

Report to Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

12 January 2023

Subject:	Cost of Living
Director:	Director of Finance Simone Hines
Contact Officer:	Simone Hines



1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board notes the work already ongoing by the Council to support its residents through the current Cost of Living crisis
- 1.2 That the Board comments on the work already in place and considers any recommendations to Cabinet for further initiatives to be considered.


2 Reasons for Recommendations

The Budget and Corporate Management Scrutiny Board has a key role to play in commenting upon the approach and shaping future thinking around the Council's response to the cost of living crisis.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people Young people must be taken into account when working with the voluntary and community sector to deliver against this priority.
	People live well and age well



	Elderly people may be disproportionately impacted by increasing costs as they get older and their needs change and increase. The approach taken by Sandwell therefore needs to deliver against this priority.
	<p>Strong resilient communities</p> <p>The cost of living crisis is projected to have adverse impacts upon the borough, Sandwell has higher rates of deprivation than the national average and therefore may be less equipped to absorb higher costs without support. It is therefore important that an appropriate and wide- reaching response takes place to support our population.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Council recognises the key role it has to play in supporting residents through the Cost of Living crisis, with the high levels of inflation and spiralling energy costs having a particular impact. The Council has put a number of measures in place already, including establishing ‘warm spaces’. A summary of the support in place can be found on the Council’s website - https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200371/cost_of_living_help

As the cost of living crisis continues to evolve it is important that the members and scrutiny are given an opportunity to comment on and develop council policy. Communications to residents, community resources and locations where support can be obtained must actively be shaped by members to ensure the service offer from the council is effective.

5 Implications

Resources:	The initiatives in place are largely being funded by government grant and existing council resources. Further work is likely to incur additional financial costs and this is being considered by Leadership Team.
Legal and Governance:	The Board has a responsibility to scrutinise all matter as appropriate in relation to the way the Council uses its resources to support residents and businesses.
Risk:	There are no direct risk implications as a result of his report.



Equality:	There are no direct equality implications associated with this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	Implications on health and wellbeing of our communities will be set out in further detail in the appendixes.
Social Value:	Engagement with the Board allows an opportunity to participate in service improvement and development.
Climate Change:	There are no direct climate change implications associated with this report.

6 Appendices

N/A – presentation to be received at the meeting

