

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive

30th November 2023

TITLE:	Cost of Living Update
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Anthony McKeown – Leader
CONTACT OFFICER:	David Smith - Head of Communities and Climate Change
WARDS INVOLVED:	All Wards

Appendices Attached:

Appendix A: Summary of Progress with Actions agreed in October 2022

Appendix B: Distribution of Emergency Funding and Referrals to Date

Appendix C: Voluntary Sector Cost of Living Emergency Fund Application Form

Appendix D: Cost of Living Ongoing Support Plan

1 Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis and present and agree options for providing further support

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Executive:
- Notes the content of the report; and
 - Approves the extended use of the Council's cost-of-living reserve to provide further support within the Borough.
 - Agrees the ongoing Cost of Living Response Plan as detailed in Appendix D.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Council reviewed the support provided to residents in the face of the cost-of-living crisis (and specifically rising energy costs) in September 2022. At its meeting on 8th December 2022, the Executive agreed a series of actions to

be taken by the Council in response to the crisis. The details of these agreed actions and progress to date is provided at Appendix A.

- 3.2 The Council's response has involved all of the customer-facing services across the Council. Many of the initiatives put in place following the December 2022 report are now embedded as 'business as usual'. Details of the distribution of emergency funding and referrals made to date are provided in Appendix B.
- 3.3 In addition to providing an update on actions, this report also proposes that further support be made available through use of the Council's reserve that was established in response of the cost-of-living crisis (application form detailed at Appendix C) and utilising funding available via the UKSPF.
- 3.4 The Council's ongoing Cost of Living Response Plan is detailed at Appendix D.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The actions in the report support delivery of Aim 1 of the Borough Plan: Supporting our communities to create a healthier and safer High Peak. Implementing a Cost of Living Response Plan is a priority action

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 None identified.

6. Implications

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)
None

6.2 Workforce
None

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment
This report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's equality and diversity principles.

The cost of living response is targeted at the most vulnerable residents who are most impacted by inflationary issues including the significant impact of rising energy costs.

The ongoing cost of living response commits to the ongoing collation and analysis of data and intelligence to better understand the issues faced with up-to-date intelligence. This will enable the response to be targeted towards the most vulnerable.

- 6.4 Financial Considerations
The report recommends extending the use of the Council's cost-of-living reserves to increase the support that is available for voluntary sector organisations. If funding is used to support project delivery then less (or no) funding may be available to support any organisations whose financial situation means that they can no longer continue to operate.
- 6.5 Legal
None
- 6.6 Climate Change
Measures to improve energy efficiency may also have a positive impact on domestic emissions.
- 6.7 Consultation
Not applicable
- 6.8 Risk Assessment
N/A

ANDREW P STOKES
Chief Executive

Web Links and
Background Papers

Contact details

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7. Introduction and Background

- 7.1 The Council reviewed the support provided to residents in the face of the cost-of-living crisis (and specifically rising energy costs) in September 2022. An initial briefing document outlining the Council's response to the crisis was sent to all councillors and then a report was subsequently approved by the Executive at its meeting on 8th December 2022.
- 7.2 The details of the actions identified in the December 2022 report and progress to date is provided at Appendix A under the following categories:
- Emergency Funding
 - Communications and Information Sharing
 - Facilitating Access to Emergency Support
 - Responding to the Energy Crisis
 - Supporting people to from crisis towards longer-term financial stability
 - Data and Intelligence
 - Supporting Businesses
 - Identifying impact on specific groups
 - Employer Responsibilities.
- 7.3 It is essential that the Council's actions recognise the multi-agency response to cost-of-living issues and that 'signposting' is critical to ensuring that High Peak's residents can be directed to the most appropriate sources of available support.
- 7.5 It should be noted that HPBC's response has been comprehensive and has involved all customer-facing of the services across the Council. Many of the initiatives put in place in autumn 2022 are now embedded as 'business as usual'.
- 7.6 The Council's role has included the distribution of national funding to households. It should be noted that the local discretion is limited. A summary of the amounts of funding distributed to individual households, including the criteria is attached at Appendix B. This also includes information on the number of referrals made for financial support from funds held by third parties.
- 7.7 It should also be stressed that, as most of the funding that the Council has distributed has been in line with government direction, it is extremely difficult to evaluate or even gauge the success or failure of its impact. Despite this it will be important for the Council, along with partners, to obtain data to understand any particular vulnerabilities in order to inform the planning of further action.

8 Future Actions

- 8.1 In addition to outlining ongoing actions, Appendix A also details future actions that will be undertaken by the Council.

- 8.2 As previously recognised and acknowledged, the ability of the Council to provide direct financial support, over and above that distributed by government direction, to individuals is limited. There are however several initiatives where the Council is continuing to provide residents with access to financial support including:
- Continuing to promote Derbyshire County Council's Household Support Referral Scheme for customers facing financial hardship;
 - Awarding the remaining balance of the Council Tax Support Fund to individuals who have made a new claim for Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) and other such vulnerable households throughout the 2023/24 financial year;
 - Contacting vulnerable LCTS claimants and encouraging them to make a claim; and
 - Continuing to support the Fuel Bank to assist residents in fuel crisis.
- 8.3 In order to maintain effective 'signposting' the information on the Cost-of-Living hub is reviewed regularly to ensure that up to date information is available to residents. The Council is also committed to the improvement of the communication of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) and Housing Benefit (HB) information.
- 8.4 The use of enforcement agents for the collection of debt is under review as requested by Executive. The first step has been the signing of the CAB Council Tax protocol. As part of this our appointed Enforcement Agents and advice agencies will work together going forward to help and support taxpayers pay their council tax bills while accessing debt advice when needed.
- 8.5 The ongoing coordination of a multi-agency response is also ensured by the Council's involvement in the High Peak Health and Wellbeing Partnership and particularly its Financial Inclusion Group.

Earmarked Reserve

- 8.6 There have only been a limited number of applications (from the Council's established earmarked reserve) for financial assistance from voluntary sector that are struggling to cope with the cost-of-living crisis. The emphasis to date has been for the Council to hold funding in reserve to enable it to step in if third-sector deliver partners are in danger of not being able to continue to provide services because of the impact of increased overheads on their own finances. The Council is aware that third-sector organisations are experiencing increases in energy costs and other overheads at a time of increasing demand for their services and that loss of any such services could be devastating for our communities.
- 8.7 Local feedback suggests food banks are really struggling and there are local community groups that would welcome support. The Council, therefore, wishes to extend the use of its earmarked reserve to provide match funding to

organisations that are providing vital support for those who are most affected by the cost-of-living crisis adopting the following principles:

- The scheme should be as simple as possible.
- Organisations will need to demonstrate at least one third match. This would provide beneficiaries with a 2:1 contribution for their funding, whilst generating at least 50% more value from the Council's reserve funds.
- Only 1 application will be allowed per applicant in any 12-month period with a maximum of £5,000 per application.
- Community groups of all forms are eligible but would need to demonstrate a contribution to at least one of our objectives.

8.8 A draft application form for the scheme is provided at Appendix C.

UKSPF

8.9 The High Peak UK Shared Prosperity Fund Board is due to receive proposals for utilising the budget allocation for measures to reduce the cost of living.

8.10 The investment priority to support measures to reduce the cost of living is:

E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.

8.11 The key deliverables are as follows:

- 500 people supported
- 3 organisations receiving grants
- 200 households receiving support
- 50 households taking up energy efficiency measures.

8.12 The budget allocation is as follows:

2023/24	Revenue £76,312, Capital £10,000 (£86,312)
2024/25	Revenue £109,719, capital £170,000 (£279,719)
Totals	Revenue £186,031, capital £180,000
Grand Total	£366,031

8.13 The Council is seeking to implement a three-tiered approach as follows:

Phase	Activities
Analysis	(i) Identify target households using various data sets. (ii) Assess beneficiaries of the Fuel Bank for suitability. (iii) Identify which houses have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).

	(iv) Offer ability for EPC to be completed for those without a current certificate.
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Triage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Work with energy advice providers. (ii) Engagement with target households using a variety of methods such as door-knocking, holding local awareness-raising events and other forms of advertising/marketing. (iii) Identify eligibility for existing funding schemes, support completion of applications and refer to UKSPF E13 programme if not eligible for other funding. (iv) Seek to enforce decent homes and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in privately rented households.
Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Installation of appropriate measures utilising UKSPF if not eligible for other funding schemes. (ii) Provide “hand holding” support through installation process.

8.14 The Council’s ongoing Cost of Living Response Plan is detailed at Appendix D.

Cost of Living – High Peak Borough Council Response – December 2022

Council Actions	Update	Further actions?
<i>Emergency Funding</i>		
Payment of the Government £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate – paid to every band A to D household in the High Peak.	Complete	
Payment of discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebates (properties above band D).	Complete	
Payment of the alternative fuel payment & energy bill support payment scheme.	Complete	
Supported Derbyshire County Council with the distribution of their allocation from the Household Support Fund.	DCC have made £219k available to us to enable us to deliver tailored assistance to those in need. So far in 203/24 we have assisted over 400 households through this funding.	Continue to support DDC with assistance to customers facing financial hardship.
Council Tax Support Fund	Further funding has been distributed to help reduce council tax bills for working age and pension age customers who are in receipt of Local Council Tax Support. The funding is to be delivered during the financial year 2023-24 and so far an amount of up to £50 has automatically	The remaining balance will automatically be awarded to individuals who have made a new claim for LCTR and other such vulnerable households throughout the financial 23-24

Council Actions	Update	Further actions?
	been awarded to claimants.	
<i>Communications and Information Sharing</i>		
<p>Targeted, consistent communications directing people towards helpful resources and links – some resources will be national and some local – this will include improvements to website content (including a ‘cost of living’ hub) and targeted social media posts.</p>	<p>Cost of Living Hub hosted on Council website, which signposts to key services. “Support for Households” leaflet updated and uploaded to Hub.</p>	<p>Check that Hub and leaflet are up-to-date.</p> <p>Website rebuild includes review to content and user journeys, to make easier to find info.</p>
<p>Improvement of the communication of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) and Housing Benefit (HB) information in communications to residents and identification of additional ways to improve LCTS and HB take-up.</p>	<p>A new LCTS banding scheme was introduced 1/4/23 for working age only (pensioners are dealt with under regulations set by Central Government and not the authorities’ local scheme). This scheme has increased the level of benefit that the most vulnerable claimants can receive from 91.5% to 100%. The new scheme is now a lot clearer for residents to understand and has removed the administrative burden for staff involved in processing claims.</p>	<p>As with any new schemes there were a small number of people who may have been worse off under the new scheme. On the introduction of the new scheme these people were notified that they could apply for hardship relief to support them through the transition to the new scheme.</p> <p>Where these claimants have not yet applied for hardship relief we are currently making contact with them and encouraging them to make a claim.</p>
<i>Facilitating Access to Emergency Support</i>		
<p>Strengthening the Council’s partnership with Citizens Advice to support additional demand.</p>	<p>The Council continue to provide funding for, and to work with, Citizens Advice to provide support and advice for residents.</p>	

Council Actions	Update	Further actions?
Continued support for food banks and other community-based schemes that are providing emergency help – building on the successful relationships that were developed throughout the response to the COVID pandemic	<p>The Council linked into Foodbank through the meetings with the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Community Lottery established to provide additional funding mechanism.</p>	
Revision and promotion of the Council's Council Tax Relief and Hardship Policies.	Policies updated.	Will be reviewed and updated in line with any changes.
<i>Responding to the Energy Crisis</i>		
<p>Promote national energy saving Programmes</p> <p>Work with Midlands Net Zero Hub on Gov funding programmes.</p> <p>Develop mechanisms to increase uptake of grant funding</p> <p>Work with DCC to establish demonstrator energy advice programme</p> <p>Support Warmer Derby and Derbyshire to provide energy advice.</p>	<p>The Council continues to work with the Midlands Net Zero Hub.</p> <p>Current funding LAD3 – wraps up at the end of Sept 2023</p> <p>HUG2 is mobilising to target off gas properties with full retrofit.</p> <p>Great British Insulation Scheme launched April 2023. Referral mechanism and targeted awareness raising needed.</p> <p>Boiler Upgrade Scheme – revise new funding limits on website</p>	<p>Support targeted marketing using data sets identifying potentially suitable household for HUG2, ECO 4, ECO flex and GBIS.</p> <p>Look at options to increase referral support.</p>

Council Actions	Update	Further actions?
<p>ECO4 and flex- Energy retrofits Promote and administer scheme applications For households with low income or Energy Performance Certificates D-G.</p> <p>Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) – single measure energy measures for council tax bands A to D.</p>		
<p>Utilise Mayoral Combined Authority funding for energy efficiency</p>	<p>Around £580k of capital has been provided to each borough and district across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire</p> <p>The proposal is to use this on Council housing stock to improve energy efficiency.</p>	<p>The proposal requires top up capital and revenue funding. Assets are managing the approval and delivery process for this.</p> <p>A dedicated officer is now in place in Assets to oversee this project and improve the energy in council housing stock.</p>
<p>Supporting HPBC tenants with additional energy costs associated with radon monitoring equipment</p>	<p>231 household offer a one- off payment of £75 per household to assist with the additional costs</p>	
<p>Creation of a High Peak Fuel Bank</p>	<p>Fuel Bank established.</p>	<p>Continue to support Fuel Bank.</p>

Council Actions	Update	Further actions?
Scheme to support families in fuel crisis.		
Promotion of 'Warmer Spaces'	Locations of Wamer Spaces highlighted on Council website.	Identify whether organisations are offering Warmer Spaces this year and, whether we need to update website.
<i>Supporting people to from crisis towards longer-term financial stability</i>		
Refresh of the Council's Debt Recovery Policies to identify vulnerability and provide for signposting for multi-agency support	Complete	
Continued work with the Derbyshire Financial Inclusion Group (FIG) to investigating alternative, perhaps multi-faceted, approaches to support.	Head of Revenues and Benefits continues to attend the multi-agency FIG meetings.	
CAB Council Tax Protocol	We have signed this protocol as our public commitment to its principles of fairness, partnership working and transparency in local authority debt collection.	By signing the protocol, High Peak Borough Council, Bristow & Sutor Enforcement Agents and advice agencies will work together going forward to help and support taxpayers pay their council tax bills while accessing debt advice when needed.
Vulnerability & Debt Collection Training	Training has been arranged for staff across the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Team to attend training during	

Council Actions	Update	Further actions?
	November 2023.	
<i>Data and Intelligence</i>		
Ongoing collation and analysis of data and intelligence to better understand the issues faced with up-to-date intelligence from partnership groups both strategic and operational; and national data sources that are extrapolated down to local level.	Profiles have been produced to assist with the Council's priority setting and also to guide action in localities.	Improve use of energy, income and tenure data to target support.
<i>Supporting Businesses</i>		
Revision and promotion of the Council's Business Rates Relief Policy	Completed	Will be reviewed and updated in line with any changes.
Implementation of the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds to provide business support	Priority action for Regeneration Service over the next quarter.	UKSPF Board to consider options and agree contracting arrangements.
<i>Employer Responsibilities</i>		
Support for our staff to identify and support the addressing of any emerging impacts on individuals	Information disseminated via Team Briefings.	

APPENDIX B

Cost of Living Support - Distribution of Emergency Funding and Referrals to Date

Funding	Source	Local Discretion Criteria	No of Households	Amount Distributed
Government Council Tax Energy Rebate	Direct Government Funding	None – £150 paid to every band A to D household in the High Peak	34,116	5.115,000
Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebates	Direct Government Funding - Allocation	<p>Properties in band E to H where the council tax liable person(s) are in receipt of Local Council Tax Reduction</p> <p>Houses in multiple occupation (HMO), where the tenants are not liable for council tax but are liable to pay fuel bills.</p> <p>New occupiers in Bands A to D who did not qualify for the rebate in their previous property.</p> <p>Targeted 'top-up' payments to the most vulnerable households in bands A – D for example those claiming full Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR).</p> <p>Where the person(s) liable for council tax can demonstrate hardship and suffering due to the rising cost of living</p>	4,943	148,862
Alternative Fuel Payment & Energy Bill Support Payment Scheme	Direct Award by Government	Signposting and verification	279	87,600
Household Support Fund	Derbyshire County Council	None – referral to DCC only		
Council Tax Support Fund	Direct Government Funding – Allocation based on no of LCTS Scheme claimants	<p>Grant funding received to support economically vulnerable households in their area with council tax bills during 2023-24</p> <p>The majority of the funding allocations is to be spent on reducing council tax bills for current working age and pension age Local Council Tax Support claimants by up to £25</p> <p>The remaining fund will be used to further support vulnerable households with council tax bills</p>	3,597(some of these households have received a top up and therefore received 2 payments)	84,516.89

Funding	Source	Local Discretion Criteria	No of Households	Amount Distributed
HUG1 Funding		Energy efficiency measures properties with fossil fuel heating systems such as oil, LPG or coal with EPC E-G	0 (several households were directed to HUG2 because the scheme had greater benefits for householders)	
LAD3 Funding		Support for energy efficiency measures for low-income households heated by mains gas	29 households 30 Measures	Capital £214k Revenue £21.4k
HUG2 (delivery starting)		Energy efficiency measured for off-grid properties with EPC F-G	Target 38 homes	Maximum £748k by 2025
High Peak Fuel Bank Scheme	Fuel Bank Foundation	Financial support for households on pre-payment meters living without heat light and power because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meters have switched off with no funds to get them back on again. ▪ Meters will switch off imminently (i.e. within the next 24-48 hours) and there is no money to avoid self-disconnection, or ▪ Household has heat, light and power, but the way they are funding it isn't sustainable or sensible – for example unregulated doorstep loans 		36
Financial assistance to voluntary sector organisations that are facing financial difficulties	HPBC Earmarked Reserve	Evaluation of Application		
Council Cost Of Living Hub	Website statistics	Anyone wishing to access information via the Council's on-line Cost-of Living Hub	2924	N/A

**High Peak
Voluntary Sector Cost-of-Living Emergency Fund
Application Form**

Funding is available for voluntary sector organisations that are providing support for those affected by the cost-of-living crisis within the High Peak.

You can apply to the scheme if you are:

- An Unincorporated Association (a group set up with a constitution)
- A Registered Charity
- A CIC
- A CIO
- A new group (not yet constituted)

AND if you are operating in, or benefiting, people or places within the borough of High Peak.

The following cannot apply

- Individuals
- Private Businesses
- Statutory organisations
- Any organisation that has political activity as one of its stated purposes i.e. as defined by the Charity Commission for England and Wales: any purpose directed at furthering the interests of any political party; or securing, or opposing, any change in the law or in the policy or decisions of central government, local authorities or other public bodies, whether in this country or abroad.

If you need any assistance in completing this form, please email communities@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk OR PHONE 01538 395692

SECTION 1 ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION

Name and address of organisation

Organisation name
(as per constitution)

Official or registered
address

Legal structure
(eg CIC, CIO,
Unincorporated)

Registered Charity
Number
(if applicable)

Registered Company
Number
(if applicable)

What service(s) does your organisation provide within the Borough?

Include geographic focus and beneficiaries

Does your project involve working with people under the age of 18 and/or vulnerable adults?

Yes/No

If yes, please tick to confirm the following is in place:

All employed staff and volunteers who work with under 18s/ adults at risk within regulated activity have an up-to-date DBS (CRB) check.

DBS (CRB) checks are renewed every 3 years.

A Safeguarding Children policy (if applicable)

A Safeguarding Adults at Risk policy (if applicable)

Which of the following Council priorities does your organisation help to deliver and how?

Providing advice	
Providing welcoming (warmer) spaces	
Tackling fuel poverty	
Tackling food poverty	
Providing support for those most at risk due to increased cost of living	

Are there any other organisations undertaking similar activity in the same area?

Details of main contact person

This must be the person who can talk about your application in detail.

Name

Position

Daytime phone number

Email address:

Banking arrangements

Does your organisation have a bank account? Yes/No

Does this bank account require the signatures of two unrelated people, living at separate addresses to access the account? Yes/No?

If successful, payments will be made by High Peak Borough Council directly into your bank account, please give details below:

Account Name

Account Number:

Sort Code

SECTION 2 FINANCIAL SUPPORT REQUESTED

Funding Requested

Match Funding Contribution

Please note that organisations must provide a match-funding contribution of at least one-third of the funding requested.

Why is this funding needed? Please provide as much detail as possible.

What will the funding be used for? Please provide as much detail as possible.

Does your organisation have cash flow issues that may force it to end its service provision within the next six months?

If yes, what measures are you putting in place/are putting in place to attempt to resolve the financial issues?

How do you plan to monitor the success of your project? You will be required to submit monitoring information to High Peak Borough Council

SECTION 3 DECLARATION

Please be aware that you are making this application at your own risk and we cannot be responsible to anybody for any loss, damage or costs arising directly or indirectly arising from this application.

- I have read, understand and accept the notes that came with this application form. I understand and agree to you using and publishing the information in this application. I agree that you can check the information in it and any supporting documents with other people and organisations.
- My organisation has the power to accept a grant, under your terms, and the power to pay back the grant if the terms are not being met.
- My organisation recognises and will support the Council's commitment to equal opportunities and diversity, the safety of our communities, safeguarding the environment, and upholding the Nolan principles, My organisation will endeavour to ensure that the funding will not be used in a way that is inconsistent with these commitments.
- I understand that any misleading statements (whether deliberate or accidental) I give at any point during the application process, or any information I knowingly withhold, could mean my organisation's application is not valid, in which case you will cancel the grant and claim back the money we have received, stop assessing and return the application, or withdraw any grant offered my organisation.
- I understand you will treat this information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, and have read the Data Protection statement in the guidance notes. I accept that you may make this form available to members of the public under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You will be notified. Personal information will be processed in line with Data Protection Act 2018.
- On behalf of my organisation, I agree that if we receive any grant from you, we will keep to the standard terms of grant and any further terms and conditions set out in the Grant Offer Letter.
- I confirm that, in the past five years (or, in the case of tax, the past three), neither the organisation (nor a member of a proposed consortium), nor any person with authority for either has, anywhere in the world, been found guilty of, liable for or threatened with:
 - (a) Bribery, conspiracy, corruption, fraud, human trafficking, forced labour, money laundering, a proceeds of crime/drug trafficking or tax offence, terrorism, theft or similar
 - (b) Not paying tax, social security contributions or their equivalent
 - (c) Acting anti-competitively, breaching the terms or spirit of a public contract bid or contract, grave professional misconduct, any form of insolvency, breaching the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or having an unresolvable conflict of interest under them
 - (d) Tax offences, a civil penalty for fraud or evasion, returns found to be incorrect under the abuse principles or equivalent, or failure of an avoidance scheme

We take from your signature(s) on this form as confirmation that you:

- Have understood we have legal responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- Accept that we will not be responsible for any loss or damage you suffer as a result of us meeting these legal responsibilities.

Finally, I am authorised to put forward this application on behalf of my organisation and sign this declaration.

Print Name	
Position within Organisation	
Signature	
Date	

SECTION 4 CHECKLIST

Please go through the following checklist to ensure that you have enclosed all the information you need to make an application. Applications will not be considered if incomplete.

- A completed grants application that is signed and dated by an appropriate person.
- A signed and dated copy of your constitution / governing document.
- A copy of your most recent set of accounts. (If you are a new organisation then a letter from your bank giving your organisation's name and account number, if you have a bank account).
- A copy of your Safeguarding Children Policy (if applicable)
- A copy of your Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy (if applicable).
- Any other information that you feel will demonstrate what you have written in your application form (if applicable).

High Peak Borough Council**Cost of Living Response Plan – November 2023**

Response	Actions
<i>Emergency Funding</i>	
Support Derbyshire County Council with the distribution of their allocation from the Household Support Fund.	Continue to support Derbyshire County Council with allocations of support to customers facing financial hardship.
Allocation of the Council Tax Support Fund	Distribute the remaining balance by awarding to individuals who have made a new claim for LCTR and other such vulnerable households throughout the 2023/24 financial year
<i>Communications and Information Sharing</i>	
Targeted, consistent communications directing people towards helpful resources and links	Ensure that Cost of Living Hub and leaflets are up-to-date. Website rebuild including review of content and user journeys, to make easier to find info.
Improvement of the communication of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) and Housing Benefit (HB) information in communications to residents and identification of additional ways to improve LCTS and HB take-up.	Implement ongoing take-up campaign Identify potential eligible claimants that have not yet applied for hardship relief and encouraging them to make a claim.
<i>Facilitating Access to Emergency Support</i>	
Partnership with Citizens Advice to support additional demand.	Continue to provide funding for, and to work with, Citizens Advice to provide support and advice for residents
Support for food banks and other community-based schemes that are providing emergency help	Continue to support the Food Banks and other community based schemes
Work to tackle illegal money lending	Continue to deliver existing project through the Community Safety Partnership
Revision and promotion of the Council's Council Tax Relief and Hardship Policies.	Ongoing review of policies to reflect any required changes

Response	Actions
<i>Responding to the Energy Crisis</i>	
Promotion of Warmer Derby and Derbyshire and other forms of support	Support targeted marketing using data sets identifying potentially suitable households Investigate and implement options to increase referral support
ECO4 and flex– Energy retrofits - Promote and administer scheme applications For households with low income or Energy Performance Certificates D-G.	Continue to promote and approve applications
Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) – single measure energy measures for council tax bands A to D.	Implement the GBIS scheme launched April 2023.
Creation of a High Peak Fuel Bank Scheme to support families in fuel crisis.	Continue to support the Fuel Bank.
Implementation of the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds to provide support to households	Contract with external providers to assist: UKSPF Board to consider options and agree contracting arrangements for distribution of the funding (£366,031) Consider best use of energy funding to fill gaps and stimulate markets.
Utilise the Mayoral Combined Authority funding for energy efficiency	Develop and implement a proposal is to utilise the funding on improving Council housing stock to improve energy efficiency
<i>Supporting people to from crisis towards longer-term financial stability</i>	
Work with the High Peak Financial Inclusion Group (FIG)	Investigating alternative, multi-faceted approaches to support
CAB Council Tax Protocol	Work with Enforcement Agents and advice agencies to help and support taxpayers pay their council tax bills while accessing debt advice when needed.
Vulnerability & Debt Collection Training	Ongoing training for Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Staff
<i>Data and Intelligence</i>	
Ongoing collation and analysis of data and intelligence to better understand the issues faced with up-to-date intelligence	Utilise data from partnership groups both strategic and operational; and national data sources that are extrapolated down to local level.

Response	Actions
	Improve use of energy data to target support.
<i>Supporting Businesses</i>	
Revision and promotion of the Council's Business Rates Relief Policy	Continue to review and update with any required changes.
<i>Identifying impact on specific groups</i>	
Provide assistance to voluntary sector organisations to ensure continuity of community support in recognition of the essential role provided by the sector	<p>Implement the High Peak Community Fund for providing financial assistance to voluntary sector organisations that wish to run projects to support the Council's response to the cost of living crisis and delivery of the corporate plan.</p> <p>One-off grants to local groups and organisations through the Councillors' Community Initiative Fund</p>
<i>Employer Responsibilities</i>	
Support for our staff to identify and support the addressing of any emerging impacts on individuals	Information disseminated via Team Briefings.