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Sent: 10 December 2020 14:33

To: Carolyn Wilkins <Carolyn.Wilkins@oldham.gov.uk>

Subject: OMBC Resolutions - Child Food Poverty Campaign and Street Harassment (Case Ref: DA38256)

Dear Carolyn Wilkins

Thank you for your recent letters, received 24th November, regarding resolutions passed by the Council on child food poverty and street harassment (Your Refs: Council – Child Poverty – 20201104 and Council – Street Harassment – 20201104).

I appreciate you taking the time to share with me the Council's views on these areas and the strong stance Members are taking to press Government to ensure a long term strategy to end child food poverty and to tackle street harassment effectively through the criminal justice system.

The outstanding campaign by Marcus Rashford has brought to the fore the great evil of child poverty. Child food poverty is about so much more than a single issue or policy, it is about saying to the millions of children who grow up worrying that they will go to bed hungry, or the parents worried that they have to choose between feeding their children or heating their home, that they matter, that their concerns are the concerns of their Government.

Child poverty was rising before this pandemic, and if nothing is done it will continue to rise. This cannot happen. This must now be a turning point, when all parties commit themselves to the end of child poverty, including child food poverty. The Government must make ending child poverty their priority. It is only by focusing relentlessly on these issues that we will make Britain the best place to grow up in.

Street harassment is appalling and I was pleased to see the Council focus on the Our Streets Now campaign. As you may be aware, recent research from Plan International and Our Streets Now suggested more than half of young women and girls were harassed on the street during the summer. A fifth (19%) of young women and girls aged between 14 and 21 experienced being catcalled, followed, groped, flashed or upskirted during the spring lockdown, which rose to 51% during the summer as coronavirus restrictions were eased and more people returned to public life.

Given that half of the girls and young women polled believed a clear law making it a specific crime would help prevent street harassment, and that being able to report harassment by text or online would also help, I would support additional measures to tackle street harassment specifically.

This persistent and pervasive harassment of girls across the UK is completely unacceptable, and is something that affects not only girls, but their families, with parents worrying from a young age about the abuse their daughters face in public.

Thank you for taking the time to make me aware of the Council's resolutions on these issues.

Yours sincerely

Debbie