

# Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

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Meeting Venue  
**By Zoom**

Meeting Date  
**Thursday, 23 June 2022**

Meeting Time  
**10.00 am**

For further information please contact

**Wyn Richards, Scrutiny Manager and  
Head of Democratic Services**  
wyn.richards@powys.gov.uk



County Hall  
Llandrindod Wells  
Powys  
LD1 5LG  
17-06-2022

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Mae croeso i chi siarad yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg yn y cyfarfod. Rhowch wybod pa iaith rydych am ei defnyddio erbyn hanner dydd, ddau ddiwrnod gwaith cyn y cyfarfod.

You are welcome to speak Welsh or English in the meeting. Please inform us of which language you wish to use by noon, two working days before the meeting.

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## AGENDA

<b>1.</b>	<b>ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR</b>
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Arising from the Annual Meeting of the Council, to elect a Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

<b>2.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>
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To receive apologies for absence.

<b>3.</b>	<b>DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST</b>
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To receive any disclosures of interests by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

<b>4.</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS</b>
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To receive disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

(NB: Members are reminded that under Section 78 Members having been given a prohibited party whip cannot vote on a matter before the Committee.)

<b>5.</b>	<b>DISCRETIONARY COST OF LIVING SUPPORT SCHEME</b>
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To receive and consider the joint report of the Cabinet Member for Fairer Powys and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation.

(Pages 3 - 32)

<b>6.</b>	<b>WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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To receive and consider the recommendations of the following Working Groups:

22-03-2022 - Buying Homes Working Group

(Pages 33 - 34)

<b>7.</b>	<b>SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME</b>
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To note the draft forward work programme of the Committee.

(Pages 35 - 36)

**Committee Reflection**

Following the close of the meeting the Committee is asked to take 5 to 10 minutes to reflect on today's meeting.

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.****Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee  
Date 23rd June**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Cllr Matthew Dorrance - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys  
Cllr David Thomas - Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation

**REPORT TITLE:** Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme

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**REPORT FOR:** Decision

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 Welsh Government announced a package of measures to help people with the cost-of-living crisis. The package includes provision for a discretionary support scheme as well as for the main scheme. The funding allocated to Powys Council is £924,373.
- 1.2 The schemes are intended to provide immediate support to households as Wales recovers from the pandemic and to deal with the impact of increasing energy and other living costs.
- 1.3 A decision is needed from Cabinet to consider the scope and design of the scheme and agree the use of the funding.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 In developing a local Discretionary Scheme, Powys Council has complete autonomy to target the funds to best support its residents and to ensure its approach best suits the needs of individual households.
- 2.2 The main Cost of Living Support Scheme (COLSS) is being rolled out and covers paying £150 to all households: -
  - In receipt of Council Tax Reductions Scheme due to being on a low income in all Council Tax bands
  - In Council Tax Bands A to D.

This will support just under 36,000 households to the value of £5.39m. This assumes 100% take up of the main scheme.

- 2.3 The discretionary nature of this scheme allows Powys to consider other categories of people who pay Council Tax as well as tackling broader cost of living support issues that residents of Powys may have. Welsh

Government in its guidance states that the scheme can consider wider areas of support need such as: -

- Enhancing capacity within existing support functions to maximise income and provide effective advice.
- Linking with energy efficiency schemes for properties with high EPC ratings.
- Supporting Community Pantry and Food Club initiatives for access by wider community.
- Supporting transport/fuel initiatives in rural communities.

The value of an award is for the Local Authority to decide, and it can cover for example, an actual cost of living situation a resident face or an actual service cost like meals on wheels.

2.4 Funding not utilised from the main Cost of Living Support scheme after Administration costs are covered or not spent in this Discretionary scheme can be used to maximise support with new rounds of support to residents in this Discretionary scheme. A decision would therefore need to be made as part of this report approval process, how Powys Council wishes to use any unspent funds and how they should be allocated.

2.5 Engagement and views of potential keys crisis areas for residents and communities have been sought from the following service areas and externally too: -

- Education
- Housing
- Adult Services
- Children's Services
- Foodbanks, Citizens Advice and P.A.V.O.
- Anti-Poverty Champion for Powys Council

2.6 Detailed analysis of Powys County Council Tax base has been undertaken to see where further Council Tax bands could be awarded a discretionary grant and a potential value rate. Given the number of properties in the higher bands, made this form of scheme award very difficult to have much value to residents. Also, the nature of an arbitrary band award whilst residents in other bands received nothing would not help the scheme design to be an inclusive scheme and therefore a different approach is needed in Powys.

### **3 Advice**

3.1 It is recommended the scheme design for Powys, supports a broad range of initiatives and measures to help residents deal with the current crisis and is balanced between: -

- Directly supporting those most in need and vulnerable

- Provide some support to external agencies who give support to those in need in this crisis and are having increase in costs or demands or workload due to the crisis
- Provide some long-term support to help deal with some of the root causes of the crisis

The Welsh Government have stated that the scheme design should be to ensure funds reach the “pockets” of needy households as the key priority.

- 3.2 Welsh Government have advised that underspend in the main scheme fund can be used to support the discretionary scheme if not used and it is recommended that main scheme funds be diverted in this way if underspend occurs. The other choice for main scheme fund underspend would be to allocate that directly to the Council Tax account which could be an issue if this is done without a customer contacting us to ask for that, as it assumes the person wishes to take up the grant in every case.

Therefore, on balance the recommendation is to move the main scheme funds to the discretionary scheme.

- 3.3 A small group of Officers and Councillors should be established to ensure spend is not overspent; to agree priorities and allocated appropriately and in accordance with the scheme rules and if there is an underspend this group will determine how that should be spent in accordance with the principles of this scheme and Welsh Government guidance. For example: -
- A second set of payments to external agencies and foodbanks or other agencies that did not get payment first time around
  - Different groups of in need residents that are identified
  - A second set of payments to service areas to directly support vulnerable residents.
- 3.4 A breakdown of the proposed scheme design and reasons for inclusion are included in the table below

<b>Scheme Item</b>	<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Num-ber</b>	<b>Cost</b>
£150 to residents in receipt of Disabled Band Reduction in all Council Tax bands	Likely that residents will be more vulnerable as will have mobility issue and in receipt of various disability benefits	122	£18,300
£150 to all residents in occupied properties that	Includes residents who have severe mental impairment, care leavers etc and so are residents who will be more vulnerable due	480	£72,000

are currently exempt	to the nature of the exemption in their circumstances		
£150 to families of children on Free School Meals who do not receive Council tax Reduction	Residents will be on very low incomes or on means tested benefits (e.g., Universal Credit) and so are residents who will be more vulnerable.  They may have already received support through the main scheme and checks would be needed to avoid duplication. 50% non-overlap estimated	150	£22,500
£150 to vulnerable young people	These are care leavers not included in the exemption scheme above but are considered vulnerable by Children's Services. Also Foster Carers and Connected Persons who need support with additional household costs and young people in Supported accommodation.  Checks would need to be made to avoid duplication	248	£37,200
£150 to residents who have care needs in the community and have undergone a means test assessment	Residents will have extra costs and care needs and be on low incomes and so are residents who will be more vulnerable.  They may have already received support through the main scheme and checks would be needed to avoid duplication. 50% non-overlap estimated	498	£74,700
£150 to residents who live in homes that have off-grid fuel supply	These residents have higher costs and who will therefore be more vulnerable in that sense.  A panel decision needs to be made here whether to allow anyone to apply regardless of whether they have received a payment under the main scheme OR only allowing an application if they have not received a grant	1000	£150,000

	already in the main scheme. As a result of this, numbers are estimated		
Home Loss Prevention Scheme	Housing administered scheme(s) to directly prevent homelessness for those who can't access rent arrears help through the Discretionary Housing Payment along with the ability to support those in who are mortgaged and at threat of losing their home. The reasons would need to be cost of living crisis related.	20	£20,000
£5k grant given to all foodbanks	This fulfils the support to external agencies element of the discretionary scheme working directly with vulnerable customers in need.  Following discussion with foodbanks, the preference from them was to receive the grant unspecified for most flexibility.	11	£55,000
Up to £1k grant given to all breakfast clubs attached to schools	This fulfils the support to external agencies element of the discretionary scheme and who will have higher costs to deliver the clubs in Powys schools which would mean they do not pass all or some of these costs onto parents.  A graded grant decided by Panel up to £1k depending on the numbers of pupils attending could be awarded	66	£40,000
£5k grants given to support agencies working directly with customers in need	The agencies could include those that are providing direct support to residents with such things as debt advice and budget advice or to credit unions to support good financial management etc.  This fulfils the support to external agencies element of the discretionary scheme and these	16	£80,000

	<p>agencies will have higher costs and more workload pressures due to the increase in numbers of clients presenting with cost-of-living crisis issues.</p> <p>Checks would need to be made to ensure that the Council has not increased support to the agencies for this crisis already.</p> <p>Panel would decide the final amount and agencies supported</p>		
<p>Fund set up to allow those in Powys Council who work directly with vulnerable residents to alleviate cost of living crisis needs as they come across it</p>	<p>These residents may have very specific situations that need support that our teams can see and directly help alleviate issues as they come across them and be more flexible in the levels of help, they give. These residents will be considered more vulnerable, as they will be presenting to the Council anyway around our statutory services.</p> <p>Panel needs to decide if a top value should be allocated to an individual award made to a vulnerable person or whether a limit could cause issues. Also, it would need to ensure the final design of this scheme element has a consistency of approach and avoids any risk of duplication.</p> <p>Teams would need to confirm the need is for cost-of-living crisis issues and maintain some simple records for Welsh Government audit requirements</p> <p>Suggested service teams with access: -  Adult Services  Children's Services  Housing  Education  Money Advice Team</p>	<p>420</p>	<p>£105,000</p>

Energy Efficiency work	<p>Installing photo voltaic panels and where needed battery backup systems too, to suitable homes where we have already undertaken some energy efficiency work, but further work is needed.</p> <p>We can identify and support our more vulnerable residents by intelligently identifying and fitting these schemes to between 25 to 50 homes.</p> <p>This will support vulnerable residents directly now by reducing energy costs during this crisis, but more importantly, it should provide more long term and sustainable solutions to this crisis for the homes fitted which is one of the key priorities that this discretionary scheme is designed to achieve in Powys</p>	50	£250,000
			£924,700

- 3.5 The discretionary scheme funding is balanced between the 3 key objectives identified in Section 3.1
- Grants up to 93 external agencies that support residents amounting to £175,000.
  - Funding to help develop more long-term solutions to this crisis is £250,000.
  - Direct support up to potentially 3000 more vulnerable residents would be £499,700.

Direct support is 55% of the scheme total so it represents the highest value priority in line with Welsh Government intentions. However, it has to be recognised that the long-term solutions element will also directly support vulnerable residents with less energy costs and so including that element, 81% of the scheme design contributes to the overall Welsh Government intention that the funds support the finances of needy households as the key priority.

The total support is £924,700, but it would be anticipated that further support could be made available if there is underspend or if funding becomes available from the main scheme.

#### **4. Resource Implications**

- 4.1 There would be some resource implications for those who are responsible for allocating and governing funding.
- 4.2 Officers delivering services to residents in need would also have some additional resource implications in delivering it alongside Income and Awards and Creditors teams who will be administering payments.
- 4.3 These resources will be met from existing service budgets.
- 4.4 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report and can support the recommendation.

#### **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 Legal: the recommendations can be accepted from a legal point of view
- 5.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".

#### **6. Data Protection**

- 6.1 None

#### **7. Comment from local member(s)**

#### **8. Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 The assessment has demonstrated that the scheme design is supportive overall towards key areas of the Well-Being Goals, Vision 2025 and on service delivery outcomes. It also shows that a scheme designed to help those with existing known poverty or known vulnerabilities circumstances rather than an arbitrary scheme makes a better contribution and impact to the Well-Being Goals, Vision 2025 and on service delivery outcomes.

The assessment also shows that Powys has attempted to design a scheme that delivers support to people directly in this crisis as a key priority but also has attempted to balance that support to some residents better with more longer-term solutions to the energy crisis. Finally, the assessment shows that the delivery mechanism of using existing service delivery within Powys to understand need and support residents and also supporting agencies that deliver directly to residents in the crisis is the best approach too.

**9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 To approve that any underspend on the main Cost of Living Support Scheme (COLSS) is transferred to the Discretionary Scheme fund.
- 9.2 To approve the establishment of a Councillor and Officer Group as advised in Section 3.3 of this report.
- 9.2 To approve the Cost-of-Living crisis Discretionary Scheme set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report.

Contact Officer: David Morris
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Head of Service: Jane Thomas
Corporate Director:

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# Impact Assessment

## Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme



17/06/2022

Reference: 2570-1715-9860-0584

Impact Assessments (IA) are a process of assessing how our proposals and decisions might impact upon different types of people and communities and developing proposals in line with relevant legislation.

**This is a legal requirement, and ensures the Council considers key legislation, including Equalities, Welsh language, Future Generations, Socio-economic Duty and Risk when developing proposals.**

**It will also help the Council make the best possible decisions for the people of Powys.**

# 1. Proposal Information

<b>Author name</b>	David Morris, Senior Manager Income and Awards
<b>Head of service</b>	Nicole Thomas, Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer)
<b>Portfolio holder</b>	David Thomas, portfolio holder for Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation
<b>Proposal title</b>	Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme
<b>Description of proposal</b>	<p>Welsh Government announced a package of measures to help people with the cost-of-living crisis. The main scheme covers paying £150 to all households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction in all Council Tax bands and in Council Tax Bands A to D and will support about 36,000 households. In developing a local Discretionary Scheme, Powys Council has autonomy to target funds to best support its residents and to ensure its approach best suits the needs of individual households but must ensure its design ensure funds reach the “pockets” of needy households as the key priority. Detailed analysis of Powys County Council Tax base has been undertaken to see where further Council Tax bands could be awarded a discretionary grant and a potential value rate. Given the number of properties in the higher bands, made this form of scheme award very difficult to have much value to residents. Also, the nature of an arbitrary band award whilst residents in other bands received nothing would not help the scheme design to be an inclusive scheme and therefore a different approach is needed in Powys. The Powys scheme instead focus on A) Directly supporting those more vulnerable groups as being identified as most in need as well as B) providing support to external agencies who give support directly to those in need and C) Provide some long-term support to help deal with some of the root causes of the crisis. The report proposal in section 3 provides a table of those areas where support is allocated.</p>

## 2. Savings and Consultation requirements

### Profile of savings delivery

### Consultation requirements

<b>Consultation required?</b>	No
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**Justification**

The guidance from this Form states that services should seek to engage stakeholders when assessing the impact of changes to service provision. This is not a change of service provision. However to help shape the report, the following stakeholders were contacted to ask their views on the impact of the cost of living on Powys residents. They included Key services who engage directly (Education/Social Services/Housing); Anti Poverty champion for Powys; PAVO; Citizens Advice and Foodbanks.

### 3. Impact on other service areas, geographical areas and data protection

#### 3a. Impact on other service areas

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#### 3b. Impact on geographical locations

The entire county

#### 3c. Data protection impact assessment

<b>Will the proposal involve processing the personal details of individuals?</b>	Yes
<b>Is Powys County Council the data controller?</b>	Yes
<b>Further information</b>	DPIA requested to consider if needed

### 4. Impact on Vision 2025

#### 4a. The economy

<b>Impact</b>	The grant scheme proposed will support energy efficiency works to vulnerable householders who have had some energy works done and an energy certificate granted but remain still in a difficult situation with high energy costs. The additional works will source battery and solar panels to work alongside other efficiency measures and will help reduce individual household energy bills but will also support long term improvements to people's homes as well. This scheme will therefore directly support more sustainable housing in Powys.
<b>Impact rating</b>	Good
<b>Mitigation</b>	The outcome is positive but as part of the process, each home will be intelligently inspected to ensure the best solution is provided.
<b>Mitigated impact rating</b>	Good

#### 4b. Health and care

<b>Impact</b>	<p>The grant scheme proposed will support energy efficiency works to vulnerable householders who have had some energy works done and an energy certificate granted but remain still in a difficult situation with high energy costs. The additional works will source battery and solar panels to work alongside other efficiency measures and will help reduce individual household energy bills but will also support long term improvements to people's homes as well.</p> <p>This proposal supports helping those in homes with off grid supplies by providing them with support for heating costs to the value of £150 each.</p> <p>This proposal supports preventing homelessness in tenanted and mortgage properties that are at risk of eviction due to the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>This proposal supports helping people get advice and guidance to prevent homelessness by supporting agencies that provide advice with grants who are experiencing additional workloads due to the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>This proposal also supports foodbanks and breakfast clubs to continue to support Powys residents to eat during the crisis.</p> <p>This proposal supports service areas directly helping vulnerable customers in need with fuel or energy or other crisis issues.</p>
<b>Impact rating</b>	Good

<b>Mitigation</b>	The discretionary scheme will help those that are considered more vulnerable in the ways described. The main scheme will help support those in a broad range of categories. However there will be those that fall outside of known poverty indicators or are not vulnerable or not in Bands A to D but may still be impacted by the crisis have not been helped in this route. There is an assumption that households in Band E and above may be able to afford to heat homes and eat, but that isn't necessarily the case. Those homes would need to present themselves to the Council or advice agencies or foodbanks to get support
<b>Mitigated impact rating</b>	Good

#### 4c. Learning and skills

<b>Impact</b>	<p>This proposal support the award of a grant to help breakfast clubs with extra costs and allow children to have healthy breakfast before school and to keep costs down to parents as a result.</p> <p>This proposal support children to keep out of poverty by awarding £150 to families of children on Free School Meals who do not receive Council tax Reduction.</p>
<b>Impact rating</b>	Good
<b>Mitigation</b>	The only way to support other children in poverty would be to extend the payment provision beyond £150 to families of more than one child if funding is available.
<b>Mitigated impact rating</b>	Good

#### 4d. Residents and communities

<b>Impact</b>	<p>This proposal focuses on working with partners to support communities and residents through the cost of living crisis by awarding grants to the various agencies and support organisations to be able support them through directly or with advice and help and therefore remain resilient.</p> <p>This proposal also supports grant awards of Powys that work directly with vulnerable adults and children and families etc so that if they see a cost of living need they can support the resident directly through the crisis which makes the resilience of the community.</p>
<b>Impact rating</b>	Good

<b>Mitigation</b>	Some vulnerabilities will be known to the Council and agencies but there is a reliance on residents presenting themselves with issues in order for the Council to support them. Communicating the scheme and making it well known throughout Powys is essential.
<b>Mitigated impact rating</b>	Good

#### 4e. Evidence

Welsh Government Discretionary Scheme guidance is available.

No other evidence is available

## 5. Impact on well-being goals including Welsh language and equalities

### 5a. A prosperous Wales

<b>Impact</b>	The grant scheme proposed will support energy efficiency works to vulnerable householders who have had some energy works done and an energy certificate granted but remain still in a difficult situation with high energy costs. The additional works will source battery and solar panels to work alongside other efficiency measures and will help reduce individual household energy bills but will also support long term improvements to people's homes as well. Intelligent work will be done on each home to determine what if any works need doing before they are completed. This scheme will therefore directly support more sustainable housing in Powys creating better more low carbon homes and will use resources more effectively.
<b>Impact rating</b>	Good
<b>Mitigation</b>	Housing will be asked to consider using local suppliers and trades people when considering the rollout of this scheme
<b>Mitigated impact rating</b>	Good

### 5b. A resilient Wales

<b>Impact</b>	The grant scheme proposed will support energy efficiency works to vulnerable householders who have had some energy works done and an energy certificate granted but remain still in a difficult situation with high energy costs. The additional works will source battery and solar panels to work alongside other efficiency measures and will help reduce individual household energy bills but will also support long term improvements to people's homes as well. This scheme will therefore directly support more energy efficient homes in Powys
<b>Impact rating</b>	Good
<b>Mitigation</b>	No new mitigations beyond extending the scope of the scheme for which there is no new funding
<b>Mitigated impact rating</b>	Good

### 5c. A healthier Wales

<b>Impact</b>	<p>The proposal is positive as grant awards are given to service areas to support residents directly with their cost of living crisis needs. This will help people remain healthy physically and mentally as they will be supporting with essential needs of food, fuel and energy.</p> <p>The proposal also supports grants to be awards to breakfast clubs, foodbanks and support agencies deliver help to those that need it with the cost of living crisis needs as they are presented to them. The work is again targeted at helping residents with basic needs and financial needs and therefore will support their physical health but also mental health. For example there is a known link between being in financial debt and mental health. Advice agencies including debt advice agencies will be supported to help residents improve their financial health and therefore their mental health.</p>
<b>Impact rating</b>	Good
<b>Mitigation</b>	Ensuring that the advice agencies, foodbanks and Powys Council services that have grant provisions to support people must be made known to Powys residents widely to ensure access to those that need help.
<b>Mitigated impact rating</b>	Good

### 5d. A Wales of cohesive communities

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### 5e. A globally responsible Wales

<b>Impact</b>	None
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## 5f. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

### Using Welsh

<b>Impact</b>	Given the discretionary and very broad nature of the scheme, there is a potential for service access to be not available in Welsh including such forms of communication or service delivery access.
<b>Impact rating</b>	Poor
<b>Mitigation</b>	When awarding grants to agencies ensuring welsh service user access is given and when Council communications go out, or for example digital forms are used, ensuring access to Welsh forms are available in the same form as English.
<b>Mitigated impact rating</b>	Good

### Promoting Welsh

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### Sports, Art & Recreation

<b>Impact</b>	None
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## 5g. A more equal Wales

### Age

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### Disability

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### Gender Reassignment

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### Marriage or Civil Partnership

<b>Impact</b>	None
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## Race

<b>Impact</b>	None
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## Religion or Belief

<b>Impact</b>	None
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## Sex

<b>Impact</b>	None
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## Sexual Orientation

<b>Impact</b>	None
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## Pregnancy and Maternity

<b>Impact</b>	None
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## Socio-economic Duty

<b>Impact</b>	<p>The discretionary scheme is intended to deliver approx. £1m of support to those in this current crisis who will face some form of energy or food or fuel poverty impact during this crisis. This includes the decision to award grants to agencies who support people directly with this particular current crisis issues.</p> <p>The decision not to award the grant in an arbitrary manner is specifically intended not to provide support directly to those who may be able to get through the existing crisis circumstances.</p> <p>The scheme is also designed to further deliver the additional funds more directly who the Council know have some form of known vulnerability or poverty situation (for example we intend to support families in receipt of Free School Meals) or whom present to our service teams as being in need in this crisis.</p>
<b>Impact rating</b>	Good

<b>Mitigation</b>	As the scheme is delivered other forms of unknown groups may emerge and if some funding remains, collecting information on new situations or circumstances from those delivering the schemes may be appropriate to support others caught in poverty.
<b>Mitigated impact rating</b>	Good

## 5h. Evidence

No evidence provided as the work is designed to deliver a scheme through known service provisions

## 6. Impact on key guiding principles & workforce

### 6a. Sustainable development principles

#### Long-term

<b>Impact</b>	The grant is intended to deliver short term aid to those facing the cost of living crisis now. However Powys Council has tried to balance that short term priority with an intended energy efficiency scheme that will support residents and those homes with more sustainable housing in the longer term.
<b>Impact rating</b>	Neutral
<b>Mitigation</b>	Not specified

#### Collaboration

<b>Impact</b>	The scheme has listened to the various agencies in the design phase as well as services who deliver support to residents in financial need. The scheme is also intended to support their work in this area with grant support rather than creating new forms of Powys Council service provision.
<b>Impact rating</b>	Good
<b>Mitigation</b>	Not specified

#### Involvement (including Communication and Engagement)

<b>Impact</b>	<p>During the scheme design, external stakeholders were engaged with. Also the service areas who deliver support directly to customers who have vulnerabilities in various ways were also asked to share impacts of the crisis to support the scheme design.</p> <p>There has been no time to launch a public consultation on the scheme design as the intention is to deliver support to residents urgently and that is why the scheme is designed to support mainly through existing council or agency mechanisms.</p>
<b>Impact rating</b>	Neutral
<b>Mitigation</b>	Not specified

### Prevention

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### Integration

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### 6b. Impact on the workforce

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### 6c. Impact on payroll

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### 6d. Welsh language impact on staff

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### 6e. Impact on apprenticeships

<b>Impact</b>	None
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### 6f. Evidence

no evidence as very little impact in the section

## 7. Likelihood and risks

### Risk 1

<b>Description</b>	a risk of residents who face difficulty not knowing that help is available from Powys Council or agency work and therefore do not get support that is needed through the crisis.				
<b>Likelihood score</b>	4	<b>Impact score</b>	3	<b>Risk rating</b>	12.0
<b>Mitigation</b>	A full and effective communications processs through partners and Council services				
<b>Residual likelihood score</b>	3	<b>Residual impact score</b>	3	<b>Residual risk rating</b>	9.0

### Risk 2

<b>Description</b>	A risk that a group of residents fall outside of the scheme design that is unintended or unknown and therefore don't receive support through the crisis.				
<b>Likelihood score</b>	3	<b>Impact score</b>	3	<b>Risk rating</b>	9.0
<b>Mitigation</b>	taking regular soundings of agency partners and service delivery partners and Councillors to ensure emerging new issues are considered.				
<b>Residual likelihood score</b>	3	<b>Residual impact score</b>	2	<b>Residual risk rating</b>	6.0

## 8. Overall summary and judgement

### Outline assessment

The IAA has demonstrated that the scheme design is supportive overall towards key areas of the Well-Being Goals, Vision 2025 and on service delivery.

It also shows that a scheme designed to help those with existing known poverty or known vulnerabilities circumstances rather than an arbitrary scheme makes a better contribution and impact to the Well-Being Goals, Vision 2025 and on service delivery.

The IAA also shows that Powys has attempted to design a scheme that delivers support to people directly in this crisis as a key priority but also has attempted to balance that support to some residents better with more longer term solutions to the energy crisis.

Finally the IAA shows that delivery mechanism of using existing service delivery within Powys to understand need and support residents and also supporting agencies that deliver directly to residents in the crisis is the best approach too.

<b>Cabinet reference</b>	
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## 9. Additional evidence

none

## 10. Ongoing monitoring arrangements and governance

### Monitoring arrangements

a panel of councillors and officers will look to ensure the right decisions are made during the distribution of grants and also will review current use and impact plus any non use of funding in September 2022 as well as listening to services, residents and agencies before deciding on any new delivery of funding in any way

<b>Review date</b>	12/09/2022
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# Cost-of-Living Support Scheme: Discretionary Support



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## Supplementary Information

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## **1. Purpose of this document**

This guidance is to provide Welsh principal local authorities with relevant information to enable them to design and a deliver a Discretionary Cost-of Living Support Scheme (DCOLSS) on behalf of the Welsh Government. The package was announced as part of the Welsh Government's Supplementary Budget on 15 February 2022.

## **2. Overview of the Discretionary Cost-of Living Support Scheme**

The Welsh Government announced a package of measures to help people with the cost-of-living crisis. The package includes £152m to provide a £150 cost-of-living payment to eligible households (the main scheme) and £25m to provide discretionary support for other purposes related to living costs.

The schemes are intended to provide immediate support as Wales recovers from the pandemic and support households to deal with the impact of increasing energy and other costs.

In developing local Discretionary Scheme, local authorities have complete autonomy to target the funds to best support residents and to ensure their approach best suits the need of their individual residents.

## **3. Items for consideration in a Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme**

Each local authority may use the funding provided under the Discretionary Scheme to provide support to households it considers to be in need of assistance with their living costs. This support may take the form of a payment to a household not already covered in the main scheme, or it may cover the cost of essential services provided to the household, for example extending the provision of free school meals or meals-on-wheels.

Each local authority will determine how it utilises the available funds and some areas for consideration in the local discretionary scheme are listed below.

### **Items that should be considered in a Discretionary Scheme:**

- Households in receipt of the following council tax exemptions.
  - Care Leavers – Class X
  - Severe Mental Impairment – Class U
  - Providing & receiving care – Class I & J

### **Items that could be considered in a Discretionary Scheme:**

The discretionary nature of this scheme permits authorities to consider other categories that could be eligible for support, namely.

- Payments may be made to separately identifiable households living in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- Payments may be made to dwellings wholly occupied by students (not halls of residence).
- Social sector properties banded E+.
- Households with restricted entitlement under the Benefit Cap or 2-child limit.
- Households who are receiving housing support services and/or are living in temporary accommodation or a refuge.
- Properties with Disability Band reductions (E-I)
- Properties where a Domiciliary care plan in place due to additional costs incurred
- Households in receipt of Free School Meals but not captured in the main scheme

### **Wider use of Discretionary Funding:**

We recognise local authorities, and their partners are closest to their residents and therefore best able to target support most effectively. It's noted that the rising cost of living cannot be dealt with quickly and consideration could be given to utilising resources in the following areas.

- Enhancing capacity within existing support functions to maximise income and provide effective advice
- Linking with energy efficiency schemes for properties with high EPC ratings
- Supporting Community Pantry and Food Club initiatives for access by wider community
- Supporting transport/fuel initiatives in rural communities

The authority has discretion over the value of the award and to pay by instalments if it considers making a full payment would not be in a household's best interests or that it might compromise their welfare.

It is recognised that payments or the provision of other support to such households may be more readily administered by specialist services within the local authority – e.g., social services, homelessness services, educational support services etc.

## **4. Process**

As part of their Discretionary Scheme, Local Authorities will determine how the scheme is promoted and how to access ensuring those it is intended to reach are aware of it.

## **Accessibility requirements**

Authorities will need to ensure any forms and local awareness-raising materials are accessible. They will also need to provide information in Welsh and English and support customers who have difficulty using online facilities

In accordance with the main scheme – any Discretionary Scheme will be required to be completed by 5.00pm on 30 September 2022.

## **5. Funding**

### **Funding**

As outlined above, a total of £25m of funding has been identified for the Discretionary Scheme. Each local authority has been notified of their individual allocation and will be responsible for ensuring any such scheme is deliverable within the terms of their allocation.

## **6. Records to be kept by Welsh Authorities**

Authorities will be required to report spending under their Discretionary Scheme on the existing Cost of Living Support Scheme monitoring form which must be returned weekly to [CouncilTaxPolicy@gov.wales](mailto:CouncilTaxPolicy@gov.wales).



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## Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

### Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: ??

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Working Group reviewing Council purchases of properties for housing met on 22-03-2022 and considered the following documents:

- Powerpoint presentation by the Head of Housing and Community Development and the Professional Lead – Housing.

The Working Group thank officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Working Group commented that it would be helpful if:
  - local members advised the Housing Service when properties came on the market to assist in potential properties which might be purchased by the Council.
  - an overview of the new Housing Service teams, who is in those teams and what roles are undertaken could be circulated to Members and Heads of Service.
- The Working Group expressed concern:
  - that the Council could be in competition with housing associations for properties. Officers advised that the Council did consult regularly with housing associations but agreed to discuss this with them.
  - that electric car charging points had not been included in the revised WHQS requirements.
  - that in more affluent areas of the county with high property prices this would make it difficult for the Council to purchase properties, and there is also a shortage of single person homes in the county.
- The Working Group welcomed:
  - that the calculations relating to the sixty year pay back for properties purchased was reviewed annually.
  - the process for the selection and acquisition of properties which was being continually refined.
  - that of 39 properties purchased between 2018 and 2022 only two had been subsequently sold as they could not be brought up to the required standard. However they had been sold at a higher price than the purchase price.

Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1 That the omission of electric car charging points outside properties be			

<p><b>taken up with Welsh Government as part of the consultation response on revisions to the WHQS.</b></p>			
<p><b>2 That local Members be requested to provide the Housing Service with details of any properties coming onto the market in their area.</b></p>			
<p><b>3 That details of the new Housing Teams be circulated to Members.</b></p>			

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e. by XXX

Membership of the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Working Group on 22-03-2022:

County Councillors:

K. Curry (Lead Member), D Selby and J Charlton.

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## Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2022

2022

Date and Time	Type and Detail
11-07-22 14.00 – 16.00	Work Programming
21-07-22 10.00 – 12.00	Pre-Meeting
25-07-22 14.00 – 16.00	Committee - Public  Q1 Performance and Risk All Heads of Service  Regulatory responsibilities Gwilym Davies
15-09-22 10.00 – 12.00	Pre-Meeting
19-09-22 10.00 – 12.00	Committee - Public  Public transport networks Matt Perry
27-10-22 14.00 – 16.00	Pre-Meeting
31-10-22 10.00 – 12.00	Committee - Public  Q2 Performance and Risk All Heads of Service
07-12-22 14.00 – 16.00	Pre-Meeting
12-12-22 10.00 – 12.00	Committee - Public

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