

a) Sunil Sharma of Furze Platt ward asked the following question of Councillor Carroll, Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health:

The council's response to Covid-19 has been very good but cases have risen and what are we doing to buck the trend and deal with a second wave?

Written response: Thank you for your question. It is true that the borough enjoyed a long period when cases of Covid-19 were low over the summer. Since the beginning of September, however, we have seen a rapid increase in the number of cases in the borough, largely driven through community transmission, and this increase has been mirrored nationally. Evidence suggests that the increase in infection is predominately due to household to household transmission, rather than within specific high risk settings.

The Royal Borough is currently rated at level 1 of the Government's alert system and whilst the rise in our number of cases has slightly abated, the potential for underlying infection remains extremely high. We are keeping the situation under constant review and any decisions on further restriction will be based on data, the expert advice of our public health professionals and liaison with government.

What we are doing, and this is our constant focus, is urging everyone to consider their actions, follow the guidance, and understand the risks around transmission to prevent the further spread of the virus within our community. Everyone has a role to play in this. Our comprehensive communications and engagement activity is focused on these five key messages:

1. Wash your hands regularly
2. Wear a face covering where appropriate
3. Keep space between yourself and those not in your household – this is particularly important if you have visitors or if you visit other homes.
4. Do not meet in a group of more than six, indoors or outdoors
5. If you have symptoms, self-isolate and get a test.

We are also acutely aware of the critical importance of our local businesses and the vital need for them to be supported at all times. Hence why myself and Cllr Johnson have been making vigorous representations to Government on improved financial support packages, particularly should cases continue to rise and any future classification is needed. I have also been speaking with DHSC colleagues over the need for improved local test and trace support and capacity. We will continue to ensure these critical issues are understood as part of our local plan.

b) Ed Wilson of Clewer and Dedworth West ward asked the following question of Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council:

What is the Council's vision for Old Windsor?

Written response: The emerging Borough Local Plan sets out the Council's vision for future development within the whole Royal Borough. Old Windsor is planned to play an important role as a local centre, continuing to meet the day to day needs of its local

population. In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan for Old Windsor was adopted last year following a local referendum. This Plan forms part of the Council's development plan and sets out the vision for Old Windsor to be a thriving large rural village for people to live and work. Future developments within Old Windsor will be considered against these overarching visions.

c) Ed Wilson of Clewer and Dedworth West ward asked the following question of Councillor Hilton, Lead Member for Finance and Ascot:

The recent CIPFA Report commissioned by RBWM (under 3.14) said that “expenditure avoided a prioritisation process to the benefit of one ward”. Is this statement correct?

Written response: The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Review of Financial Governance by CIPFA was published in June this year, debated at the June Cabinet and again at Corporate O&S on the 27th July. You refer to section 3 of this report, namely the Clewer and Dedworth Capital schemes that related to highways, joint sealing and resurfacing in the Clewer and Dedworth area of Windsor.

The Council sets an annual budget for roads resurfacing and, quoting from the report to Cabinet the Highways Team state that; “The Highways network is assessed each year for structural condition and skid resistance through machine driven assessments. The results from these surveys are used to formulate a priority list of schemes for each road class based on a condition rating. In addition, requests from Ward members, Parish Councils, Town Councils, residents and area inspectors are considered to determine local priorities.”

An annual Highways and Transport Capital programme is published that details the roads where work is proposed including the cost with the total cost equating to the budget set. In case one of the schemes listed, for some reason cannot be carried out, it is usual for a reserve list of roads to be published. None of the Clewer & Dedworth schemes were included in the prioritised list and all of the schemes were within one ward. This supports CIPFAs conclusion that the expenditure avoided a prioritisation process to the benefit of one ward.

d) Deborah Ludford of Oldfield ward asked the following question of Councillor Stimson, Lead Member for Climate Change, Sustainability, Parks and Countryside:

Council has declared a Climate Emergency and states in its Environment and Climate strategy ‘the quality of life and the role of the natural environment in creating great places is a critical part of the success of the borough economy, and to our residents’ health and wellbeing’. Surely this is inconsistent with plans to build on the golf course?

Written response: The Council is committed to ensuring Sustainable Development which is defined by the UN as ensuring development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UK Planning System seeks to achieve this outcome by balancing economic, social and environmental objectives.

It is important for quality of life and creating great places to have sufficient and affordable family housing and educational facilities to meet needs. The process for the Borough Local Plan has been extensive and concluded that the site is needed to meet housing demand and the assessment shows that the site makes a lower or no contribution to the five purposes of the Green Belt.

A comprehensive placemaking approach will enable any potential impacts to be mitigated. This requires, amongst other things, “a strategic green infrastructure framework and network of green spaces to meet strategic and local requirements, including retention of existing green spaces and edges where possible and provision of new public open space in accordance with the Council’s standards.” In addition, there will be improved, safe pedestrian and cycle links between this site and the new leisure facilities and existing open space at the adjacent Braywick Park, which is proposed to be allocated as a strategic green infrastructure site to serve Maidenhead.

The Open Space Study, 2019 found that Maidenhead is well served by public parks and gardens, has excellent access to natural and semi-natural greenspace such as Windsor Great Park and Dorney Reach as well as sites within the town. Maidenhead Golf course was not assessed by the Open Space Study as it is not publicly accessible. The greenspaces created through the development of the allocated site will be publicly accessible and provide more areas of accessible green space for local residents.

The climate strategy sets out the important principle of biodiversity net gain. This will mean that developments coming forward will not only have to mitigate their impacts but bring forward improvements to enhance biodiversity. As part of the allocation, the requirements for any future development will help to create a sustainable, high quality new development with a strategic green infrastructure network across the site. Any potential impacts have been weighed against the many positive impacts of the development, including the provision of about 2,000 new homes on the golf course site alone, as well as the creation of public open space, biodiversity net gains and community facilities.

e) Deborah Ludford of Oldfield ward asked the following question of Councillor Stimson, Lead Member for Climate Change, Sustainability, Parks and Countryside:

Biodiversity is under threat with 1 million species facing extinction. The golf course is rich in wildlife habitats, providing homes for protected and endangered species such as slow worms, bats, hedgehogs and badgers. How can our council justify the destruction of these habitats when we know continued biodiversity loss threatens the wellbeing of everyone?

Written response: The climate strategy sets out the important principle of biodiversity net gain. This will mean that developments coming forward will not only have to mitigate their impacts but bring forward improvements to enhance biodiversity. As part of the allocation of the golf course, the requirements for any future development will help to create a sustainable, high quality new development with a strategic green infrastructure network across the site. Through the planning process, the council will

ensure the important habitats are protected and new opportunities for sustainable development are taken forward.

- f) Tina Quadrino of Pinkneys Green ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning, Environmental Services and Maidenhead:**

Building on brownfield land is more sustainable than building on greenfield sites, with buildings recycled wherever possible to reduce carbon emissions. With the RBWM environment and climate strategy in mind, what is the council doing to make sure this is prioritised in our borough, particularly in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic which will leave many more business premises vacant?

Written response: The Borough Local Plan sets out the spatial strategy and prioritises development on sustainable locations and brownfield sites where possible to meet the housing needs of the Borough. Our recently adopted Recovery Strategy also sets out our approach to supporting communities and businesses through the coronavirus pandemic. We will continue to support businesses to help them maintain sustainable models, as well as working with landlords to develop pop-up and 'meanwhile' uses in our town centres for any vacant units. The strategy also sets out a longer term plan to develop strategies for the future of our town centres to ensure they continue to thrive in the future and our maintained as the focus of community activity as well as ensuring the long term economic success of the borough.

- g) Tara Crist of Riverside ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning, Environmental Services and Maidenhead:**

Like the River Thames, the creation of a Great Park in Maidenhead would provide a major draw to people looking to live and visit here, bringing economic prosperity, as well as providing a healthier environment. Surely the short term gain from developing the golf course is not in the long term economic or environmental interest of our town?

Written response: The process for the Borough Local Plan has been extensive and concluded that the site is needed to meet housing demand. The assessment shows that the site makes a lower or no contribution to the five purposes of the Green Belt. The development itself will bring forward a strategic green infrastructure framework and network of green spaces to meet strategic and local requirements, including retention of existing green spaces and edges where possible and provision of new public open space in accordance with the Council's standards. The development itself will support the creation of this green space as well as other infrastructure that will support the regeneration of Maidenhead, as well as potential for innovation in low carbon energy and heating infrastructure.

- h) Mark Loader of Oldfield ward asked the following question of Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council:**

Will the planned development of Maidenhead Golf Course result in the removal of established trees? If so, is this consistent with RBWM's Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy? These trees remove carbon emissions and will make an

important contribution towards RBWM target of Net Zero emissions by 2050. They also help to improve air quality in the centre of Maidenhead.

Written response: The climate strategy sets out the important principle of biodiversity net gain. This will mean that developments coming forward will not only have to mitigate their impacts but bring forward improvements to enhance biodiversity, which includes the impact on trees. As part of the allocation, the requirements for any future development will help to create a sustainable, high quality new development with a strategic green infrastructure network across the site.

As part of the strategy, we are also developing plans to increase tree cover across the borough. This includes the recent successful bid to the urban tree fund which will enable the borough to plant and establish 1,000 new whips spread across three sites in the borough. We will continue to explore similar opportunities to work with communities and stakeholders to take advantage of these opportunities to meet our target to be net zero as a borough by 2050 at the latest.