

## Appendix 2: Environmental Sustainability Assessment

<b>Project Title:</b> PROGRESS REPORT - COST OF LIVING EMERGENCY PROGRAMME				
<b>Department:</b> Strategy, Equalities and Partnerships		<b>Team:</b> Cost of Living Programme Team		<b>Person Responsible for assessment:</b> Greg Ward
<b>Date of assessment:</b> 16 <sup>TH</sup> March 2023		<b>Is it a new or existing proposal?:</b> Existing		
<b>Brief description of the proposal:</b> This is a programme that was set up after Birmingham Council declared a Cost of Living Emergency in October 2022. The Programme focuses on five main immediate actions: 1) Warm Spaces, 2) Food Provision, 3) Information and Guidance 4) Energy, 5) Support to Council staff. The current Cabinet Paper is a report on progress against these immediate actions since October 2023.				
<b>Potential impacts of the policy/development decision/procedure/ on:</b>	<b>Positive Impact</b>	<b>Negative Impact</b>	<b>No Specific Impact</b>	<b>What will the impact be? If the impact is negative, how can it be mitigated, what action will be taken?</b>
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 <sub>2</sub> emissions	X			<p>The 197 warm spaces do generate additional energy costs, although these are marginal, given that these buildings were in existence and functioned before they became warm spaces. We have warm spaces operating in Museums and Mosques, in Libraries, Leisure Centres and even a bowls club. This is further mitigated by the fact that there are hundreds of users every day who are not using fuel at home but in a collective space. This must create a benefit of scale.</p> <p>We do also provide energy cost top ups for the poorest households because of their vulnerabilities.</p> <p>The kitchen equipment that we have provided grants for is often reused and therefore may not be the most energy efficient. However, this is offset by the fact that food is</p>

				<p>prepared in batches for thousands of people who are therefore not using their own equipment.</p> <p>We ask applicant foodbanks to consider the environment and sustainability where possible, for example proposing buying reusable equipment rather than disposables.</p> <p>We do provide energy top-ups for the households experiencing the most fuel poverty in the city. There is therefore an encouragement of the use of energy, but these are for households that would become even more vulnerable without this support. The maximum group would be 5,000 homes receiving a £50 top-up. We complement this with the distribution of warm packs of electric blankets etc, rudimentary insulation such as draft excluders and through the loan of slow cookers and other energy efficient appliances.</p>
Impact on local green and open spaces and biodiversity			X	None of our work impacts either positively or negatively on green spaces.
Use of sustainable products and equipment		X		The foodbanks we support do often use disposable packaging, and the warm spaces often use paper cups for warm drinks. We have restricted the purchase the foodbanks make of disposables, with our grants, to 5% of the total cost of their purchases. Nevertheless, we need to be clear that the network of foodbanks and warm spaces do not always use sustainable products and equipment. This has been a crisis situation but as we move forward, we will continually make the case to our partners for more use of sustainable products.
Minimising waste	X			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.
Council plan priority: a city that takes a leading role in tackling climate change	X			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 footprint of a sizeable proportion of citizens.
Overall conclusion on the environmental and sustainability impacts of the proposal	<p>There is some waste and additional energy use as a result 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. Our energy saving advice, our warm packs and our rudimentary insulation saves additional domestic energy.</p> <p>Also, we are working with some of the most vulnerable citizens in the city and many of these communities would experience widespread hunger and cold without these interventions. Many have particular health needs which make these interventions ever more vital.</p>			

If you require assistance in completing this assessment, then please contact: [\[link\]](#)