

Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee



20th September 2022

Title	<i>Spelthorne Winter Warmer Project</i>
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Stephen Mortimer-Cleevely</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	
Corporate Priority	Community Recovery Service delivery
Recommendations	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>To endorse the Council's approach to temporarily expanding the Community Centres provision to take account of the impact of current cost of living and energy crisis on our communities</i> 2. <i>To open at least one of our community centres for 6 days a week throughout the winter period, potentially from 1st October 2022 to 1st March 2023. Utilising centre staff to provide the additional provision.</i> 3. <i>Offer a warm meal and hot take home options at a subsidy during the winter period.</i> 4. <i>Approve engagement cross departmentally to maximise resident options in relation to warm places, stay warm and energy efficiency support.</i> 5. <i>Approve engagement with external stakeholders to maximise response package.</i>

1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 SBC seeks to respond to the current cost of living and energy crisis with proportionate and appropriate winter warmer offer that will support the most in need, utilising its existing assets and staff resource, whilst minimising the impact on SBC budgets.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 During winter, the health sector experiences their usual winter surge of presentations at primary care and in the acute settings with an increase in falls and frailty and other environmental related or triggered conditions. This winter will see the same winter pressures with the additional burden of

vulnerable members of the population at further risk from the impacts of cost of living and the energy crisis.

- 2.2 The Council has an opportunity to maximise its assets, that are normally underutilised at weekends, to help create 'warm places' for these residents. The offer would include opportunities for social interaction, watching TV, reading the paper, playing games or light exercise. Added to a subsidised hot lunch and hot drinks to take home. A shower will also be available at the Greeno Centre, which is available for those residents whose families or carers can support when using the shower.
- 2.3 Staff have been asked to volunteer to cover these shifts and both HR and Unison have been consulted. Independent Living cannot offer shift swaps as staff capacity is low, but advice suggests that full time staff would attract a time and a half payment for Saturday work. Staff are required to have food preparation, manual handling, and safeguarding training to cover this provision.
- 2.4 Residents face a difficult winter as rising energy bills are set to wipe out nearly three-quarters of their annual state pension, leaving many more than £800 worse off.
- 2.5 Higher energy bills often hurt our elderly residents significantly more than the rest of the population because they spend a greater amount of their income on heating their home.
- 2.6 While the state pension has increased and will pay out an annual average of £9,623 after next April, just £3,000 will be left to live on per year once bills have been paid - even after the triple lock raise. However, inflation may almost double to 18.6 per cent by spring, according to analysis by Citigroup, leaving pensioners nearly £1,000 worse off.
- 2.7 Age UK has called for additional support to help pensioners face a 'terrifying' winter.
- 2.8 To help those on the state pension deal with rising costs, the Government has launched a £300 payment for older households. On top of this, state pensioners on low income who claim Pension Credit will be eligible for the Government's £650 cost of living payment. The Winter Fuel Payment will also be doubled from £300 to £600 for more than eight million pensioner households ahead of this winter. The full new state pension comes to £185.15 per week, while the basic state pension comes to a weekly rate of £141.85 per week.
- 2.9 Four in 10 people over the age of 66 rely on the state pension as their main source of income, according to the Money and Pensions Service.

See below the financial implication for our residents sourced by Energy bills support factsheet UK Government issued after the Energy price Guarantee announced on September 8th 2022:

Example savings based on your type of home

Under the new Energy Price Guarantee, the average house will save an average of £1,000 and the average flat will save £700.

Property type	October price cap	Energy Price Guarantee	Difference
All dwellings	£3,550	£2,500	£1,050
Houses	£3,800	£2,650	£1,150
Detached	£4,700	£3,300	£1,400
Semi Detached	£3,800	£2,650	£1,150
End Terraced	£3,500	£2,450	£1,050
Mid Terraced	£3,300	£2,350	£950
Bungalow	£3,500	£2,450	£1,050

Flats	£2,450	£1,750	£700
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Converted flat	£2,750	£1,950	£800
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Purpose built flat	£2,400	£1,750	£650
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Typical Bills - 2019 median consumption (Dual fuel, annual basis)

3. Options analysis and proposal

3.1 Option 1

Do nothing and risk increased admissions and increased resident poverty.

Option 2 (preferred option)

Endorse 6 days a week Winter Warmer approach.

Option 3

Defer a decision based on weather conditions and new central government response.

4. Financial implications

4.1 The Council have been awarded non recurrent funding from the NWS Alliance Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) of £132,000. It is recommended that an element of this is assigned to this project. A proportion of this funding is already earmarked for preventative services delivered by SBC. There is no deadline to spend this by March 2023 but there is an expectation of timely use. Officers recommend, in the first instance, that £30,000 be assigned to this project, with the option to increase this based on attendance and need.

5. Risk considerations

5.1 Risks of inaction are well documented nationally and ultimately inaction will lead to potential poverty and increased presentation at primary care and increased hospital admissions.

5.2 These initiatives and additional responsibilities that are created by this approach draw heavily on our limited resources. There are staffing implications here that need to be funded by the NWS Alliance.

6. Legal considerations

6.1 There are none

7. Procurement considerations

7.1 There are none

8. Other considerations

8.1 The Council can agree and endorse this project, but although warmly received as a principle this still requires 'buy in' from our residents.

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 This initiative potentially only 'scratches the surface' of this issue with many residents who are house bound and have little engagement with our services may struggle to access this offer. In the first instance we may only offer this provision to centre members.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

10.1 The proposed project will be informed by our sustainability and climate change team who will support in relation to cost saving and energy initiatives.

11. Timetable for implementation

11.1 The Council are proposing that this initiative be instigated by early October 2022

12. Contact

12.1 Stephen Mortimer-Cleevely 01784 448616

Background papers: *There are none*

Appendices:

1 Winter Warmer Project Costings