

**Report to the Cabinet**

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 8 September 2022

**Report of the Director of Strategy and Performance, Director of Public Health.**

**Part I**

Electoral Division affected:  
(All Divisions);

**Corporate Priorities:**  
Caring for the vulnerable;

**Cost of Living - Warm and Welcome Places**

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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**Brief Summary**

Further to a notice of motion, regarding the cost of living, agreed at Full Council on 14 July 2022, officers have developed the approach described in the report, which Cabinet is requested to consider. In particular, it is proposed that libraries are utilised, with staff supporting and signposting to a range of services and resources.

**Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to note progress and comment on the approach described.

**Detail**

Further to a notice of motion, regarding the cost of living, agreed at the meeting of [Full Council](#) on 14 July 2022, Lancashire County Council resolved to:

- a) Provide for members a list of opening times and locations of publicly accessible County Council buildings that are free of charge and offer a warm and welcome place where people can keep warm and comfortable this coming autumn and winter.



- b) To ask district councils to identify other locally-based voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise provision that offers similar support and for that list to be shared with members.
- c) To ensure such 'warm and welcome' public spaces should offer additional support and advice services to support individuals and families to access other services to alleviate food and fuel poverty.
- d) To place this resolution before the Lancashire Leaders and Health and Wellbeing Board meetings later this month, and work with districts to develop a deliverable plan as soon as possible and report on progress to September Cabinet with a view to reporting final arrangements to the October Cabinet with, where possible, all sources of funding for the scheme being identified at that meeting.
- e) And further, to ask Scrutiny Management Board to form a cross-party task and finish group with immediate effect to identify and adopt best practice, and work in delivering warm hubs and welcoming space schemes and report the same to Cabinet.

Consequently, officers have been working to ensure that a range of publicly accessible buildings are available, where people can shelter and receive some appropriate support over the forthcoming months.

It is proposed that utilisation of facilities and the associated signposting support is kept under review, so that the approach can be scaled up or amended as necessary.

### **County Council Buildings**

Sixty-four libraries have been identified across the county council's operational portfolio that provide universal access and have sufficient space to enable the offer of warm and welcome spaces. All have disabled access to the building.

It is considered that libraries are the most suited of the County's buildings to this offer, with the network of library buildings providing a good distribution within the communities across Lancashire.

A list of the buildings and opening hours is attached at Appendix 'A'.

A map showing the distribution of the libraries across Lancashire is attached at Appendix 'B'.

### **Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector**

Officers are currently collating information about local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector provision shared by district council colleagues.



## Advice and Support

Whilst recognising that library staff are already highly skilled and accustomed to assisting customers to access information and support, officers are considering support for residents including:

- Further development of the current offer in libraries to include regular sessions for residents to enhance skills in terms of health, digital, employment, and volunteering opportunities, so that sources of information and support can be better utilised.
- [British Gas Energy Trust](#) fuel debt project for Lancashire, based with Citizen's Advice Bureaux, focussing on fuel poverty, identifying client debt, setting up payment plans, and benefit check/income maximisation.
- Working with the Lancashire Benefit Assessment and Appeals Advocacy Service, which supports Lancashire residents at a range of welfare benefit assessment and appeal tribunals.
- [Under One Roof](#) for essential household goods support providing essential household items to those individuals/families who do not have access to sufficient income or funds to meet their immediate needs, along with help and advice in seeking additional support.
- Affordable warmth support, commissioned by Lancashire County Council and delivered through district councils, working with [Cosy Homes in Lancashire](#), to provide access to home energy support such as boiler and insulation measures.
- Availability of local food banks, some of which may be accessing support from Lancashire County Council's [Community Food Bank Fund](#).
- Development of a communication strategy to share details of the support and information available locally and nationally, e.g.:
  - A Warm and Welcome Places tab on the Library Services webpages.
  - A Cost of Living webpage detailing the information and support available.
  - Posters for Libraries detailing the support services available across Lancashire.
  - Other channels such as social media, etc.

It is also proposed to identify the routes to access relevant support provided by district councils further to delegation of Household Support Funding.

The financial implications of any further investment will be reported to the Cabinet meeting in October.

## Member Engagement

The resolution has been discussed by Lancashire Leaders and by the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board.

An Overview and Scrutiny task group was formally established by the Scrutiny Management Board on 26 July 2022. The first meeting is scheduled to take place after the publication of this report as part of the Cabinet agenda, and the views and recommendations of the task group on these proposals will be reported to Cabinet at the meeting.



A further report will be provided to the Cabinet meeting in October, with Overview and Scrutiny input beforehand.

### **Consultations**

N/A

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

Financial

Budget implications will be reported to the October meeting of Cabinet.

Currently there are no suggested changes to opening hours and running costs for the utilisation of the proposed buildings.

Property Asset Management

Proposals at this stage do not include for alterations to county council premises.

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

