

CABINET – 26 OCTOBER 2021

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Members Questions**Question (1) Will Forster (Woking South):**

1. a) With many Surrey residents on low incomes already struggling with price rises in food and energy costs and with the upcoming increase in NI from April next year, what long term plan does the county council have for supporting residents who are living in poverty and for levelling up those communities already experiencing a widening gap in living standards.

b) Will the Council consider introducing a funding scheme similar to the previous 'small areas disadvantaged fund' to specifically target assistance to those communities in need?

Reply:

Surrey's long-term plan for supporting residents facing financial hardship includes a suite of measures focused on mitigating the impacts of poverty as well as its causes. Core to this work is the understanding that there is a need to level up within the county to address disparities across not just living standards, but also health inequalities, social mobility, and rural isolation. As such, we continue our long-term strategies for a fairer and more sustainable economy, tackling health inequalities, empowering our communities, and enabling a greener future.

Our more immediate assistance to residents covers tailored support through family centres, community partnership projects to provide specific interventions on food, fuel and housing poverty, changing our integrated approach with the NHS to better aid those with multiple disadvantages, and of course, various hardship funds and grants. Among these financial schemes are the Surrey Crisis Fund for immediate household financial hardship, more than £5.4m (allocated since Nov 2020) of the Local Support Grant targeting those on free-school meals, homeless, or accessing food banks, and recent decisions to allocate money from the Household Support Grant and Community Outbreak Management Fund to further assist communities on issues such as food and utility bills during the winter months as well as advice and training for getting back into work.

Tim Oliver
Leader of the Council
26 October 2021

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