

a) Sajid Khan of Furze Platt ward asked the following question of Councillor Haseler, Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport:

Community groups had been reassured that a surface level crossing across the A4 would provide connectivity to the Town Centre and Hines Meadow Car Park due to loss of parking in Holmanleaze.

Could the Cabinet Member for Planning inform RBWM Residents the details of funding of the surface level crossing and the timeline for the completion of this crossing.

Written Response: The planning consent was granted including the requirement for the developer to contribute £833k to an at-grade crossing of the A4 near the former Magnet Leisure Centre site to ensure good active travel links. We are progressing with the design of the crossing on the A4 which will support connectivity as part of our wider plans to improve walking and cycling across the Borough, outlined in our LCWIP adopted by Cabinet in June. An initial estimate of the timescales to complete the design and build of the crossing is around 18 months, although more will be known once the design work is complete. Until December 2024, some parking will remain open on the former ten pin bowling site to help to mitigate the impact on users.

Supplementary question: I would like to further request if the cabinet member for planning would kindly commit to meeting community groups in Holmanleaze to discuss ways in which RBWM can help support them amongst other things, the loss of parking and any impact on traffic in the area during all the stages of the St Clouds way development work?

Written response: As Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport, I would be happy to meet with community groups to listen to concerns and suggestions. In terms of the detail, there will continue to be parking during the first phase of the work available on site and also a short walk away at Hines Meadow. The developers have prepared a Construction Environmental Management Plan setting out what vehicle movements are expected, how construction vehicles will enter and leave the site during different phases of construction, how these movements will be staggered to avoid roads becoming blocked with queuing delivery vehicles, and how vehicle movements of contractors travelling to and from site will be minimised. This plan is available through the council's planning portal: search for application reference 22/02278/CONDIT

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

RBWM has been awarded £40,000 from the Government's Changing Places Fund. This is a very positive development for the Royal Borough and for those disabled residents who need specific facilities at public toilets. Will the Leader of the Council confirm how and where this money will be invested?

Written Response: The Borough has been awarded a sum of £40,000 from the Governments Changes Places Fund, however the scheme we submitted costs approximately £65,000 for an installation at Windsor Leisure Centre, this was identified

as the best location available for such a scheme. A review is currently underway to seek to identify some additional Capital Funding for the balance of £25,000, to enable the scheme to be implemented. It is hoped that this 'top up' balancing capital funding can be found from slippage in the approved capital programme which is not required for the original purposes within the approved capital programme.

Supplementary question: This project will help some of the most vulnerable people in our community. It's time to get on with it. Will Cllr Johnson please write to me with the names of the people in the council who are responsible and accountable for delivering this project.

Written response: The responsible officers are Alysse Strachan, Head of Neighbourhood Services and Michael Shepherd, Sport and Leisure Service Manager. The last data submission required for the project was provided on 24th June and the £40,000 grant was received on 11 August. The aim is to complete the project in Q3-Q4 of 22/23.

c) Ed Wilson of Clewer and Dedworth West ward asked the following question of Councillor Stimson, Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Sustainability:

HM Government is providing more than £5M for tree planting to local authorities in England and Wales through its Treescapes Fund. RBWM has confirmed to me that it has not applied for any of this funding and has no intention of doing so. Will the Lead Member advise why the Royal Borough appears uninterested in this source of funding?

Written Response: Working with its partner, Groundwork South, the Council has secured external funding to deliver significant tree planting over the last 3 years. Nearly 20,000 trees alone have been planted at the Ockwells Nature Reserve by Council Officers along with help of hundreds of corporate and community volunteers. Not every funding stream is appropriate for the Council, but we will always look at opportunities to secure external funding to deliver projects and will prioritise those funding streams which align closely with our corporate priorities and that we judge to be most likely to succeed.

Supplementary question: More than 140 councils have successfully applied for this government funding but RBWM have refused to even put in an application because it doesn't fit their priorities or it may not get approved. Are there any other government grants for environmental projects that RBWM has not applied for?

Written response: The Council has secured over £4 million from external grant funding to tackle environmental issues in the Borough over the last 2 years. An example of this is the £1.5 million the Council secured from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to fund energy efficiency improvements in 5 schools this year, the first two of which in Boyn Hill Infant School and Braywood School are now complete. It means those schools now have low carbon heat pumps installed along with better insulation, reducing carbon emissions and making the schools better places to work and study.

A further application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme will be submitted this month (September).

There are always a large number of funding streams available but making good quality applications is time consuming. It's important for the Council to prioritise those scheme where the likelihood of success is high and fit best with the priorities of residents.

h) Adam Bermange of Boyn Hill ward asked the following question of Councillor Rayner, Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor:

Please could the Deputy Leader advise when, and on what basis, will the Council be distributing its £294k central government Discretionary Funding allocation of the "Energy Bills Rebate"?

Written Response: The Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate scheme proposals will be submitted to Cabinet for consideration on 25th August 2022. In order to assist those residents within the Borough, who we know are already on a low income, the proposal will be to utilise existing Council Tax Reduction records to assist those in bands E-H, who have not already received financial help under the Mandatory Scheme, and to provide a top up payment for those in Bands A-D.

Supplementary Question: I thank the Lead Member for their answer and I'm pleased that, by sheer coincidence, the paper mentioned was added to the Cabinet Forward Plan simultaneously; I'm always happy to be of service.

I live in a Band D property but with 52% of properties in the Borough falling in Bands E-H, we shouldn't be under any illusion all these households will be immune from severe financial hardships, especially as the energy price cap is set to rocket again in October.

Whist it is the right approach focus support on those likely to be in most need with those eligible for the CTR scheme being a good starting point would the Lead Member agree with me that it would be helpful if options to broaden the criteria using data already on file, for example disability band reduction and carer's discount recipients were also considered?

Written Response (from Cllr Hilton): We recognise that residents in Bands E-H are not immune from severe financial hardship, however, the award of a disabled band reduction or a carers discount disregard is not necessarily tied in with the liable party's level of income. While some households, which include a disabled member, maybe on a low income we would expect those to already be in receipt of Council Tax Reduction. Therefore, utilising the records of those claiming Council Tax Reduction will capture them and we believe is the best way to identify liable parties, on a low income irrespective of their Band, and provided much needed assistance from the very limited funding available from the Discretionary Funding allocated.