

a) Ed Wilson of Clewer and Dedworth West ward will ask the following question of Councillor Hilton, Cabinet Member for Finance and Ascot:

Will the Lead Member advise when RBWM will repay its' short-term debt and how this will impact the Council's revenue budget?

Written response: *Based on the current forecast of future capital cashflows the Council is projecting to have repaid all of its short-term debt by the end of 2035/36. Based on current assumptions of future interest rates the cost of this debt is projected to peak at £2.540m per year in 2024/25 before gradually decreasing to zero by 2036/37. The average cost of short-term debt is projected to be £1.470m per year from 2022/23 to 2035/36.*

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

What steps has RBWM taken to ensure that it does not follow the example of Slough Borough Council and become bankrupt?

Written response: *One of the core messages from the Slough Governance review for the Secretary of State was the importance of good financial governance. This is a message already understood by RBWM from the CIPFA review presented to Cabinet in June 2020. As such, many actions have been taken to strengthen financial governance. These include:*

- *Establishment of a robust medium-term financial strategy that underpins our budget setting. This allows us to budget in the context of challenges in future years, rather than narrowly focusing on the year in question.*
- *Development of a transformation plan which will link to this medium-term financial strategy, as it will be a key enabler of achieving the significant savings required in future years.*
- *Establishment of a Capital Board and the strengthening of links between capital and revenue budgets, so the impact of capital schemes on the revenue budget is understood.*
- *On debt, reporting of debt has been strengthened and bad debt provisions reviewed to ensure they are appropriate.*
- *Partnership arrangements have been reviewed and actions implemented, including Optalis, AfC and the Property Company.*
- *New internal auditors have been appointed, allowing a fresh pair of eyes on our processes.*
- *Audit and Governance Committee has been established to facilitate greater Member scrutiny of financial matters.*

As well as these specific actions from the CIPFA action plan, the finance team has been reviewed and strengthened, with the recent appointments of a new Chief Accountant and Senior Finance Business Partner. The finance team recognises that further change and improvements will be required to achieve the excellent financial management standards to which we aspire.

c) John Affleck (not a resident of the borough) will ask the following question of Councillor Carroll, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health:

What is the proposed total expenditure per head for each child in care in 2022/23 and how many children are currently in care?

Written response: *The total budget 2022/23 for Children in Care direct costs is £9.8m which, based on the current total number of Children in Care of 134, equates to £73,000 per child. In addition to these direct costs are the cost of staffing and other associated operational costs.*

d) John Affleck (not a resident of the borough) will ask the following question of Councillor Carroll, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health:

There have been 24 successful claims of sexual abuse at the Green Field House children's home, RBWM agreed the latest settlement two months ago in December 2021, does the council have a budget to pay any future compensation claims?

Written response: *The Council inherited the responsibility for dealing with claims arising from the Berkshire County Council children's home and has suitable insurance arrangements in place to ensure claims are appropriately settled.*

We hold an earmarked reserve for legal claims. The value of this is estimated at £1.1m at the end of this financial year. It is externally valued every 2 years (the last one in 2020) and the current level of reserves is sufficient on the light of this valuation.

e) Mark Loader of Oldfield ward will ask the following question of Councillor Hilton, Cabinet Member for Finance and Ascot:

On page 242 of the package we have 'Major Capital Cashflows - Proposed and agreed'. Under Capital receipts it shows 6. Development partnership receipts it shows total receipts of £329 million being received cumulatively up to 2035/36. Please can you provide the breakdown by source of those capital receipts and are you confident they are realisable?

Written response: *This information is commercially sensitive and therefore not available to release.*

f) Adam Bermange of Boyn Hill ward will ask the following question of Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council:

I am concerned to see that there does not appear to be any funding in the Capital Budget for the community facilities relocation project described in the withdrawn Cabinet report from September 2021. Please could the Leader give an update on this project?

Written response: *The report was referred to the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel; the Panel is currently developing a scoping document to ensure appropriate scrutiny takes place.*