

# QUESTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE

## 2 DECEMBER 2020

### PUBLIC QUESTIONS RECEIVED AFTER DESPATCH OF THE AGENDA

#### EEP1

Daniel Hinton has asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

#### Question

With the end of Lockdown will these Grants being offered help to get businesses going again?

#### EEP2

Philip Cunningham has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

#### Question

There have been concerns about mental health during the Covid emergency, will these Government Winter Payments help residents in this respect?

#### EEP3

Annette Medhurst has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

#### Question

Wokingham Foodbank provides support for households across the Borough that are unable to afford to buy food and other essentials, and where appropriate heating and lighting. So far this year the Foodbank has received just over 250 referrals from departments at Wokingham Borough Council including children's services, community engagement and local welfare provision. The Covid Winter Grant Scheme Report states that approximately £100,000 will be distributed to families and individuals in need to provide support with food, water and utilities. How will WBC ensure that this scheme is fully understood and accessible to its front line staff working with vulnerable households across the Borough such that they refer into this scheme rather than the Foodbank?

#### EEP4

Claire Revie has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

#### Question

At Share Wokingham we distribute food to households that have been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. While most people come to us at Norreys Church we occasionally need to deliver food to support self-isolating households. How will the Local Authority help families eligible for support from the Covid Winter Grant Scheme but unable to physically get out to the shops to buy food with the vouchers that have been issued?

## **EEP5**

Emma Cantrell has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

### **Question**

First Days is a local charity that works to reduce the impact of poverty on families in the Wokingham area and beyond. Many of the families we support are very anxious and struggling with additional costs at this time of year, particularly fuel to heat their homes. There are a high number of domestic energy suppliers in the UK and how support is offered to families might vary according to the company that supplies their gas or electricity as well as whether they have a pre-payment meter or pay by direct debit. How will this scheme be rolled out and how will we, as a local anti-poverty charity, refer our families into it for support?

## **MEMBER QUESTIONS RECEIVED AFTER DESPATCH OF THE AGENDA**

### **EEM1**

Alison Swaddle has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

### **Question**

Cllr Halsall, Can we have confidence that the winter grant payments will be distributed before Christmas?

### **EEM2**

Abdul Loyes has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

### **Question**

Will the Covid Winter Grant Scheme ensure that no child in the Borough will go hungry this winter?

### **EEM3**

Barrie Patman has asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

### **Question**

What are the arrangements for phase 2 of the Additional Restrictions Grant – Discretionary Grants Scheme?

### **EEM4**

Graham Howe has asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

### **Question**

Whilst the grants in the report are designated for businesses, many are run by families who have a great dependency on these distributions to survive. Can you assure us that those that are vulnerable, as a consequence of short falls in business or indeed any other families, will not suffer homelessness within the Borough of Wokingham?

## **EEM5**

Pauline Helliard-Symons has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

### **Question**

Can you ensure that all families in need will be catered for by the support provided by the Covid Winter Grant Scheme?

## **EEM6**

Andy Croy has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

### **Question**

The Executive plans to give grocery and clothing vouchers to families in receipt of free school meals over the school holidays. The option to give families cash has been barely considered, but it was an option that was allowed by government.

A moral judgement has been made on the ability of the parents to manage their cash.

How many of the parents were expected to spend cash on tobacco and alcohol?