

## Responses to Councillor Questions Council - 26 September 2023

### **a) Councillor Larcombe will ask the following question of Councillor Coe, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services**

Please explain why the Wraysbury Drain is still blocked at Hythe End having been reported over four years ago?

*The Wraysbury Drain has been blocked for many years, in particular at Hythe End where homes and an industrial yard have been built across its path.*

*Sadly, in 16 years the former Conservative administration made extremely limited progress in restoring the channel as a whole and no progress at all in reinstating the channel in the vicinity of Hythe End.*

*The Council did undertake clearance of part of the channel at the Dive Centre in March 2022 and engagement and enforcement work is currently underway along another section where riparian owners have recently taken action to further clear the channel.*

*How planning consent has been acquired for property to be built across the course of a drainage channel is a question we are exploring with officers, with a view to seeing if there are any lessons to be learnt. We will also look at options for reinstatement of this section of channel such as diversion or culverting.*

*Further updates on work to reinstate and maintain the Wraysbury Drain are given by the council at the bi-monthly Flood Liaison Group.*

### **b) Councillor Larcombe will ask the following question of Councillor Jones, Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead member for Finance**

With the ever-increasing probability of flooding, how much RBWM money has been allocated over future years towards flood defence and land drainage infrastructure maintenance and improvements please?

*The following items are currently identified as 'spend' in the capital budget in relation to flood defence and land drainage infrastructure maintenance and improvements.*

2023/4 CD54	River Thames Scheme Infrastructure Project	£400k
CI93	Highway Drainage Schemes	£300k
2024/5 CD54	River Thames Scheme Infrastructure Project	£450k

### **c) Councillor Story will ask the following question of Councillor Bermange, Lead member for Planning, Legal and Asset Management**

Planning permission for a new health centre to replace two GP surgeries in Sunninghill and Sunningdale was granted 18 months ago and residents are concerned that work has not yet started. Would the cabinet member advise Council on the reasons for the delay, when the work is likely to start and the likely opening date of the new health centre.

*On 2nd March 2022, the Council's Development Management Committee resolved to approve the application for the new health hub, subject to an appropriate legal agreement*

*being in place to secure planning obligations, namely an undertaking to secure a carbon offset contribution. This agreement has only recently been completed allowing a decision notice on the application to be issued on 20th September 2023. This is a welcome step forward for the long-awaited new health facility, however, the Council does not currently have any information from NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board, as developer, about their intended programme for implementation.*

**d) Councillor Sharpe will ask the following question of Councillor Reynolds, Lead member for Communities and Leisure**

The Novello Theatre, one of the original cinemas in the country, is a highly valued gem in Sunninghill High Street. The community in Sunninghill wish to use this, now abandoned, facility for drama, dancing, singing and for cinema, to provide additional vitality to the area. What action is now being taken to return this facility to community use?

*The Novello Theatre was returned to the Council following the surrender of the lease in June 2023. The building was originally built as a cinema in 1908 and subsequently extended when converted into a small theatre. It is directly next door to the Cordes Hall in Sunninghill – a community venue which hosts a range of events, productions and shows, many of which are similar in nature to the events that used to be held at the Novello.*

*Following the lease surrender handover inspection and detailed building condition survey, the Cement Particle sheets making up the flank wall have been found to have failed due to their age. The building is beyond its economic life and the subsequent cost to extensive refurbishment or new build would be approximately £1 million which we believe is prohibitive.*

*The Council is in the process of considering the appropriate option(s) for the property particularly given the challenging funding environment facing the Council. Once the feasibility options for the site have been concluded the Council will report on the proposed strategy.*