

Corporate Board

15th November 2022

RICHMONDSHIRE WARM SPACES FUND

Report of Senior Management Team

All Wards
Key Decision = N

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek Member approval for financial support towards a District Council response to the cost-of-living crisis and increased health risks of winter.

2.0 Decisions Sought

2.1 To allocate funds from the Area Partnership underspend to establish a Warm Place Network for Richmondshire to link with other areas in North Yorkshire

3.0 Link to Corporate Priorities

3.1 This report links to the corporate priorities of Working with our Communities, Helping Vulnerable People and Providing a Healthy Environment

4.0 Introduction

4.1 On 1 October 2022, the energy price cap increased. The energy price cap limits the amount that your supplier can charge while you are on a supplier's basic energy tariff. The impact of this was that the standard charge and price for each kWh of electricity and gas (the units your bill is calculated from) also increased. Members will be aware that this has put financial pressure on individuals and organisations as they potentially face much higher energy bills

4.2 In response the Government has introduced the 'Energy Price Guarantee' which seeks to ensure that a household with typical energy use will pay on average £2,500 per year. Other support measures listed below have also been introduced.

- Residents in council tax band A to D (or band E where there is a disabled reduction) are eligible for a £150 council tax rebate.
- All domestic energy customers in Great Britain will receive help with the cost of their energy bills through the Energy Bill Support Scheme. This will be given monthly through household electricity bills starting in October 2022 for six months, totalling £400.
- All pensioner households will receive an extra £300 to help them cover the rising cost of energy this winter.
- People with disabilities will receive an extra £150 to help with the particular extra costs they face.

- The Household Support Fund will help households who are not eligible for other kinds of help or need further support. The Government announced a further £500 million of support via the scheme, which will now run until March 2023 and which is administered by the County Council.

4.3 Yorkshire Leaders Board recently received a report which explores in greater detail the drivers and impacts of the Cost-of-Living Crisis and proposes a potential Yorkshire and Humber wide approach to support residents and mitigate some of the worst impacts of the cost of living crisis. The report is attached at Appendix1 for Members information.

4.4 The report notes that Councils will be considering how best to support residents in their own local areas through actions such as supporting residents to, providing other financial and practical support, and as a convenor of organisations across places.

5.0 Richmondshire Warm Places Fund

5.1 Over the past weeks Officers have been engaging with colleagues at the other District, Borough and the County Council as well as liaising with community groups across the District. There have been numerous requests from communities about providing warm and welcoming places this winter particularly for elderly and vulnerable people who will struggle to afford to heat their homes.

5.2 Similar schemes have been developed in other local authority areas with the general intention of providing funds to community venues such as village halls, community centres, social clubs and places of worship to provide a warm place in the local community where people can come together to keep warm, socialise and perhaps enjoy some additional activities.

5.3 These schemes also seek to create a directory of all the places available to residents across the public, private, health and voluntary sectors so that anyone who is cold knows where they can go to get warm, stay warm and enjoy a little company and some hot refreshments.

5.4 In order to deliver the scheme quickly and efficiently we are proposing that £50,000 from the Area Partnerships underspend from previous years of £71k is allocated based on £10,000 per partnership area to support the operation of at least one warm space venue in each of our five Area Partnership areas.

5.5 Applications to the Scheme will be administered by the Business and Communities Team in consultation with the Chair of each Area Partnership, and will be based on actual spend up to the maximum £10,000 per area.

5.6 To be considered under the scheme applicants will need to provide the following information and consent to this information being included in an online directory held on our website so that people know where they can access Warm and Welcome Places in Richmondshire.

- Venue Location
- Dates and times that the venue will be open.

- Contact details for enquiries.
- What facilities will be available for example, hot drinks, biscuits, a bit of company, any activities, advice services, charging phones and other devices, free wi-fi, etc
- Applicants will also be asked to confirm that their warm space will welcome anyone who needs it and treat everyone equally, with dignity and respect.

5.7 Organisations that are already providing Warm and Welcoming Places (such as libraries) but do not wish to apply for a grant will also be welcome to submit their details for inclusion in the directory.

5.8 Members are requested to consider approving funding this proposal, the amount of funding suggested is £50,000 in total however members may consider a different amount.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 That Members approve the use of £50,000 from the Area Partnership underspend as financial support towards the establishment of 'Warm Spaces' across the District as set out in the report.

7.0 Corporate Implications

Scrutiny Consultation	None undertaken
Community Engagement	This proposal has been developed in part due to proactive engagement on the part of local communities.
Environment & Sustainability & Climate Change	The proposal has been discussed with the Climate Change Officer and there are no specific issues arising from this report
Financial Implications	The sum of up to £50,000 will be required to be allocated from the Area Partnerships Fund held in reserves
Legal Implications	None arising from this report
Risk Implications	With all other local authorities in North Yorkshire considering community support for energy costs there is significant reputational risk if Richmondshire District Council does not consider the need for support for its communities.
Human Resource Implications	None arising from this report
Equalities Implications	None arising from this report and following analysis no full EIA is required relating to this decision.
Health & Safety Implications	None arising from this report

8.0 Further Information

- 8.1 Background Papers – None
- 8.2 File Reference – None.
- 8.3 Appendices – Report to the Yorkshire Leaders Board

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Report to the Yorkshire Leaders Board

Report title: Cost of living crisis

Date: 21 July 2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update Leaders on the current and potential impacts on residents and councils of the cost of living crisis, and consider whether any immediate action is required by the Yorkshire Leaders Board.

2. Background

- 2.1 The country is currently facing a cost of living crisis, with increasing costs across a number of goods and services exacerbating pre-existing poverty and inequality issues in some communities across the region, affecting many of those still recovering from the effects of the pandemic, while also impacting on those who may have coped previously but are now struggling to manage.
- 2.2 The current crisis is being caused predominantly by high inflation outstripping wage and benefit increases; exacerbated further by recent tax increases. It not only impacts on residents, but businesses and public services.
- 2.3 This report sets out some background to the crisis, considering the impact high inflation could have on residents and councils, and considers whether any immediate action is required by the Yorkshire Leaders Board as the voice of the region.

3. Current picture

- 3.1 Latest data shows inflation currently at 9.1% in the last 12 months to May 2022, the highest rate in 40 years – although if housing costs are included this comes in slightly lower.
- 3.2 The Bank of England forecast has inflation peaking at 10.2% in the fourth quarter of 2022, largely driven by cost pressures associated with the increase in the energy cap in April 2022 and the expected increase in October 2022 (previous estimates of which have been understated). Pressures linked to disruption to global supply chains and the war in the Ukraine have also impacted. It is expected inflation will remain high for the next two years.

4. Impact on residents

- 4.1 Inflation remains the biggest issue for the country¹, with the level of worry around inflation at its highest for around 40 years. It is reported that 91% of adults have

¹ <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/ipsos-issues-index-june-2022>

seen their cost of living rise over the past month, up from 62% in November 2021², due to an increase in the price of food shopping, gas or electricity bills or the price of fuel. Most common actions taken as a result of this increase were:

- Spending less on non-essentials (60%)
- Using less fuel such as gas or electricity at home (51%)
- Cutting back on non-essential journeys in a vehicle (45%)
- Shopping around more (35%)

4.2 It is suggested that inflation affects households differently, with inflation in the poorest households estimated by the Institute for Fiscal Studies to be around 10.9% in April, compared to 7.9% in the richest households.

4.3 The Joseph Rowntree Foundation³ (JRF) suggests that many people in low income households have found themselves choosing between paying rent on time or feeding family members, in many cases unable to do either; with an estimated 2.3m households finding it was not a choice of heating or eating, having already gone without both. People on low-incomes have also turned to borrowing, taking on £12.5bn of new debt in 2022 out of a total £22bn, with a total of £3.5bn to high-cost lenders including doorstep lenders and illegal loan sharks. Arrears on all personal debt have more than doubled from £1.8bn to £3.8bn since October last year and, with interest rates rising, JRF expects these arrears will spiral.

4.4 In Yorkshire and the Humber, 17.5% of households live in fuel poverty (approximately 418,000 in 2020), the second highest in the country, ranging from 12.9% in Selby to 20.8% in Hull⁴.

4.5 With the majority of adults travelling to work doing so by a private vehicle such as a car, van or motorbike (64%), the continued increase in fuel prices is likely to have a significant impact on ability to travel to work.

4.6 In an interesting take, Britain Thinks⁵ has suggested five distinct demographic typologies of people that are feeling the pressure in different ways and with different levels of optimism and pessimism, outlined below in Figure 1.

Figure 1



- 5.2 On 28 June 2022, during his keynote speech at the Local Government Association's annual conference⁶, former Secretary of State Michael Gove acknowledged the role of local councils, stating that 'every single one of the major challenges we now face as a country depends on local government.' He also referenced the accumulating demands such as in adult social care and the additional expectations in planning and housing.
- 5.3 Within adult social care there are concerns building over whether the reforms proposed by the government will be fully funded, with it feared that councils will have to pick up the bill for the difference⁷.
- 5.4 Analysis by the LGA⁸ set out below shows that inflation, energy costs and projected increases to the National Living Wage (NLW) will add £2.4 billion in extra cost pressures onto council budgets this year, rising to £3.6 billion in 2024/25.

Change in cost pressures since LGA's 2021 analysis over Spending Review period compared to 2021/22

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Inflation	£0.8bn	£0.7bn	£0.5bn
Directly employed staff (NLW compliance)	£0.4bn	£0.0bn	£0.0bn
Commissioned services (NLW compliance)	£0.8bn	£1.8bn	£2.5bn
Energy costs	£0.4bn	£0.4bn	£0.5bn
All other factors ⁹	£0.0bn	£0.0bn	£0.1bn
Total	£2.4bn	£3.0bn	£3.6bn

- 5.5 Even before the revised forecast for the NLW, an LGA workforce survey found 15% of councils were already considering having to reduce staffing numbers, and six in 10 councils said the workforce capacity of their council to deliver services was a moderate or large concern.
- 5.6 While the government provided councils with additional funding for this financial year and council tax increased by an average of 3.6%, these inflationary costs, coupled with rising demand, far outstrip these additional resources.
- 5.7 Specifically around energy cost, some quick analysis of figures provided by nine authorities from the Yorkshire and Humber region shows an average expected increase in energy costs of 141% in 2022/23 from 2021/22, with a range of between 110% and 164%.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/local-government-association-annual-conference-2022-secretary-of-states-speech>

⁷ <https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/new-analysis-reveals-the-regional-impact-on-local-councils-of-the-governments-flagship-adult-care-reforms/>

⁸ <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/inflation-and-national-living-wage-pressure-add-ps36-billion-extra-costs-council>

⁹ All other factors are assumptions which drive demand, such as population and number of households

- 5.8 At a more granular level, research released by the County Councils Network¹⁰ - in conjunction with the Society of County Treasurers¹¹ - on 14 June 2022 warns that spiralling inflation could add £1.5bn to costs, which may need to be offset by in-year reductions to services and cancellation or delay to repairs of local roads and infrastructure. The research estimated costs of inflation in 2022/23 for 40 of England's largest councils had risen by 92% in just three months since budgets were set in March.
- 5.9 The research reveals the following breakdown of the total £1.5bn of inflationary costs being experienced by those authorities during 2022/23:
- Adult social care services are expected to be hit with £428m of additional in-year costs, including higher fees to care providers to offset their rising costs of running care homes. Children's social care faces £72m of additional costs.
 - The cost of delivering capital projects is set to be £397m higher, including an additional £211m in building new roads and pothole filling, while the cost of building new schools and other construction and building maintenance has grown £149m.
 - Record energy prices are expected to add a minimum of £107m to council costs, including £60m for streetlights and £46m on fuel and energy bills.
 - Inflation in external contract and labour costs, including highways maintenance and waste management, are expected to add £136m to council budgets at least.
 - Rising fuel prices mean that bus, taxi and minibus providers are charging councils more for school transport services, adding £77m at least to councils' costs.
 - Increases in staff pay are expected to add £259m to the revenue budgets of councils.
- 5.10 Research by SIGOMA¹² released on 22 June 2022 also revealed significant inflationary pressure on budgets of metropolitan councils, with inflation predicted to be more than 4% on top of what was budgeted for, creating an estimated £570m pressure. Only 27% of councils spoken to rated their confidence in meeting this years budget as "Green" (deemed as having more than 90% confidence), and all councils surveyed reported planning some kind of service reduction in the upcoming year, with 23% stating that they faced a threat to key services or financial sustainability.

6. **Other analysis/impacts**

- 6.1 *Business/economy:* As people reduce their non-essential spending to mitigate the impacts of inflation, this will undoubtedly have a knock on impact for local economies. Latest data around retail sales in Great Britain¹³ shows a 1.3% reduction in sales volumes in the three months to May 2022, primarily due to a 1.6% fall in sales at food stores.

¹⁰ <https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/cost-of-living-crisis-councils-face-winter-of-difficult-decisions-as-spiralling-inflation-adds-1-5bn-to-costs/>

¹¹ The Society of County Treasurers represents the chief financial officers of the 24 county councils in England as well as 16 unitary councils that share similar interests in local government issues.

¹² <https://www.sigoma.gov.uk/news/2022/sigoma-survey-reveals-significant-inflationary-pressure-on-budgets>

¹³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/retailindustry/bulletins/retailsales/may2022>

- 6.2 As people potentially turn to working from home as a way to reduce travel costs, this will impact high street and town centre businesses that rely on footfall. There may also be a potential escalation in the number and impact of industrial relations, impacting provision of services and the ability for workers to travel.
- 6.3 *Third sector:* Research by Britain Thinks¹⁴ highlights two key challenges for the charity sector: an increased demand for support from the public in the coming months, and a reduction in charitable donations. They report that just under a quarter of the public say they have already cancelled or reduced their charitable donation to help deal with the crisis, with a further 39% saying they will either definitely do this, or might do this. If the charity sector struggles, this will inevitably push more demand the way of local authorities, who may also receive more requests for financial and capacity support to the third and community sectors.
- 6.4 *Cities:* The Centre for Cities will soon be publishing a report¹⁵ showing that some places in the UK are experiencing higher inflation than others, and that there are significant differences in how much is offset by wage growth between cities. This means that the impact of the Government's £15bn cost of living support package will be asymmetric across cities.

7. Government policies announced to date

- 7.1 At the Local Government Association conference in June 2022, the Institute for Government highlighted that national government cannot protect everyone from the economic pain associated with the increasing costs linked to inflation, but it can influence how the pain is distributed.
- 7.2 So far government support announced throughout the year towards the cost of living totals over £37 billion, which will affect people/households differently. Measures include:
- *All households:* Energy Bills Support Scheme of £400 off bills; national insurance threshold rise to £12,570 on 6 July 2022.
 - *Majority of households:* £150 rebate for houses in council tax band A-D.
 - *Vulnerable people/households:* £650 one-off Cost of Living Payment for those on means tested benefits; One-off £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment; £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment; £500m increase and extension of Household Support Fund, extended from October to March 2023.
- 7.3 It should be noted that despite the benefit of a planned increase in the national insurance threshold, the freeze in the income tax personal allowance rate for four years will amount to a tax rise for many people on the threshold of tax brackets.
- 7.4 The government has also launched MoneyHelper, which contains free information and resources to help individuals manage their money and keep up with essential bills and payments (<https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/money-troubles/way-forward/>) and an additional website outlining the support government is making available for households (<https://costoflivingsupport.campaign.gov.uk/>).

¹⁴ <https://britainthinks.com/what-does-the-cost-of-living-crisis-mean-for-the-charity-sector/>

¹⁵ <https://www.centreforcities.org/event/cost-of-living-report-launch/>

- 7.5 In terms of councils, the then Secretary of State announced the introduction of a 2-year financial settlement from 2023, which will be consulted upon. He also announced that government will be looking at the number of funding streams and the associated bureaucracy, and committed to working with local government to reduce these burdens.
- 7.6 With the recent wide-scale change in ministerial portfolios and a new Prime Minister on the horizon, it is unclear to what extent announced measures will remain the same. There are also many unknowns linked to the levelling up agenda, which could in the longer term have a positive impact for communities in our region.

8. A potential Yorkshire and Humber approach

- 8.1 The impacts on residents and councils of the cost of living crisis and inflationary increases is already well documented, with further research and evidence expected to emerge.
- 8.2 Councils will be considering how best to support residents in their own local areas and deal with increased demand, including supporting residents to maximise income, provision and signposting to debt and wider support, providing other financial and practical support, and as a convenor of organisations across places. Many councils run very similar schemes and initiatives to provide and signpost relevant support. Some specific examples include:
- Sheffield City Council has taken a cross-partner incident management approach, learning from the response to Covid-19, establishing a Gold command group supported by a tactical Silver group¹⁶.
 - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Scarborough Borough Council have launched a review of the crisis and how to support residents.
 - Various initiatives to understand the nature of poverty, identify some of the underlying issues which create poverty and to further explore creative ways of addressing them.
 - Connect for Help in York, which offers a free telephone assessment of needs, extra advice sessions to help with energy and money issues, and referrals to other services.
 - Websites that bring together a range of information to help people on key topics such as financial support, food, housing, fuel, digital support, benefits, and accessing local services, such as Ryedale Community Connect.
 - Provision of practical support and advice through services such as social housing, citizens advice, benefits services, food pantries and training within local community venues, such as Help at the Hub initiative in Wakefield.
 - Supporting Families Programme in Hull, which uses caseworkers to support families in contacting debt support agencies to arrange a manageable and sustainable debt management programme, ensuring receipt of the correct benefits payments, and – in the case of poverty - support families in bidding for charity funding for basic household items including, beds, wardrobes, carpets etc.
 - Looking at how to use the Shared Prosperity Fund to bolster existing interventions and supporting mitigations in Doncaster.

¹⁶ https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s52586/Cost%20of%20Living%20Crisis%2031.05.22_.pdf; Sheffield City Council - Agenda for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on Tuesday 5 July 2022, 2.00 pm

- The officer led South Yorkshire Learning and Development Group has begun to meet to share practice and ideas in relation to the crisis across the sub-region.

8.3 The Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commissions Regional Policy Forum has recently met to discuss the issue of fuel poverty. The Commission is well placed to add the most value and influence a regional retrofit plan to address energy consumption and improve energy efficiency, focusing on those in fuel poverty. National Energy Action has suggested a number of actions that are being considered by the Policy Forum, including: raising fuel poverty up the agenda and drawing out connections between fuel poverty and other important issues; promoting the benefit of action on warm homes for public health, loneliness, educational attainment, local economies and productivity; targeting those most at risk to inform them of wider support available via energy suppliers and others; and enforcement of regulations on energy efficiency and property standards in the private rented sector.

8.4 From a practical point of view, Yorkshire and Humber Chief Executives have discussed the impact of fuel price increases on staff, agreeing to collate and share different approaches to mitigating petrol price rises for staff who have to use their cars for work.

8.5 The Yorkshire Leaders Board aims to be ‘the voice of the region’. The following areas of joint work/approaches could therefore be considered:

- *Funding:* Lobby for the introduction of a less competitive basis for prioritisation and access to funding, reducing inefficiencies for local areas having to use limited resources to focus efforts on producing competitive bids, at the expense of delivery against outcomes at a local level.
- *Funding:* Lobby for the fast tracking of work announced by the former Secretary of State to reduce the number of funding streams.
- *Funding:* Learning the lessons from pandemic interventions, lobby for any cost of living crisis funding to be delivered by local government to be aligned, to reduce the burden on local government of administering emergency funds/processes.
- *Funding:* Produce a Yorkshire and Humber response to the consultation on the 2-year financial settlement from 2023.
- *Social care:* Replicate the County Councils Network analysis of the potential costs and impacts of the adult social care reforms¹⁷ at the Yorkshire and Humber level, with further work undertaken to explore issues raised as a specific concern for the region.
- *Learning from history:* Work with Yorkshire Universities or other academic partners to understand how councils and other local services have historically responded to periods of economic hardship (e.g. the 1930’s and 1970’s) and whether any of these responses could be applied today.
- *Fuel poverty:* Work with the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission’s Regional Policy Forum to lobby around fuel poverty issues, providing support as would be viewed beneficial; and favourably consider council related recommendations made by the Commission and partners.

¹⁷ <https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/new-analysis-reveals-the-regional-impact-on-local-councils-of-the-governments-flagship-adult-care-reforms/>

- *Horizon scanning and shared intelligence*: Form a network of key officers in councils, linking in with other organisations such as the JRF, to ensure the Yorkshire picture is communicated to local MPs and government.

8.6 While not wanting to duplicate work already taking place in local authorities or sub regions, Leaders may also want to consider supporting the collation and sharing of intelligence, good practice, initiatives and case studies to help mitigate the impact of the crisis on residents, businesses and local services, such as:

- *Horizon scanning and shared intelligence*: Jointly understanding both current and future pressures on residents, business and local services (e.g. energy price rises) to support planning and early intervention. This could include how these pressures are likely to differently impact on differing cohorts e.g. homeowners, benefit claimants, disabled people, public transport users etc.
- *Anti-poverty initiatives*: Identify and share good practice within the region around anti-poverty and wider resilience work, and consider if, and how, these initiatives could be scaled up at a wider regional or cross authority level.
- *Demand management*: Identify and share good practice within the region and beyond around early intervention and demand management, and consider how learning from these can be wider disseminated and delivered (potentially through cross authority partnerships where applicable).

8.7 Chief Executives and Leaders may want to consider whether the collection of any other data/case studies would be useful, in support of a joint message or to support the LGA in its lobbying work.

9. **Recommendations**

9.1 It is recommended that Leaders:

- Consider whether a Yorkshire and Humber lobbying angle would be useful, particularly any of the ideas set out in 8.5 and 8.6, and any additional analysis required to develop/support a position.
- Refer those areas of interest to the Yorkshire and Humber Chief Executives group for oversight and development.
- Commit to make available staffing resources to collect any additional data/information required to develop a joint position.
- Commit to fund the collection of additional data/information required to support this work, within reason.
- Seek a meeting for the Co-Chairs with the new Secretary of State to highlight the financial challenges for councils and push for more funding for people locally in need.

SELFA Cost of Living proposal

Project aim: To provide healthy meals to children attending SELFA during the winter months; helping those most affected by the cost of living crisis.

Background: SELFA is a local children's charity. We run activities and clubs in Skipton, Bentham and Settle for over 450 children each year. All the children and young people we work with have been referred to us by professionals such as social workers, health visitors, pastoral staff in schools etc. Reasons for referral are varied and complex. We work with children who are facing a range of adverse childhood experiences. For those accessing our services in the last year:

- 46% had emotional/behavioural needs;
- 22% had autistic spectrum disorder;
- 21% had learning disabilities;
- 17% were young carers;
- 10% had physical health issues.

They often have low self-esteem, lack confidence and are socially isolated and they may come from low income homes, be experiencing a family crisis or help to care for parents or siblings. They are the families who have been most affected by the cost of living crisis. Many have emotional and/or behavioural problems, and gaps in provision mean they struggle to get timely support from statutory services. Approximately 10% have multiple and complex needs and require help with feeding, communication or personal care.

Since 2020 SELFA has been providing healthy meals to children and young people who attend our clubs and activities during the school holidays. We would like to extend this offer to support the children and families who attend our after-school and weekend activities during term time, in particular the harsh winter months of December through to the end of February.

Each session will include the option of a healthy meal for all of the children and young people who need one. The additional costs for ingredients will be met through repurposing food that may have previously gone to waste. We are part of the Fareshare scheme and we collect daily donations from Morrisons, Co-op, Aldi, as well as a number of local retailers and wholesalers. This ensures we can secure a significant proportion of food we need at no cost. We also have ring-fenced donations to cover any additional costs if needed.

Request: We would like to request £3,000 towards providing a healthy meal for every child who needs one at SELFA over the winter months.

Funding would cover the following:

Item	Cost
Healthy Food Co-ordinator (10hrs/week for 12 weeks)	£1,380
Cook (10hrs/week for 12 weeks)	£1,380
Overheads (equipment, admin, resources etc.)	£240
Total	£3000

Outputs:

- We will provide 100 healthy meals each week to children across Craven affected by the cost of living crisis (1200 meals over the 12 weeks of winter)
- We will provide 20 family food parcels a week for those families affected by the cost of living crisis across Craven (240 parcels over the 12 weeks of winter)

Outcomes:

- Support local families during the cost of living crisis
- Promote health, growth and development.
- Increase resistance to illness over the winter months
- Children will eat more healthily and not go hungry
- Promotion of healthy eating habits for later life
- Improve children & young people's concentration and performance in school and other local services

Gateshead Warm Spaces Scheme

There is a cost-of-living crisis in the UK resulting in unprecedented pressures on people already in poverty, and this winter despite the support given by Government, thousands of people in Gateshead will be forced to make tough decisions about when and what they eat, what they can do in life, and when they can afford to heat their home.

Gateshead wants to do more to help its residents, delivering upon its Thrive ambitions to ensure:

- We put people and families at the heart of everything we do
- Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance
- Support our communities to support themselves and each other
- Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead
- Invest in our economy to provide opportunities for employment, innovation and growth

In doing so, we wish to work with our local partners, building on the great work we did during the pandemic, to create a network of Warm Spaces, a group of places where Gateshead people can come together to stay warm, perhaps enjoy a cup of tea and a biscuit.

Our intention is to create a directory of all the places available to our residents across the public, private, health and voluntary sectors so that anyone who is the cold knows where they can go to get warm, stay warm and enjoy a little company and some hot refreshments.

Creating Warm Spaces for people in Gateshead

There is a cost-of-living crisis in the UK resulting in unprecedented pressures on people already in poverty, and this winter despite the support given by Government, thousands of people in Gateshead will be forced to make tough decisions about when and what they eat, what they can do in life, and when they can afford to heat their home

Could your organisation offer a Warm Space for people in your community who need it?

Why we need Warm Spaces

From April 2022 Ofgem [increased their price cap](#) for default (standard variable tariffs) and prepayment meter tariffs by 54%. This is expected to raise the bills of 22 million gas and electricity customers by an average of between £693 and £708 depending on how they pay.

This is on top of the price increase that came in October 2021, which saw an average increase of £139 - £153.

However, Ofgem reviews the Price Cap twice a year, in February and August, and implements changes in April and October. The price cap for October 2022 has not been announced but current estimations are that [another 20%](#) could be added. This would see the average bill increase to around £2300 a year for gas and electricity, with some families, such as those with disabilities running clinical machinery reaching as much as £3,000 per year.

The government's position on support is evolving, with some measures already announced, including:

- Residents in council tax band A to D (or band E where there is a disabled reduction) are eligible for a £150 [council tax rebate](#).
- All domestic energy customers in Great Britain will receive a £400 grant to help with the cost of their energy bills through the Energy Bill Support Scheme.
- All pensioner households will receive an extra £300 to help them cover the rising cost of energy this winter.
- People with disabilities will receive an extra £150 to help with the particular extra costs they face.
- The Household Support Fund helps households who are not eligible for other kinds of help or need further support. The Government announced a further £500 million of support via the scheme, which will now run until March 2023.

The reality is that for most families, this support barely covers the increase imposed in April - it does not address the increase coming in October or the current price rises for food and fuel and other necessities.

This means that although people will have an extra money to go towards their energy costs it may not make enough of a difference.

Sharing Warm Spaces for Gateshead

We know that many of our partners across Gateshead already provide this type of facility, so if this is you, we're asking you to consider registering your facilities and/or services with us so we can create a Warm Spaces directory and begin to let our residents know how to access the Warm Spaces near them. We're also asking you to think about how you can enhance your space even further, perhaps by accessing our Warm Space Grants details of which you can find below.

If you've got a Warm Space already, please [tell us about your facilities and services](#). It should take you less than two minutes to complete the form.

We are in discussion with Connected Voice about linking Warm Spaces to a grant programme to support VCSE groups with energy costs, which they will be launching later in the year. We anticipate Warm Space participants will be granted additional credit in this upcoming process.

Warm Space small grant programme

Small grants (£50 - £500) have been awarded to organisations in Gateshead for the creation and improvement of Warm Spaces for local communities, leading to a positive difference for those living in the area.

What you can expect if you offer a Warm Space

If you want to offer a Warm Space you will be asked to sign up to the [Warm Space Charter](#), developed in collaboration with the Gateshead Poverty Truth Commission. The Charter is intended to help local people who want to use the Warm Spaces to know what to expect when they step across the threshold of a Warm Space building; a guarantee of respect, dignity and warmth.

Two training modules are available to you, the first is mandatory for all Warm Space participants, it includes:

- Understanding the Warm Space Charter
- Things to consider in preparing your venue to receive visitors
- The importance of confidentiality in a Warm Space Understanding the Cost of Living Crisis and how this affects people
- Making Every Contact Count
- Signposting visitors to advice, advocacy, and support
- Communicating under different circumstances and managing difficult conversations.

The second training module is discretionary, it includes:

- Basic energy efficiency information and signposting
- Signposting for energy advice to include charitable grants
- Understanding the Household Support Fund and how to refer

Further, you'll receive branding guidance and a social media toolkit so you can create own materials to promote your Warm Space.

Warm Space participants will be expected to adhere to their own safeguarding policies and ensure that all staff and volunteers are briefed on these procedures.

Warm Spaces Gateshead Charter

You'll get a warm welcome as well as Warm Space

Every time you come to a Warm Space you'll be given a warm welcome from the staff and volunteers there.

Everyone is treated equally, with dignity and respect

Everyone has a right to be warm, so everyone in a Warm Space treats people, and is treated by people, with dignity and respect.

Your Warm Space will be a safe space

Your Warm Space will stick to the safeguarding policies that it always uses, and it will stick to food hygiene rules too!

We'll not tell anyone about you needing a Warm Space

If you want to share the reasons you need a Warm Space, someone will listen, but they won't tell anyone else unless you give them permission, or they must because of their safeguarding policies.

It doesn't matter why you need a Warm Space

Every Warm Space is a non-judgemental space; whatever the reason you have for needing to come in, you'll be treated the same and never judged.