

c) Martyn Cook of Hurley and the Walthams ward will ask the following question of Councillor Stuart Carroll, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health

As a serving veteran of the conflict in Afghanistan, I would like to ask the council and cabinet to outline the positive actions taken by RBWM to support refugees from the crisis in Afghanistan?

Written response: *The Council has proactively worked with partner organisations and private sector landlords to offer the following properties to support the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). These are:*

- *3 x 1 bed units in Windsor suitable for single households*
- *1 x 2 bed house in Maidenhead, suitable for a family of four*

Currently the Housing Service is awaiting details of suitable matches from the Government's centralised resettlement team.

In addition, the Council coordinated a local 'donation in kind' scheme at John West House in Maidenhead. The Council was overwhelmed by the generosity of Borough residents with items received currently being sorted and categorised ready for the arrival of households in the Royal Borough.

The Council has proactively worked with Slough Refugee Support to manage monetary donations from Borough residents. Again, the generosity of donations received from residents, which currently total over £3,000, has been fantastic. These donations will be used in a targeted way to ensure that households moving into the Borough are able to access key items quickly upon arrival.

Slough Refugee Support will be working in partnership with the Council to deliver support to households arriving in the Borough, this support includes but is not limited to:

- *Welcome briefings*
- *A package of advice and assistance covering employment, welfare benefits, housing, health, education and utility supply*
- *Translation services*
- *Registration with GPs*
- *Support with approaching the Job Centre Plus*
- *Support to obtain a National Insurance Number*

d) Victoria Parkin of St Mary's ward will ask the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Cabinet Member for Planning, Environmental Services and Maidenhead:

In light of the recent decision by the golf course to accept the offer from the council for the purchase of the lease, what are the council's plans for providing infrastructure to support the proposed 2000 new homes?

Written response: The new Borough Local Plan is accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which identifies the key infrastructure needed to support the growth proposed in the new Local Plan, including on the golf course land.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be developed and refined as part of the South West Maidenhead Framework SPD process. More detailed work is underway on the strategic highway improvements required to support development at South West Maidenhead. The SPD work will look at the mitigation likely to be required at key junctions, and when this mitigation will need to be in place. The cost of the mitigation

works will be estimated, ensuring that the CIL contributions (along with S.106 financial contributions and any other funding sources) will be sufficient to deliver the necessary highway improvements needed to support development at SWM.

The SPD process will address the other types of infrastructure needed to support development at SWM, including in relation to the planned new primary and secondary schools, cycling and walking infrastructure, public transport, community facilities, open space and sustainable drainage.

e) Hillary Su of Oldfield ward will ask the following question of Councillor Andrew Johnson, Leader of the Council:

In light of business rates loss from the Nicholson centre, does the Council have plans to attract new business into other areas of Maidenhead town to help offset the loss and balance the book? If so, how?

Written response: The council formed a new economic growth team as part of last year's budget, recognising the importance of a thriving economy to local communities. We invested additional resource into creating new posts to support our economic recovery plans to help tackle the impacts of the pandemic through employment and skills programmes, improved business support and attracting greater inward investment. Examples of this work include working with the Thames Valley Berkshire Business Growth Hub to provide expert advice, working with local people to start and grow their businesses and working with Government through the Department for International Trade on opportunities to welcome new businesses to the borough. We are already seeing that businesses want to work with us and locate into the Borough with IHG choosing Windsor for its new Corporate HQ and Quantuma moving from Marlow to Maidenhead. We will continue to build stronger partnerships with business to retain and attract investment to the borough.

f) Hillary Su of Oldfield ward will ask the following question of Councillor Gerry Clark, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity:

Does the council have plans to improve fibre broadband/5G data connection in Maidenhead to accommodate growing business needs and WFH demand?

Written response: The council set out in its Recovery Strategy that improving digital infrastructure was a priority action for both community and economic recovery. We are working in partnership with the other six unitary authorities in Berkshire and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver a Berkshire wide digital infrastructure strategy. There are a series of projects to improve mobile and broadband connections across the borough with the aim of increasing full fibre broadband to 95% coverage by 2025 and eliminating 'not spots' in mobile coverage. Within Maidenhead, Cityfibre already has plans for installing gigabit broadband and we will continue to work with the public and private sector to deliver improved digital connectivity across the Borough.

g) Sunil Sharma of Furze Platt ward will ask the following question of Councillor Ross McWilliams, Cabinet Member for Housing, Sport & Leisure and Community Engagement:

The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead has worked considerably hard on bringing in affordable housing to the town and it's great to see some of the developments across the borough. I understand the council is looking to support some refugees from Afghanistan. What sort of impact can we expect this to have for the borough & residents?

Written response: RBWM is committed to delivering significant higher levels of affordable housing, particularly social and affordable rent. The impact of COVID-19 has demonstrated how unsustainable our housing market is and we need to do more to ensure more local people are able to access homes in their local area. We have seen increases in affordable housing delivery in recent years and the adoption of the Local Plan later this year will help us drive these numbers up even further, particularly on council-owned sites, which provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver significant numbers of genuinely affordable social and affordable rented homes.

On our efforts to support Afghan refugees, the Council has proactively worked with partner organisations and private sector landlords to offer properties to support the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

Currently the Housing Service is awaiting details of suitable matches from the Government's centralised resettlement team.

Impact on the Borough and its residents is expected to be positive, as experienced professionals, who have served alongside the British Armed Forces, will be resettled into our local communities and bring their expertise with them. We look forward to welcoming those refugees who supported our armed forces over the last few years in often very difficult circumstances.

The response from Borough residents has been overwhelmingly positive with many contacting the Council to enquire about how they can assist households to settle into their new homes and feel part of the local community.

h) Derek John Wilson MBE of Bray ward will ask the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Cabinet Member for Planning, Environmental Services and Maidenhead:

With the BLP proposed main modifications consultation finishing on Sunday 5th September, following the Examiner's confirmation, when is it expected to be adopted by RBWM for approval?

Written response: Shortly after the close of the seven-week consultation on Main Modifications to the Borough Local Plan, all of the representation received were forwarded to the Inspector. Once the Inspector has considered these representations, she will decide whether further hearing sessions are needed or whether she needs more information from Council. Once the Inspector is satisfied that she has all the information she needs, she will issue her final report and it is firmly expected that she will find that it is 'sound' and can be adopted with main modifications. A report will be presented to Full Council, likely during November or December 2021, recommending the adoption of BLP.

i) Adam Bermange of Boyn Hill ward will ask the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Cabinet Member for Planning, Environmental Services and Maidenhead:

Could the Lead Member please give a progress update on the steps taken so far in preparation of the emerging South West Maidenhead Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document and also an approximate timetable of the future actions required prior to adoption, including details of any stakeholder engagement planned?

Written response: Policy QP1b of the new Local Plan requires preparation of a South West Maidenhead Framework SPD. The policy sets out that the purpose of this SPD is to ensure the SWM area is planned comprehensively, and supported by the necessary new infrastructure (including community infrastructure and highways infrastructure).

Officers have agreed a Planning Performance Agreement with the principal landowners and developers within the SWM area, and this Agreement provides financial resources to the Council to instruct a consultant team to advise the Council on the preparation of the SPD.

Officers are currently looking at the scope of the SPD (including in relation to the matters that will need to be addressed in the SPD, and those matters that may be more appropriately addressed at the planning application stage). The evidence available to support the preparation of the SPD is being reviewed, and more detailed work underway to assess the impacts of the planned development on the strategic highway network; the mitigation required; the cost of these works; and how and when the works will be implemented, with funding from CIL and S.106 contributions. Work is also underway to look at the cycling, walking and public transport strategies for SWM, with a view to offering real alternatives to private car use.

Officers have been meeting with the principal landowners and developers, to understand the technical and design work that they have undertaken, and to encourage joint working, for example in relation to coordinating potential new access points onto Harvest Hill Road.

The new Local Plan sets a target for adoption of the SWM Framework SPD of April 2022. This is a very challenging timetable. The current intention is that a series of stakeholder and local community engagement sessions will take place in November. These sessions will be focused on the challenges and opportunities associated with development at SWM, to help ensure that Officers and their consultants have a comprehensive understanding of the issues when preparing the draft SPD. Officers will then take the draft SPD to Cabinet for approval in early 2022, and the draft SPD will then be subject to public consultation. The comments received will be taken into account, and then the revised final SPD will be taken back to Cabinet for adoption.

j) Adam Bermange of Boyn Hill ward will ask the following question of Councillor Hilton, Cabinet Member for Finance and Ascot:

Could the Lead Member please provide an assessment of the financial impact on the Council of the recently-announced increase in Employers' National Insurance Contributions, broken down by the growth in the cost of (i) directly-employed Officers; (ii) the AfC contract; (iii) the Optalis contract; and (iv) any other outsourced services with a contractual passthrough built in for such rises?

Written response: *We have calculated the additional NI costs across the Council, Optalis and AfC at approximately £500,000. An assessment of additional contract costs is still underway. The impact on the Council is unclear at present as we are not certain whether the Government will compensate us for Optalis and AfC costs*