



Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: 05-07-2022

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee met on 23-06-2022 and considered the following documents:

- Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee thank the Portfolio Holders for a Fairer Powys and Finance and Transformation and officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

1. The Committee commented that the report was balanced in relation to the funding proposals;

2. The Committee suggested:

(a) that in relation to the grant to residents who live in homes that have off-grid fuel supplies:

- that the estimate for the number of properties for this element was probably significantly underestimated as there were a large number of people in Powys who relied on off-grid fuel supplies.
- that the Panel should consider not excluding those who are eligible for the grant from the main scheme as well.
- that although a fuel and transport support was not included in the current proposal, that in further phases of the scheme consideration be given to assisting with the rural fuel crisis.

(b) that food surplus projects could be considered for funding and welcomed the view that these might be considered in the second phase of the scheme.

(c) that other sources of heating such as ground source heating be considered as part of the energy efficiency element of the scheme.

(d) that for future consultations the Council should engage with local community support groups as well as representative bodies such as PAVO, and local Councillors.

3. The Committee expressed concern regarding the emphasis on funding reactive services such as foodbanks as opposed to into more preventative services such as food surplus projects which could provide support to individuals by different means.

4. The Committee was assured:

- that in relation to communications of the scheme there would be direct communication with individuals who the Council was aware would fall into the eligibility categories.
- that Welsh Government had moved the end date for the delivery of the scheme to allow more flexibility for authorities;

- that it was intended that the application process would be straightforward, and that support was available by means of the grants team or at customer service points at libraries, to assist individuals who had difficulty in applying;

5. In relation to energy efficiency schemes, the Committee noted that clarification would be sought with Housing Services in relation to photo-voltaic panels and whether these would work with either existing systems or with new systems only.

Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1 that for future phases of the schemes that consideration be given to providing support to food surplus projects and the rural fuel crisis			<p>There are no future phases of the scheme only this one, therefore it cant be considered.</p> <p>Also as part of the current scheme, there is a community/agency grant element that such groups can be considered for. We have asked all Councillors to provide detail of any community groups in their area.</p>
2 that the Panel be asked to consider not excluding those eligible for the off-grid fuel supply grid from the main scheme.			<p>This was rejected as the cost of including all off grid homes would have exceeded our total discretionary budget on just this one element.</p>
3 That other sources of heating such as ground source heating be considered within the energy efficient element of the scheme.		<p>It was agreed that the Panel would look at the best form of energy efficiency elements to take forward with Officer input and recommendation which is being done.</p>	
4 that for future engagement exercises that local Councillors and local community support groups be included.	<p>This was agreed by Cllr Dorrance and will be considered in the future as Powys develops its contacts and networks better into the community via the development of the</p>		

	anti-poverty work for the Powys Council.		
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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 05-09-2022

Membership of the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 23-06-2022:

County Councillors:

A Davies, D Bebb, I Harrison, T Colbert, G Mitchell, K Lewis, S Williams, B Davies, A Jones, A Cartwright, J Thorp, A Jones.