

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

Author name	David Morris, Senior Manager Income and Awards
Head of service	Nicole Thomas, Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer)
Portfolio holder	David Thomas, portfolio holder for Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation
Proposal title	Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme
Description of proposal	<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

Consultation required?	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

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

4. Impact on Vision 2025

4a. The economy

Impact	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.
Impact rating	Good
Mitigation	The outcome is positive but as part of the process, each home will be intelligently inspected to ensure the best solution is provided.
Mitigated impact rating	Good

4b. Health and care

Impact	<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>
Impact rating	Good

Mitigation	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
Mitigated impact rating	Good

4c. Learning and skills

Impact	<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>
Impact rating	Good
Mitigation	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.
Mitigated impact rating	Good

4d. Residents and communities

Impact	<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>
Impact rating	Good

Mitigation	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.
Mitigated impact rating	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

Impact	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.
Impact rating	Good
Mitigation	Housing will be asked to consider using local suppliers and trades people when considering the rollout of this scheme
Mitigated impact rating	Good

5b. A resilient Wales

Impact	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
Impact rating	Good
Mitigation	No new mitigations beyond extending the scope of the scheme for which there is no new funding
Mitigated impact rating	Good

5c. A healthier Wales

Impact	<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>
Impact rating	Good
Mitigation	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.
Mitigated impact rating	Good

5d. A Wales of cohesive communities

Impact	None
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5e. A globally responsible Wales

Impact	None
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5f. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Using Welsh

Impact	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.
Impact rating	Poor
Mitigation	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.
Mitigated impact rating	Good

Promoting Welsh

Impact	None
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Sports, Art & Recreation

Impact	None
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5g. A more equal Wales

Age

Impact	None
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Disability

Impact	None
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Gender Reassignment

Impact	None
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Marriage or Civil Partnership

Impact	None
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Race

Impact	None
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Religion or Belief

Impact	None
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Sex

Impact	None
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Sexual Orientation

Impact	None
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Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact	None
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Socio-economic Duty

Impact	<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 he 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>
Impact rating	Good

Mitigation	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.
Mitigated impact rating	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

Impact	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.
Impact rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Not specified

Collaboration

Impact	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.
Impact rating	Good
Mitigation	Not specified

Involvement (including Communication and Engagement)

Impact	<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>
Impact rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Not specified

Prevention

Impact	None
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Integration

Impact	None
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6b. Impact on the workforce

Impact	None
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6c. Impact on payroll

Impact	None
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6d. Welsh language impact on staff

Impact	None
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6e. Impact on apprenticeships

Impact	None
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6f. Evidence

no evidence as very little impact in the section

7. Likelihood and risks

Risk 1

Description	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.				
Likelihood score	4	Impact score	3	Risk rating	12.0
Mitigation	A full and effective communications processs through partners and Council services				
Residual likelihood score	3	Residual impact score	3	Residual risk rating	9.0

Risk 2

Description	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.				
Likelihood score	3	Impact score	3	Risk rating	9.0
Mitigation	taking regular soundings of agency partners and service delivery partners and Councillors to ensure emerging new issues are considered.				
Residual likelihood score	3	Residual impact score	2	Residual risk rating	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.

Cabinet reference	
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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

Review date	12/09/2022
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