

Cabinet

13 October 2022

Cost-of-Living

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Supports the Council's approach and support package aimed at alleviating the cost-of-living pressures in Warwickshire as set out in Section 3.
2. Endorses the proposed allocation of the £3.47m Household Support Grant (HSG) for use between October 2022 and March 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 and authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to make such allocations.
3. Approves a funding package of up to £1m, funded from the Revenue Investment Fund, to be allocated by the Strategic Director for Resources, in consultation with the Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property and the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture on a range of support initiatives as he considers necessary, to include those themes set out at Appendix 2, to alleviate the cost-of-living pressures for Warwickshire.

1. Background and context

- 1.1 The UK is experiencing a period of significant economic challenge. Living costs have been steadily rising nationally since early 2021 due to a range of factors including the impact of the Pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the increase in consumer price inflation, increasing demand in consumer goods and materials and the rapidly rising costs of energy, food and fuel. This unprecedented combination of events at a global and national level leaves the country facing a period of significant uncertainty and a very challenging financial outlook in the short- to medium-term.
- 1.2 The magnitude of cost-of-living pressures, which some predict will result in the biggest fall in living standards since the 1950s, will have significant impacts on the residents, communities and businesses of Warwickshire and will require a focused response, combining activity at national, regional, and local levels.
- 1.3 The Government has very recently made announcements which introduce a package of measures intended to mitigate the impacts of cost-of-living increases which are described in paragraph 3.4 below. At a local level we will

need to do everything we reasonably can within available financial resources, , to alleviate the impact of the cost-of-living increases on Warwickshire households and businesses. Working with partners, we will need to target resource in a way which delivers greatest impact for local residents and businesses, whilst recognising that we are unlikely to be able to mitigate the impact completely.

- 1.4 This report presents Cabinet with proposals for: the approach to be taken by the County Council; the allocation of the Housing Support Fund 2022/23; and the financial support package to address the short- and medium-term challenges.
- 1.5 The proposed approach recognises that the response in Warwickshire will be most effective through a collaborative multi-agency approach which draws upon the full range of partner contributions – the *Team Warwickshire* approach - to maximise impact during the difficult winter ahead.
- 1.6 The scope of this report does not include cost-of-living pressures for Council staff. Impacts on staff, and our wellbeing support offer, are being closely monitored by officers, and will be considered by the Staff and Pensions Committee as necessary.

2. The cost-of-living impact for Warwickshire

2.1 Households

Warwickshire has huge strengths and performs very well against many measures, including Community Life Surveys, the Thriving Places Index, the Sustainable Growth Index, and for many areas the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. However, significant and longstanding disparities exist, meaning that the impacts of the cost-of-living on residents will vary greatly, dependent on factors such as geography and household income. The following evidence reflects this:

- Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) data from April 2022 (using 2020 data) indicates 35,781 households in Warwickshire (14.3% of total) were living in fuel poverty¹. These figures are prior to any increases in the cost of energy, with some estimates suggesting more than half of households are at risk of fuel poverty.
- County Council data from 2022 indicates 18.57% (16,218) of school-aged children are claiming a free school meal; for Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough this increases to 25.3% (4,857). We expect to see an increase in demand in coming months.

¹ For this data a household is considered fuel poor if it is living in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below **and** it is left with a residual income below the official poverty line after it spends the required amount to heat its home.

- Between April and June 2022, Warwickshire County Council's Local Welfare Scheme (which administers the Household Support Fund) experienced a 35% increase in enquiries compared to the same period in 2021.
- The impact of the cost-of-living is expected to have significant consequences for people's wellbeing. We are already seeing increases in domestic abuse cases, mental health issues, children in need and neglect concerns.
- Anticipated further increases in demand, as a result of cost-of-living pressures, in a number of service areas including Children and Families, Adult Social Care, the Local Welfare Scheme and the Family Information Service. Resourcing of these services will be kept under review on an ongoing basis.

Increasing interest rates are likely to increase pressure on households with high levels of debt, and higher mortgage rates are likely to depress the housing market. This could potentially improve housing affordability but leaves others facing difficulty affording a mortgage or finding themselves with negative equity.

2.2 Businesses

The cost-of-living will also have profound impacts on businesses across Warwickshire. Inflationary pressures have been pushing up the costs of supplies across most sectors, and a tight labour market has led to recruitment and retention difficulties which has put upward pressure on salaries. Up until the Government's announcement on 8th September, which introduced an equivalent price cap under the Energy Bill Relief Scheme for businesses for six months, business had been excluded from the consumer price cap and were typically seeing four to five-fold increases in their energy costs, particularly affecting certain energy-intensive sectors such as manufacturing and hospitality.

The recent increases in interest rates also create significant additional cost and risk for many businesses in Warwickshire. Increased borrowing rates and reduced consumer and business confidence also means that businesses will be less likely to invest in new products, machinery or premises; and may reduce demand for labour.

Working with the business intermediaries, including those set out below, our Economy and Skills team, is exploring what support can be provided:

- Federation of Small Businesses;
- Chamber of Commerce;
- Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub; and
- National Farmers' Union (NFU)

We are working with partners on a number of events/webinars to provide advice and guidance to businesses on how to save energy and reduce their

bills. We are looking at holding events for manufacturing businesses with WMG (Warwick Manufacturing Group); retail and hospitality; and agriculture (with the NFU). We are also actively promoting the Coventry & Warwickshire Green Business Support programme, which can provide advice and support to businesses to reduce their energy costs and exploring opportunities around the use of grant funding to support investment in energy efficient equipment. We are also exploring the potential of utilising the Warwickshire Recovery & Investment Fund (WRIF) to provide finance for investment in energy efficient/low carbon equipment.

3. The approach and the support package

The approach

- 3.1 The County Council has a key role to consider ways of further supporting communities, businesses, families and individuals as cost-of-living pressures increase. It also has a unique role in convening partners and co-ordinating effort across the County. The six Warwickshire Council Leaders and Chief Executives held a meeting dedicated to the cost-of-living on 27 September and agreed a series of actions, reflected in the proposals set out in this paper, to help co-ordinate countywide efforts on cost-of-living issues.
- 3.2 In responding to the cost-of-living pressures facing Warwickshire, a Council approach is set out below. Both the approach and the support package proposed take into account the resolution on the cost-of-living by full Council at its meeting on 29 September 2022. It is important to recognise that the impacts of the cost-of-living pressures are likely to be fluid and changeable in what is a fast-moving environment and so our approach will need to be kept under review over time. However, it is considered that the approach below presents a way of working that will provide a strong direction for the countywide response to very challenging times.
 - 3.2.1 We will be evidence led, drawing on existing intelligence and knowledge of our communities and residents. We will target our resources towards those people and places most in need and will allocate funding in such a way as to optimise impact and deliver sustainable outcomes.
 - 3.2.2 We will convene a Warwickshire Cost-of-living Summit to be arranged with key stakeholders and partners to help address the current cost-of-living crisis. We will bring together key partners and stakeholders in Warwickshire, from across the sectors, including Borough and District Councils, Town and Parish Councils, Health, Education, and businesses and will wherever possible adopt a multi-agency response, ensuring that we complement the actions being taken by others and avoid duplication.
 - 3.2.3 We will recognise the critical role that the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector will have in responding to cost-of-living pressures and we will proactively work with the sector, building on the

substantial amounts of support to communities, families, and individuals it already delivers, supporting the sector and creating conditions for grass-roots social action, as happened during the Pandemic and in response to the arrival of residents from Ukraine.

- 3.2.4 We will build on our Community Powered Warwickshire movement, and our support offer will seek to include initiatives which are community-driven and deliver more sustainable outcomes.
- 3.2.5 We will work with partners to coordinate our joint response to benefit those that need help and support and maximise the impact of our collective efforts on cost-of-living. Working together, we will maximise opportunities to inform and support residents needing help and direct them towards services that can advise on saving money, heating bills, employment and skills and wellbeing support.
- 3.2.6 We will connect with other partners beyond Warwickshire, such as Coventry City Council, West Midlands Combined Authority and the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (ICB), all of whom are developing approaches to the cost-of-living, to align and amplify our efforts as far as is possible.
- 3.2.7 We will ensure that our communications, messaging and engagement with communities and individuals are clear, concise, and accessible, utilising established channels whilst also recognising the need to consider alternative methods (such as poster sites, broadcast advertising and hard copy) for those residents who do not have access to digital channels.

The support package

- 3.3 The support package proposed by the Council needs to be considered in the context of the national measures that have been put in place, most recently through the fiscal event on 23 September 2022. The initially negative market reaction to the announcement has seen a series of consequences including rising interest rates and further falls in the value of the pound, which could fuel further increased inflation. Cost-of-living issues facing our residents now notably include those with, or seeking, mortgages where they are exposed to interest rate changes. This may require more signposting and support for homeowners and others with significant debts.
- 3.4 The Government's national support measures focused on the cost-of-living and announced to date can be summarised as below:
 - an Energy Bill Support Scheme which will see every household in Great Britain, receive £400 over six months to help with energy bills;
 - an Energy Price Guarantee which will reduce the unit cost of electricity and gas so that a typical household in Great Britain pays, on average, around £2,500 a year on their energy bill, for the next 2 years, from 1 October 2022;
 - energy price capping for businesses at the same rate that households pay for six months (reviewed after three months and maybe extended for certain industries and vulnerable businesses);

- a cost-of-living payment for benefit claimants whereby more than 8 million households on means tested benefits will receive a one-off payment of £650;
- Winter Fuel Payment - more than 8 million pensioner households will receive a one-off payment of up to £600, including a supplementary Pensioner Cost-of-living Payment;
- a one-off £150 disability cost-of-living payment to more than 6 million people who receive Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, Armed Forces Independence Payment, Constant Attendance Allowance and War Pension Mobility Supplement;
- a reduction in the basic rate of income tax from 20p to 19p from April 2023; and
- a reversal of the 1.25% National Insurance increase for both individuals and businesses.

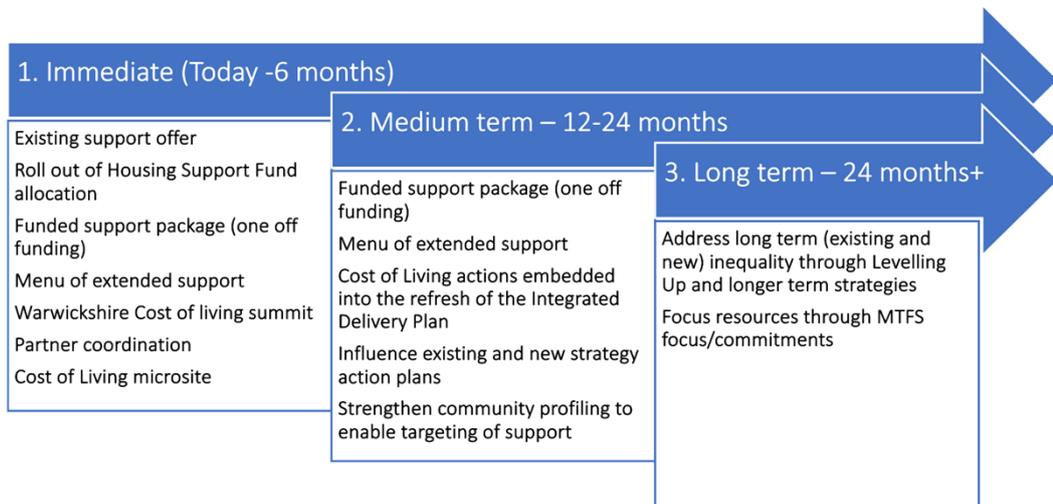
3.5 Taking into account the measures announced by Government, and the existing comprehensive support offer provided by the County Council, the bespoke additional package of support proposed to address the cost-of-living pressures facing Warwickshire can be summarised into the following three specific areas:

- 3.5.1 allocation of the Government funded Household Support Fund (via the Local Welfare Scheme) – circa £3.473m;
- 3.5.2 delivery of a Council funded support package of up to £1m one-off funding funded from the Revenue Investment Fund; and
- 3.5.3 a menu of extended support which can be delivered from within existing available budgets based on a repurposing and reprioritisation of existing resources.

These are all aimed at short- to medium-term interventions, ranging from immediate actions to initiatives which will inevitably take longer to deliver but remain focused over the coming 18-month period.

The diagram below summarises our overall approach based on immediate, medium- and long-term actions.

A phased response to cost of living



Household Support Fund

- 3.6 The objective of the Government's Household Support Fund (HSF) is to provide support to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with significantly rising living costs, specifically food, energy and water bills. The County Council has successfully delivered the Household Support Fund, and its predecessor schemes, for multiple rounds under the delegated authority of the Strategic Director for Resources. This previous grant ran from 1 April to 30 September 2022 and Warwickshire's allocation of £3.47million from the Department of Work and Pensions has been successfully distributed to vulnerable households through the existing Local Welfare Scheme.
- 3.7 Government has announced an extension to the Fund and the next round of funding will run from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. We have received an allocation of £3.47m for this period. We propose to use the funding in a similar way to previous rounds of funding, to provide short-term support to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to access the essentials, including food and fuel:
- food and fuel vouchers to families/carers with children eligible for benefits-related free school meals;
 - fuel campaign cash vouchers by application through the Local Welfare Scheme;
 - an increased sum dedicated to welfare grants to community-led groups and initiatives, including schemes led by the five district and borough councils;

- food and fuel vouchers to pensioners in receipt of pension credit; and
- Act on Energy extended welfare offer.

Further details, such as eligibility, the application process, and other support available through the Local Welfare Scheme will be available at; warwickshire.gov.uk/localwelfarescheme

- 3.8 The Strategic Director for Resources has delegated authority to allocate the Household Support Fund in support of the Council's priorities and in previous years has made such allocations in support of the Council's priorities as set out in the Council Plan. This has been important to expedite the allocation of resources, ensuring that the funds reach their intended recipient as quickly as possible. The allocation proposed by the Strategic Director for Resources for the period October 2022 – March 2023 is attached at **Appendix 1** and Cabinet is asked to endorse that allocation subject to Government confirmation of the grant.

Funded Support Package

- 3.9 The Council's proposed funded support package identifies up to £1.0m intended to provide a local and targeted response to the cost-of-living, building on and complementing the measures announced by the Government and those announced or being implemented by partners, voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector and through other organisations and bodies across Warwickshire.
- 3.10 A package of proposed support has been identified and costed and is attached at **Appendix 2**. This is an indicative list and it must be recognised that the amounts allocated, and the specific areas of focus may need to flex given the fast-moving landscape and the possibility that Government and/or partners may offer similar support in these areas. As we allocate our one-off funding allocation, it is vital that we retain the flexibility and responsiveness to ensure that our funding secures maximum benefits and greatest reach on a sustainable basis, whilst avoiding duplication and potential over provision.
- 3.11 Although the support package at Appendix 2 is at this stage indicative, it will focus on the key areas/ themes:
- **Food poverty, financial hardship and fuel poverty:** providing increased funding for the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme;
 - **Food poverty:** extension of the community supermarkets proof of concept until March 2024;
 - **Food poverty and support fund:** creation of support funds for food banks, voluntary and community transport schemes, and other VCSE organisations undertaking activities to support cost-of-living pressures;
 - **Financial hardship, information and advice, and fuel poverty** additional capacity and financial resources for Citizens Advice and Act on Energy to provide debt, benefits, money management, housing, employment and energy advice; and

- **Fuel poverty and keeping warm:** the creation and extension of a network of warm hubs, including within Council operated buildings such as libraries and museums, in community venues and promoting local small businesses.

Menu of Extended Support

3.12 In addition to the activities referred to above, a number of initiatives will be rolled out in the short-term, covered from existing available budgets through repurposing and reprioritising existing resources. These are set out in more detail in **Appendix 3** and are summarised below. Some of these will require cross-agency, cross-sector working, including with the private sector, e.g., supermarkets, utility companies, banks etc:

- **Food poverty:** extend existing partnerships, such as with supermarkets and community pantries;
- **Financial hardship:** strengthen signposting and promotion of services such as Credit Unions, financial and debt advice;
- **Digital inclusion:** accelerate schemes similar to the laptop rollout as part of digital inclusion; and
- **Information and advice:** communications - establish a cross-media communications campaign, engaging partners to promote consistent messaging, including creating an on-line “Cost of Living Hub” as an online resource offering practical and financial advice to struggling residents, and issuing a printed ‘winter wellness’ guide to all households in the County.

4. Looking to the Future

4.1 It is difficult to assess the likely inflation trends over the medium to longer term. Some are predicting a stabilisation to levels of inflation on or around 2% towards the end of 2024-2025. Others have a more pessimistic outlook and consider that sustained cost-of-living pressures may persist into the medium term. Inevitably, this will increase need and demand for services at the very least in the short-term, with potentially longer-lasting implications for service delivery.

4.2 The annual refresh of the Integrated Delivery Plan will reflect cost-of-living considerations, a process that will further focus our effort and work on addressing the rising cost-of-living. Alongside increased demand and costs for core services, this will likely require reprioritisation of our plans and focus.

4.3 A key underlying challenge is that the cost-of-living is likely to drive significant increases in demand at the same time as our cost base will increase as a direct result of the inflationary pressures from energy prices and staff pay. These pressures are outside of our direct control and may limit our scope to provide direct additional support and divert our ability to deliver on some things the Council wishes to do. We will need to prioritise.

- 4.4 The Council's Community Powered Warwickshire programme, which acknowledges the ability of communities to identify their own challenges and priorities, and to suggest solutions to these, and in many cases to be part of solutions, will be an essential part of the Council's medium-term response. The programme's delivery plan will further embed the approach over the next 2 years. The plan will see extension of ongoing activities including the six "Ground Breakers" aiming to accelerate community powered approaches into activities aimed at easing cost-of-living pressures.
- 4.5 The countywide Levelling Up Approach for Warwickshire, approved by Cabinet in July 2022, is a fundamental part of the longer-term response which will also need to take account of the impact of the current cost-of-living challenge facing the County. The Levelling Up approach aims to tackle longstanding and disparities by working collaboratively with partners to focus effort on priority communities and places whilst recognising and protecting the strengths of other areas across the County. A key part of this work, already underway, is to develop local Levelling Up Plans with each District and Borough Council.
- 4.6 A specific priority, which could help both with the cost-of-living and Levelling Up, is to explore opportunities to auto-enrol eligible children for free school meals. This will require collaboration and data sharing with district and borough councils, and there is strong interest in progressing this, initially as a pilot.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 In the short-term, the activities described in 3.7 and Appendix 1 and 3.12 and Appendix 3 can be funded through existing resources.
- 5.2 The activities shown in Appendix 1 are funded from the Household Support Grant, based on the allocation of £3.47m grant to be used between October 2022 and March 2023. We do not know how much of this funding will continue beyond March 2023. More information may be made available as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement in December 2022. If this is not forthcoming the grant-funded support through by the Household Support Fund would cease.
- 5.3 The proposed package of additional support set out in paragraphs 3.9 to 3.11 and in Appendix 2 will require additional one-off, in-year funding of up to £1 million, if the proposals are to be taken forward. In 2022/23 this funding need can be met by an allocation from the Revenue Investment Fund. Approving the allocation will reduce the resources available to implement the Council's Integrated Delivery Plan. Cabinet should be aware that there is also a risk that this decision will reduce the flexibility in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to manage timing differences between cost pressures requiring funding and the delivery of savings. A further risk is that any decisions by the district and borough councils to increase the reliefs offered through their Local

Council Tax Reduction Schemes to partially alleviate the cost-of-living impacts for qualifying households would lead to significant costs to the County Council which would require the use of reserves. The extent of any such decisions would demand consideration of impact on the amount of one-off resources this Council could provide for these additional support measures anticipated.

5.4 The one-off nature of the resources being allocated to tackle the immediate cost-of-living issues means it is critically important that all activities are undertaken on the basis that the funding to support the themes in Appendix 2 is one-off funding, is only available for a limited amount of time and as such should not create dependency or an ongoing need.

5.5 It is therefore important that the use of resources (identified in Appendix 2) is targeted effectively and sufficiently flexible and responsive to adapt to the changing nature of the cost-of-living challenge and the interventions from other agencies both nationally and locally. To this end officers will undertake an evaluation of each proposal before implementation to ensure that the proposal:

5.6.1 complements other initiatives and does not duplicate;

5.6.2 has a sufficiently strong evidence base to justify the intervention;

5.6.3 is an effective and justifiable use of the available funding;

5.6.4 maximises the scope for longer term sustainability;

5.6.5 has an appropriate exit strategy recognising that this is one off funding; and

5.6.6 undertakes an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure decision making processes are fair and no group is disadvantaged or discouraged from participating.

The outputs of the evaluation will form part of the supporting information provided to the Strategic Director for Resources as he makes decisions about the allocation of the approved resources in consultation with the Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property and the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture.

6. Environmental Implications

6.1 The link between cost-of-living pressures and climate change is highlighted in the Sustainable Futures Strategy presented to Cabinet on today's agenda. Long-term key elements of the strategy, themselves being subject to external funding being available and actions also being taken by external bodies, will be critical to providing options and alternatives to current cost-of-living challenges, particularly in relation to securing sustainable energy supply and pricing.

7. Next Steps

7.1 Key next steps in mobilising the Council's response and offer include actions to:

- co-ordinate the Council's operational delivery of this response to cost-of-living pressures;
- finalise and implement the funded support package, and roll-out the Household Support fund package;
- finalise and implement the extended support offer through the Local Welfare Scheme;
- work with partners to develop and launch the Warwickshire cost-of-living microsite;
- convene a Warwickshire Cost-of-living Summit to be arranged with key stakeholders and partners; and
- work collaboratively with partners such as District and Borough Councils, Town and Parish Councils and voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to ensure a coordinated offer which is supported by joined up delivery mechanisms and appropriate signposting to services.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Household Support Fund allocation

Appendix 2 – Funded Support Package

Appendix 3 – Menu of Extended Support

Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:
Local Member(s): n/a - countywide

Appendix 1 – Household Support Fund

Household Support Fund (HSF) Grant 3 (October 22 – March 2023):

- **The HSF will be divided into awards for the following:**
 - up to three awards for food, fuel and personal hygiene;
 - one award for warm clothing allowance, water, and broadband; and
 - discretionary support for wider essentials by application, as required.
- Automatic awards for food and utilities will be provided to families where a child is eligible for a free school meal (FSM) in November and February. There will also be awards via application for families where a sibling is eligible for a FSM.
- Awards by application for utilities will also be split into two campaigns, with automation for families eligible for FSMs.
- Other awards for warm clothing, hygiene and white goods will be available by application only.
- An increased portion (11% or £380,000) of the HSF will be reserved to provide welfare grants to community groups, homeless charities, as well as specific projects run or supported by the District and Borough councils. As part of this we also propose to extend the level of grant awarded to Act on Energy (AoE).

Type of Support	Allocation (£)	Method of Distribution	% of Allocation
Food		£1,113,567.00	32%
Cost of Living campaign 1 Free School Meal only	£530,100.00	automatic	
Cost of Living campaign 2 Free School Meals only	£530,100.00	automatic	
Cost of Living campaign 1 Free School Meal siblings	£13,950.00	by application	
Cost of Living campaign 2 Free School Meals siblings	£13,950.00	by application	
Food applications	£25,467.00	by application	
Energy and Water		£1,882,063.00	54%
Cost of Living campaign 1 Free School Meal only	£833,500.00	automatic	
Cost of Living campaign 2 Free School Meals only	£833,500.00	automatic	
Cost of Living campaign 1 Free School Meal siblings	£23,250.00	by application	
Cost of Living campaign 2 Free School Meals siblings	£23,250.00	by application	
Utilities campaign 1	£23,250.00	by application	
Utilities campaign 2	£23,250.00	by application	
Fuel bill applications	£21,635.00	by application	
Water bill applications	£428.00	by application	
Essentials linked to Energy and Water		£20,190.00	1%
Hygiene	£190.00	by application	
Planned Need (fridge/freezer etc)	£10,000.00	by application	
Warm clothing allowance	£10,000.00	by application	
Wider essentials		£987.00	0%
Broadband	£150.00	by application	
Other	£837.00	By application	
Grants		£380,000.00	11%
Act on Energy	£100,000.00	welfare grant	
Borough Councils/District Councils	£200,000.00	welfare grant	
Community Groups	£80,000.00	welfare grant	
Admin		£76,190.00	2%
Welfare Resource	£62,190.00		
Ctalk 0800 call costs	£12,000.00		
Communications support	£1,000.00		
Consumables (print & postage)	£1,000.00		
TOTAL £3,472,997.00			

Appendix 2 – Additional Funded Support Package, indicative list and estimated costings

Theme	Offer	Service Lead	Estimated Maximum cost
Food Poverty	Extend the Community Supermarkets proof of concept funding from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.	Communities & Partnerships	£262,000
	Create a support fund for the County’s food banks, including support with energy costs, food costs, and the supply of other household essentials such as hygiene products.	Communities & Partnerships	£100,000
	Support Community Managed Libraries (CMLs) to operate “community fridges”.	Libraries	£10,000
Fuel Poverty and keeping warm	Extend library and museum opening hours as warm places. Explore opportunities for the opening hours of other WCC publicly accessible buildings to be expanded.	Libraries	£50,000
Keeping warm	Funding to extend Warwickshire Rural Community Council’s “Warm Hubs” project, providing warm spaces/hubs at community venues across the county https://www.wrccrural.org.uk/services/halls/warm-	Communities & Partnerships	£30,000

	hubs/		
Financial hardship	Support for voluntary and community transport schemes, including hardship funding, to be distributed via the established Warwickshire Community Transport group/partnership.	Communities & Partnerships	£50,000
	Reduce charges and provide more free children's and family activities in libraries and museums for one year.	Libraries	£30,000
Information and advice	Additional capacity for Citizens Advice for debt, benefits, money management, housing, and employment advice.	Communities & Partnerships	£285,000
	Communications campaigns with partners to ensure residents and businesses are aware of the support mechanisms available		
Support Fund	Create a support fund for VCSE organisations including Town and Parish Councils to maintain or establish projects addressing cost-of-living-pressures. Include a strand within the fund to provide mental health support to individuals and communities (similar to the support provided by mutual aid groups during the Pandemic). Grant awards of £1,000 or less to maximise spread and impact.	Communities & Partnerships	£180,000
		Total	£997,000

Appendix 3 - Options for potential Extended Support

Detail of options that have been assessed as viable and can be delivered within existing budget through repurposing and reprioritisation of existing resources.

This list will be kept under review and expanded on as further work is undertaken.

Theme	Offer	Service Lead
Food Poverty	Establish and extend partnerships with supermarkets, and supermarket surplus apps such as Too Good to Go, linking to community pantries, community fridges, and libraries	Communities & Partnerships
	Establish further links and signposting to programmes/tools such as BBC Food Waste, Money Saving Expert, Love Food Hate Waste, NHS Lose Weight Better Health, NHS Healthy Start	People Strategy & Commissioning / Marketing & Communications
	Investigate auto-enrolment for Free School Meals with associated Pupil Premium for schools	Communities & Partnerships
Fuel Poverty and Keeping warm	Promote libraries, museums, children's centres, Voluntary and Community Sector and Local Businesses as warm places (during their normal working hours)	Libraries
Financial hardship	Promote credit unions	Communities & Partnerships
	Refresh/renew the role of the countywide Financial Inclusion Partnership as a vehicle for greater levels of cross-agency and cross-sector working	Communities & Partnerships
Information and advice	Create with partners a Cost-of-living Hub as an online resource expanding information already available on the County Council website and offering practical and financial advice to residents. Link the microsite hub to other resources such as the Dear Life suicide prevention microsite.	Marketing & Communications
	Establish a cross-media marketing and communications campaign, with partners, to promote available support and the microsite above.	Marketing & Communications
	Distribute the winter wellness publication to households signposting support mechanisms available, and provide extra	Marketing & Communications

	copies in public places such as libraries, hospitals etc. This will provide a range of signposting and advice to keep well, physically, and mentally, over the winter.	
Digital Inclusion	Accelerate the laptop lending being rolled out as part of digital inclusion work.	Libraries
Business Support	Exploration of the support that can be offered to businesses by working with our partners such as the Federation of Small Businesses, Chamber of Commerce, Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub and the National Farmers union	Economy and Skills
	Active promotion of the Coventry and Warwickshire Green Business Support Programme, which can provide advice to businesses in reducing energy costs and explores options for grant funding to support investment in energy efficient equipment	Economy and Skills
	Expand/amend criteria for WRIF to allow for investments in activities that reduce energy use as opposed to job creation/safeguarding	Economy & Skills / Finance
	Work with District & Borough Councils to see if funding from the UKSPF could be directed at supporting future green business programmes in the county	Economy & Skills