

Appendix 4 - Environment and Sustainability Assessment

Project Title: Cost of Living programme Phase 2				
Department: SEP		Team: Cost of Living		Person Responsible for assessment: Alison Muckersie
Date of assessment: May 2023		Is it a new or existing proposal? Existing		
Brief description of the proposal: The expansion of the Cost-of-Living programme in Phase Two will include elements of enhancement to employment and enterprise opportunities for the most vulnerable communities in Birmingham, whilst retaining interventions to mitigate challenges of fuel and food poverty across the city.				
Potential impacts of the policy/development decision/procedure/ on:	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Specific Impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative, how can it be mitigated, what action will be taken?
Natural Resources- Impact on natural resources including water, soil, air			x	The programme does not have an effect on air, water, or soil quality.
Energy use and CO ₂ emissions	x			<p>Whilst the 243 warm spaces established in Phase 1 of the programme did generate additional energy costs, these were marginal, given that these buildings were in use before they became warm spaces. This impact has been further mitigated by the hundreds of users who were not using fuel at home but in a collective space. Warm spaces have been operating in a range of venues including Museums and Mosques, in Libraries, and Leisure Centres.</p> <p>In Phase 1 of the Cost of Living programme we provided energy cost top ups for 3,400 of the households experiencing the most fuel poverty in the city. A new element of Energy Resilience advice will be introduced in Phase 2, to assist citizens to apply for social tariffs and other</p>

				<p>assistance from utility companies.</p> <p>In Phase 2, there will also be additional support to a network to develop specialised or localised clusters of Warm Welcome spaces. The Warm Welcome workstream has become ever more closely aligned with energy resilience. Residents currently collect warm packs from Warm Welcome spaces when they visit. In Phase 2 of the programme the aim is to extend this programme to identify and send warm packs to those vulnerable residents that cannot access Warm Welcome spaces as part of Warm Welcome@ home. As part of the Warm Welcome approach, we will also provide emergency gas and electric funds to residents. We also hope to be able to pilot 'lendable' slow cookers and other energy saving devices to residents to help cut down on household energy bills.</p> <p>Part of any successful energy resilience workstream will be to increase education and awareness. This is about accelerating damp and mould education, including expanding signposting and information within the Warm Welcome spaces. There will be a particular focus on the private rental sector where capacity to do this is low. We also want to create a route to resolution so social housing and private renting residents can learn how to remediate problems and engage with landlords and, if necessary, enforcement teams. As part of this we will identify 20,000 dwellings where direct support will be provided to alleviate this burden.</p> <p>Through our energy saving work, our energy avoidance, by the use of warm spaces, and our use of food surplus and veggie and vegan offerings, we are reducing the carbon</p>
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				footprint of a sizeable proportion of citizens.
Impact on local green and open spaces and biodiversity			x	None of the work impacts positively or negatively on green spaces or biodiversity
Use of sustainable products and equipment	x			<p>The foodbanks we support have often used disposable packaging, and the warm spaces may use paper cups for warm drinks. However, we have restricted the purchase the foodbanks make of disposables, with our grants, to 5% of the total cost of their purchases. This was during a crisis but, as we move forward, we will continually make the case to our partners for more use of sustainable products.</p> <p>There is some waste created in the making of tea and coffee and the batching of food at our partner's Warm Spaces and Foodbanks, respectively. However, this is offset by the fact that the foodbanks and surplus food hubs use a great deal of surplus food that would otherwise go to waste. The foodbanks often offer predominantly vegetarian and vegan meals, and they play an educating role in the preparation of such food.</p>
Minimising waste	x			<p>There is significant food insecurity in Birmingham, whilst we also have enormous amounts of food waste in the city. Innovative approaches are needed to redirect surplus food so that it goes on people's plates rather than into landfill. A first surplus food hub was funded in Balsall Heath in Phase 1. It is likely a second hub, where surplus food is cooked into meals for Birmingham communities, will be developed in Phase 2. We are also looking at ways to promote more affordable food models, with a particular focus on provision in East Birmingham.</p>
Council plan priority: a city that takes a leading role in tackling climate change	x			By promoting energy efficiency and reduction in food waste the programme aims to promote sustainable lifestyles amongst vulnerable residents

Overall conclusion on the environmental and sustainability impacts of the proposal	<p>There is some waste and potentially additional energy use because of the Cost of Living Programme. However, it is more than offset by offering communal warm spaces to prevent vulnerable citizens from needing to use their own fuel and incur expense and energy in cooking their own food from scratch. Furthermore, our work to increase education and awareness in relation to damp and mould in the private rental sector, where capacity to do this is low, has the potential to improve living environments for some of our poorest citizens.</p> <p>Our energy saving advice, our warm packs and our rudimentary insulation saves additional domestic energy. With a focus on reducing food waste in Phase 2 we aim to redirect surplus food so that it goes on people's plates rather than into landfill. By working with some of the most vulnerable citizens in the city we aim to improve social, economic and environmental outcomes city-wide.</p>
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If you require assistance in completing this assessment, then please contact: ESAGuidance@birmingham.gov.uk