

## **FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 8 NOVEMBER 2017**

### **AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – ORDER IN WHICH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL WILL INVITE QUESTIONS BELOW RECEIVED IN WRITING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING**

1. From Mr Chester to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support - Councillor Wensley

### **THE FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED BELOW**

**NOTE:** The Chairman will:

- invite questions from members of the public who have submitted in writing their questions in line with the Council's Constitution;
- explain that the questions received will be answered by the appropriate Members of the Cabinet or the Chairman of the Overview Select Committee
- confirm that Public Question Time allows Members of the public to ask one question at a time and that a maximum of one minute is allowed for each question.
- state that questions will be invited in the order in which they have been received and that if there is time remaining from the 15 minutes allowed for Public Question Time, questioners will be allowed to ask a supplementary question.

### **QUESTION ONE**

**From Mr Chester to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Wensley**

#### **Question**

What steps is the Council taking to be able to assist residents who may be affected by delayed payments when the full rollout of universal credit takes place in the Arun area next April? In particular if the well documented early problems are not resolved by then what can the Council do to ensure that whether in social housing or private housing residents are not evicted due to late payments?

## **Response**

Thank you for your question Mr Chester.

The Council will be working with the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) over the coming months to ensure that staff receives the training needed to support applicants for Universal Credit, we have identified the following areas where we may be able to provide support:

- advice and support with making and managing claims for UC advice and support with housing options
- support with housing costs –rent shortfalls, arrears, rent deposits and rent advances –including advance payments and direct payment to landlords and direct deductions
- support with the costs of council tax
- support with on-line access including availability of and use of IT, budgeting support, money advice and debt counselling

## **Supplementary Question**

The questioner outlined that he was delighted to hear that the Council was taking this matter seriously. This was because he was aware that in areas where Universal Credit had already been rolled-out, the use of food banks had risen by over 30% compared to 12% usage in areas that had not yet started adopting Universal Credit. In a fifth of all cases, applicants were waiting for longer than six weeks for their first payment. The questioner stated that he had concern over possible evictions and he urged the Council to take all of these facts on board so that they could be resolved by the time it adopted Universal Credit.

## **Response to Supplementary Question**

In responding to the supplementary question asked, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support stated that he appreciated the points and matters of concern raised. However, the Council now had to wait until the Chancellor of the Exchequer made further announcements.