

a) John Sewell of Boyn Hill ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Cabinet Member for Planning, Environmental Services and Maidenhead:

Why aren't all the house building companies required to put solar panels on the roof of every single new build? Just think how much this could contribute to the National Grid! It would also appeal to potential buyers.

Written response: Addressing energy use within the borough is one of the key themes of the Council's adopted Environment and Climate Strategy and this includes the need to reduce energy demand, decarbonise supply and increasing renewable energy generation.

The Building Regulations look at the overall outcome rather than the contribution from individual technologies. As such they mandate a level of performance for the final building, which can be achieved in a variety of ways, rather than mandating the use of specific technologies. The approach remains largely the same in the amended Part L building regulations which are due to come into force later this year, although the measures and targets have changed alongside some other significant changes.

A holistic approach is required to secure the best overall outcomes based on a balance of considerations and through the Council's Interim Sustainability Position Statement it seeks that the design of new buildings minimises energy use so far as possible that 12% of the building's energy needs are met through renewable technology. While this often involves the installation of solar pv this is not always the most appropriate technology to utilise.

That said the Council of course recognises that maximising the installation of solar panels on buildings is an effective way to make efficient use of land and contributes to the generation of renewable energy within the borough. As the Council seeks to further develop its response to the need to reduce carbon dependency within the borough and promoting sustainable energy generation, it will keep its policies under review to ensure the most appropriate response to securing the objectives in the set out within the Environment and Climate Strategy and in line with national policy frameworks.

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

What is the economic outlook for Windsor in 2022 and how will it influence RBWM's approach to Windsor?

Written response: Windsor is showing positive signs of recovery from the pandemic with footfall performing better than the South East and UK as a whole and has nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels. December footfall and trade across the town was affected by the Omicron strain of Covid-19 and the resulting Plan B restrictions. The pandemic has accelerated shifts in consumer behaviour away from traditional bricks and mortar retail to experience led spending including increased demand for food, drink and leisure experiences. The hospitality sector has faced challenges in recruiting staff locally with available jobs being higher than demand for jobs.

Current vacancy rates in the town centre are higher than pre-pandemic but still below the national average however there have been several new businesses opening in the town and more in the pipeline. The trend has been towards food and beverage businesses rather than retail which is following national trends. Centre for Cities data has suggested that smaller cities and towns are more likely to attract leisure spend at weekends/night time reflected in the cities tracker data that shows that the weekend and night time economy bounced back faster than weekday activity which is also reflected within RBWM data.

RBWM's current approach will be to continue to implement the RBWM support and recovery strategy adopted by the Council in September 2020 and to work with businesses to understand their needs and help signpost to available support. The borough's economic growth team was formed during the pandemic and will be working on developing an economic development strategy for the borough as a whole including plans for supporting our town centres. The team will be working closely with businesses and other stakeholders across the borough to ensure that the strategy is developed collaboratively.

In 2022 there will be a particular focus on Windsor due to the Platinum Jubilee with celebrations taking place in the town throughout the year. In 2022 we hope to see a return of international tourism and the team have been working with the sector to ensure the borough is best placed to welcome visitors back.

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

Will the lead Member update residents on the progress being made at the Vicus Way car park?

Written response: *Construction of the new car park is proceeding well with the main contractor, Buckingham Group, on programme and budget. The car park will open as planned in September 2022 following completion of the construction contract and the installation of the car park's management systems.*

d) Hari Sharma of Furze Platt ward asked the following question of Councillor Clark, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity:

The National Bus Strategy for Green industrial revolution states 'Green public transport, cycling and walking supported by £5 billion which would create a further 3000 jobs and bring 4000 zero-emission vehicles on the road, 12% of local bus fleets in U.K. by 2025'.

What actions or initiatives have been instigated to achieve these ambitious plans for our residents?

Written response: *In response to the National Bus Strategy, the council published its Bus Service Improvement Plan in October 2021, which set out an ambitious range of initiatives to improve services and grow the number of people using buses to help*

make them more financially sustainable. It is dependent on a future announcement from Government on specific funding allocations to local authorities but it will enable the council to trial a range of measures, working closely with bus operators through our new enhanced partnership. We are also developing a new local cycling and walking infrastructure plan that will set out our priorities for investment in infrastructure. As a signal of our commitment, the draft capital budget for 2022/23 that will be considered at Council in February includes proposals for £1.5M of investment in walking and cycling projects.

e) Hari Sharma of Furze Platt ward asked the following question of Councillor Clark, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity:

The borough is blessed with Windsor Castle, Ascot Racecourse, Bisham Abbey and Legoland attracting millions of tourists from around the world. Cleaner and greener transport can make a huge difference to enhance air quality for residents.

Will he agree to propose the “first electric bus town” in the country and write to the Transport Secretary to fund this scheme?

Written response: *The council is committed to taking action to tackle climate change and improve the local environment, as one of the priorities of our recently adopted corporate plan. As set out in our environment and climate strategy, driving down transport emissions is one of the four key themes. To support this we are developing a new local transport plan with key elements having recently come forward through our Bus Service Improvement Plan. The primary objective of this is to improve services and grow the number of people using them, which will deliver the greatest benefit in terms of reducing overall transport emissions and tackling local air quality as well as helping to make services more financially sustainable. We will also be working with operators through our new enhanced partnerships to set out a roadmap to bring in new cleaner buses and manage the transition to electric buses.*