

Cost of Living Response Draft Action Plan

Theme 1 – Preparation					
	Issues	Action	Timeframe	Status	Who
1.1	Leadership focus, awareness and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT Group discussion/consideration workshop session • CMT Group discussion/consideration workshop session • Set up Cost of Living Focus group of key officers to drive preparation/response • SLT participation in the assumptions and scenario analysis as part of development of revised MTFP and MTFS 	Early July	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>	SLT CMT Focus Group
1.2	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create draft action plan 	End July	Complete	SLT Focus Group
1.3	Staff Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Staff Briefing (25.07) used to be delivered key messages • Regular staff newsletter articles to keep staff up to date • Focus Group to feedback to Service Areas • Head of Service/Managers to feedback in Team meetings 	July onwards	<p>Complete</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In Progress</p>	SLT Comms Team Focus Group
1.4	Staff Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training/awareness session for frontline teams • Website awareness comms 	September onwards	Not started	Comms Team Focus Group
1.5	Financial awareness and preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of likely service pressures arising as a result of cost-of-living crisis • Inclusion of themed discussions as part of budget monitoring meetings to 	July onwards	In progress	SLT CMT Finance

		estimate financial impact of service pressures			
1.6	The wider organisational effects of inflation on the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of inflationary pressures • Inclusion of themed discussions as part of budget monitoring meetings to estimate financial impact • Inclusion of analysis in revised Medium Term Financial Plan and new Medium Term Financial Strategy 	July onwards	In progress	SLT CMT Finance

Theme 2 - Supporting Residents					
	Issues	Action	Timeframe	Status	Who

2.1	Rising cost of utility bills, rent, mortgage costs, fuel, clothing goods etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Financial Inclusion Officer (FIO) role (via social media/other non - digital methods) • Utilise Household support fund • Consider increasing resource (for example recruit Cost of Living Coordinator or additional FIO) • Set up an online advice referral form for staff to use to request call back from FIO • Internal & external promotion of Helping Hand Service • Maximising partnership working to provide targeted support where needed • Promote ways for residents to switch to lower energy tariffs • Benefits team to balance processing of New Benefits claims and change of circumstances notifications • Corporate debt policy review • Consider of establishment of corporate debt group 	End September	In progress	Comms Revenue & Benefits Manager SLT Finance Team Housing Team
2.2	Rising cost of food, residents relying on/using food banks more, food banks getting less donations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote foodbanks on social media and noticeboard around the Borough • Ensure our website has clear & up to date information on food banks in our Borough • Arrange a OWBC staff collection for donations to increase awareness and help food bank stock levels 	Aug/Sept	In progress	Comms Team Clean & Green Team SLT
2.3	Families struggling, living in poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication programme with schools • Produce leaflet/business cards to encourage/help schools signpost parents to OWBC Council for help/advise/support 	End of September	In progress	Comms Team Financial Inclusion Officer

2.4	OWBC Tenants struggling to pay rent, food costs, utility bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Comms Plan to be developed • Income Management Team to continue supporting tenants experiencing in financial hardship with advice, form completion, referrals and payment arrangements • Housing Officers to refer tenant to IMT or FIO where needed 	End September	In progress	Comms Team Housing Team Income Management Team
2.5	Decrease in Health & Mental Health wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Mental health support • Promote cost effective healthy eating • Promoting community-led “wellbeing” initiatives • Work with SLM to promote Everyone’s Active Services 	End of September	In progress	Comm Team Community Wellbeing Team

Theme 3 - Supporting Businesses

	Issues	Action	Timeframe	Status	Who
3.1	Businesses struggling with all bills, utilities, Business Rates etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Hardship Relief for business rates 	Sept	Not started	Comms Team Economic Development Team Climate Change Officer Comms Team
3.2	Businesses struggling to keep staff employed and stay open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Regeneration Team to use their established contacts and partnerships, particularly the LLEP to identify any support that is available and to work with the comms team to promote this through our Business Newsletter and Social Media Make use of our relationships with organisations that support businesses directly such as the FSB and LLEP Consider becoming a Local Leadership partner with the FSB Continue to provide Town Centre Management Support to town centre businesses and support businesses in organising town centre events, such as Christmas Events Deliver our UKSPF Investment Plan which include a number of programmes that will support businesses Signpost businesses to other means of business support such as government grants When the Council is aware of local employment issues, offer support to local business owners to engage with DWP and benefits 	August onwards	Ongoing	Economic Development Team Comms Team

3.3	Customers shop less, local business hit further	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run a “Shop Local” Campaign to promote/encourage people to shop local to support local businesses • Consider the possibility of suspending parking charges in town centre to promote special shopping events at certain key times or holiday periods 	Oct onwards	Not stated	Comms Team SLT
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	Issues	Action	Timeframe	Status	Who
4.1	Staff struggling with Rising cost of utility bills, food, rent, mortgage costs, fuel, clothing goods etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use staff briefing to encourage concerned staff to reach out to the HR Team • Use Staff Wellbeing Hub to promote information, help & Support available • Review staff crisis assistant/loan scheme • Promote Employment Assistant Programme • Promote Mental Health First Aiders • Review staff benefit in view of cost of living 	End of July Sept onwards September September onwards	Complete In progress In Progress	Comms Team Community & Wellbeing Team HR Team
4.2	Staff struggling to pay traveling cost to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider travel needs for staff coming forward ▪ Encourage agile working were possible ▪ Encourage car sharing 	Ongoing	In progress	HR Team SLT
4.3	Reaching staff most affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance gives to manager about advice to give to staff ▪ Develop Managers tool kit ▪ Supporting staff that come forward 	September September Ongoing	Not started	HR Team Comms Team

	Issues	Action	Timeframe	Status	Who
5.1	Residents/Businesses not knowing what help/support is available to them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a webpage to centralise information, this page will sign post customers to a wide range of information/support 	To be launched end of August	In progress	Comms Team
5.2	Digital inclusivity - Skills/Access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure other communication channels are utilised such as posters, leaflets, notice boards etc • Ensure help/advice can be provided via phone skilling our Customer Service Team effectively 	Aug/Sept	In progress	
5.3	Staff Awareness and understanding of issues and support available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness training session to be carried out for all frontline officers • Regular updates in Staff Newsletter • Link to webpage sent to all staff 	Aug/Sept Ongoing End August	In progress	Comms Team
5.4	Members Engagement & Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Members bulletin article (22.07) • On-going key messages provided in Members bulletins • Members Hub to be used (once launched) • IT Working group to explain plan for web page • SCD to include Cost of Living Response Action Plan 	July Ongoing Ongoing August September	Complete In progress In Progress Complete Complete	Comms Team SLT