

Responses to Councillor Questions 16 April 2024

a) Councillor Wilson will ask the following question of Councillor Hill, Cabinet member for Highways and Transport, Customer Service Centre and Employment

Please explain the plans to support EV owners in the Borough, particularly where they live in Resident Parking Zones or otherwise need public charging facilities. Could some on street charging spaces be reserved for EV's, and could car parks with EV chargers installed be open for Residents Permit holders to park in using their permit and recharge overnight?

Written response: The council has published its plans for supporting EV owners in the borough's EV Chargepoint Implementation Plan, which can be viewed on the council website: <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/transport-and-streets/motoring/electric-vehicle-chargepoints/expanding-number-public-chargepoints>

This plan recognises that, in particular, residents without private off-street parking will be reliant upon chargepoints on public streets and in public car parks.

To date, the council has introduced 107 public chargepoint sockets across the borough on streets and in public car parks. The council has very recently secured £927,000 of grant funding from the Department for Transport for the next rollout phase of EV chargepoints. This funding will now be used to substantially expand further the number of chargepoints in the borough.

I can confirm that in the EV Chargepoint Implementation Plan, the council committed to introduce parking restrictions at EV chargepoints, limiting parking to charging EVs only (subject to any site specific circumstances):

Policy EV06: Parking at chargepoints will normally be restricted for charging electric vehicles only, and any Controlled Parking Zone restrictions will apply

Whilst this applies to new chargepoint sites, the council will review whether parking restrictions need to be introduced at any of the existing on-street chargepoint locations, too.

I can confirm too that in the EV Chargepoint Implementation Plan, the council has also committed to 'Work to enable local residents to recharge their vehicles in [council car parks] overnight where possible'.

b) Councillor G Singh will ask the following question of Councillor Reynolds, Cabinet member for Communities and Leisure

Having been closed for 7 years I was glad to hear from Councillor Reynolds last year that the Kidwells Park Pavilion was to be put on the market and reopened. Could the Lead Member give us a progress update on how this is going?

Written response: Kidwell Pavilion has been closed for far too long, that is why I made the decision to lease the property so it can be brought back to community use.

Late last year we opened Kidwell Pavilion for expressions of interest from the community, we were delighted that we had almost 40 expressions of interest in the site. Of those who made a bid, we've written to all parties to inform them whether we are moving forward with their bid. Those we are moving forward with, have been asked for some more detailed information

about their plans, we expect this information to be back with us by 17th May. Once we have that we'll make the final decision and then get the legal team to draw up the lease.

This is an important site, which needs investment to get it open, therefore the lease is likely to be for around 10 years. This is why it's so important we make the right decision for Maidenhead!

c) Councillor Buckley will ask the following question of Councillor Werner, Leader and Cabinet member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection and Maidenhead

Councillor Werner, can you confirm that all expenditure whether through a reallocation of CIL or 106 monies or just general spending, not itemised in the budget, will be approved by the spending panel? The spending panel was set up in 2023 to help control and improve the council's precarious financial position by scrutinising all expenditure over £500.

Written response: All revenue and capital spending above £500 continues to go via SPC even if included in the budget. However, this is not the case where spending is fully funded via external grants such as CIL or S106.

d) Councillor Buckley will ask the following question of Councillor A Tisi, Cabinet member for Children's Services, Education and Windsor

Datchet's Churchmead secondary school had 300 applicants for 120 places this year. Many local families from the feeder school, Wraysbury Primary weren't allocated places. They were offered places in Maidenhead, up to 19 miles away, disrupting friendships and harming education and well-being. Why are some RBWM schools primarily attended by non-local children and how do you propose to fix this?

Written response: Churchmead is a Voluntary Aided School and, as such, is (together with the Oxford Diocese) in charge of its own admissions arrangements. The local authority continues to have the responsibility of ensuring that there are sufficient school places for all borough children. The school has traditionally served both Datchet/Wraysbury and parts of Slough and Buckinghamshire, taking pupils from all three areas. The school's designated - or catchment - area covers the two villages as well as the Upton area of Slough (south of the A4) and the villages of Colnbrook and Poyle in Buckinghamshire.

In recent years, the school has become increasingly popular, and it has been full on National Offer Day every year since 2021. In 2024, there were more applicants from the feeder schools than places available, once siblings had been admitted. The three RBWM children not offered places at Churchmead who were then left without a place were offered the nearest secondary school with places available.

Churchmead School has indicated a desire to expand, in order to better meet the growing demand. This is an ongoing consideration, but at a meeting between the school, LA and Oxford Diocese on 28th September 2023, the LA advised that the admissions criteria for the school should be changed, so that designated area pupils are given priority ahead of children attending feeder schools. Due to the lengthy timetable for implementing changes, this would be for the September 2025 intake, rather than September 2024. We have also suggested that the number of feeder schools be reduced - the priority given to pupils attending any church affiliated school (i.e. anywhere in the country) in particular needs to be reviewed.

The admissions arrangements for 2025 have not yet been published on the school's website, so it is not yet clear whether these changes have been adopted but we will continue to work with the school and the Diocese to try to improve the situation for our borough's families in the future.