

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

20 JANUARY 2022

PUBLIC QUESTIONS RECEIVED AFTER DESPATCH OF THE AGENDA

CP4

Annette Medhurst has asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

Question

Wokingham Foodbank provides support for residents across Wokingham Borough by providing food and fuel support for households in crisis or in an emergency situation. Wokingham Borough Council currently has 108 members of staff registered to make referrals into Wokingham Foodbank. In 2021, Council staff made 441 referrals for emergency food parcels and 68 referrals for emergency energy support vouchers (excluding Covid Local Support grant referrals).

Local Welfare Provision (LWP) is a financial assistance scheme run by the Council to help people who are in a crisis or emergency situation. Foodbank volunteers invariably find that Council employees are unaware that the LWP exists and don't know how to access these funds.

What is Wokingham Borough Council doing to ensure its staff are fully aware of LWP and how to access this help quickly and easily to best support residents, rather than always relying on local charities.

CP5

Louise Timlin has asked the Chairman of the Equalities Working Group the following question:

Question

White Ribbon is a leading national charity, engaging with men and boys, aiming to end men's violence against women. They are working towards the culture change that is needed to prevent violence before it starts. Part of this is encouraging men and boys to recognise and call out harassment, sexist behaviour, microaggressions and misogynist "jokes", in order to promote equality and respect, and remove the cultural norms which enable the tolerance and excuse of men's violence against women in our society.

The four recommendations from the Equalities Working Group do not address these aims. Please could the leader of the Equalities Working Group state how Wokingham Borough Council intends to be a role model, and what concrete actions it will take to seek the culture change necessary to prevent men's violence against women?

CP6

JB Staunton has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

The Ofsted rapid review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges, published in June 2021 found that nearly 90% of girls and 50% of boys have been sent explicit pictures or videos of things they did not want to see. 92% of girls and 74% of boys said sexist name calling happens a lot. Children reported that sexual harassment is so commonplace they see no point in reporting it. One of your four recommendations is to write to schools to ask how they are upholding the Department for Education's "Keeping Children Safe in Education" policy. This seems a rather passive recommendation. Addressing a sexist culture is essential in order to end men's violence against women, and clearly schools have a huge role to play in this.

Will you be making it clear to schools what best practice looks like and how will you be holding them accountable to implement these best practices?

MEMBER QUESTIONS RECEIVED AFTER DESPATCH OF THE AGENDA

CM7

Sarah Kerr has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

It's now more than 6 months since Cranstoun were awarded the domestic abuse contract. Have Cranstoun finally got a refuge set up yet?