



Report to Strategy and Resources Committee

Author of Report:

Cat Arnold, Policy and Improvement Officer

Report of: Director of Policy, Performance and Communications

Report to: Strategy and Resources Committee

Date of Decision: 5th July 2022

Subject: Cost of Living Crisis Strategy and Action Plan

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 1203				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

This report provides the Strategy and Resources Committee with an update Sheffield's response to the cost-of-living crisis.

Following the decisions made at the S&R Committee meeting on 31st May 2022, incident-style response arrangements have been established with the first citywide Cost of Living (CoL) Crisis Strategy Group meeting on 23rd June.

The CoL Crisis Strategy Group have developed a draft action plan for S&R Committee to consider (see [Appendix 2](#)) which outlines the actions we are and will take as a city to support communities across Sheffield. This will continue to develop over the coming months based on evidence and insight from our

communities about the support they need and to ensure we prepare as best we can for additional cost of living pressures in the winter.

Finally, the paper provides an outline of the Food Access Plan ([Appendix 3](#)) for Sheffield, which will focus on the themes of responding to immediate need, responding to underlying causes of food poverty and coordination and capacity building. The Food Access Plan will ultimately form part of the city's new Food Strategy (expected Sept 2022) but S&R Committee are asked to agree the outline focus and initial investments.

Recommendations:

That Strategy and Resources Committee:

1. Notes the work that has been done to establish an incident response-type arrangement to help the city respond to the current situation and prepare for the forthcoming autumn and winter period, including the establishment of a strategic-level group chaired by the Leader of the Council and a tactical partner group led by a senior SCC officer.
2. Endorses the strategic aims, objectives, principles and draft action plan that have been developed in response to this work, as set out in [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#) which will be developed further in collaboration with partners.
3. Agrees the outline Food Access Plan and proposed funding allocations as set out in paragraphs 21-24 and [Appendix 3](#).
4. To the extent that further decisions reserved to this Committee will be required in order to finalise and implement the action plan, delegates authority to take those decisions to the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications, in consultation with the chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee following discussion with the Cost-of-Living Crisis strategic group.

Background Papers:

Supporting Sheffielders Through the Cost-of-Living Crisis, Strategy & Resources Committee, 31st May 2022,

https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s52586/Cost%20of%20Living%20Crisis%2031.05.22_.pdf

Sheffield Tackling Poverty Framework 2020-30,

<https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s38873/Appendix%201%20-%20Sheffield%20Tackling%20Poverty%20Framework%202020-2030.pdf>

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Ryan Keyworth (Director of Finance and Commercial Services)
		Legal: Sarah Bennett (Assistant Director of Legal and Governance)
		Equalities & Consultation: Adele Robinson (Equalities and Engagement Manager)
		Climate: N/A
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	EMT member who approved submission:	<i>James Henderson (Director of PPC)</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Cllr. Julie Grocutt</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: James Henderson	Job Title: Director of Policy, Performance and Communications
	Date: 24 th June 2022	

Purpose of report

1. This report provides an update on activity to address the Cost of Living crisis, including a draft of a live action plan which is being developed with city partners through the newly established Cost of Living Crisis Strategy Group. This is in direct response to the direction set by Strategy and Resources Committee at the meeting on 31st May 2022.
2. The report also provides Strategy and Resources Committee with an outline Food Access Plan which was allocated funding in SCC's 2022/23. The Food Access Plan will become part of the new Sheffield Food Strategy but this paper sets out for approval a proposed approach to investing the funding allocated in the 2022/23 budget.

Background

3. At its meeting on the 31st May 2022, Strategy and Resources Committee agreed to introduce citywide incident response-style arrangements to co-ordinate the city's response to the cost of living crisis which is having profound implications for citizens and businesses.
4. The Committee also agreed that a further report should be prepared for the S&R Committee on 5th July setting out a proposed strategy and action plan for addressing the cost-of-living crisis in Sheffield.

The cost-of-living crisis is bringing real hardship to Sheffielders in all communities

5. The cost-of-living crisis is beginning to have a significant impact on people in every part of our city. Price rises driven by energy price inflation, alongside additional taxation, are having an impact on most households in the city. The energy price cap is likely to rise again in the autumn which will amplify the challenges from autumn/winter.
6. Poverty was already increasing in Sheffield before Covid hit – and the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities and disproportionately affected the city's poorest communities.
7. We are seeing real incomes reducing, costs increasing with inflation at 9.1% – this is affecting energy, food, and rent. We are also seeing an increase in illegal money lending, with people increasingly using them for essentials. For further details about the impacts see Cost of Living Crisis paper from Strategy and Resources on 31st May 2022:
https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s52586/Cost%20of%20Living%20Crisis%2031.05.22_.pdf

The worst of the crisis is likely to be ahead of us so citywide response is needed now

8. As a council, and a city, we have a long-standing commitment to tackling poverty, as set out most recently in the Sheffield Tackling Poverty Framework. We have been working together as partners before and throughout the pandemic to support people in crisis across the city and have focused on both the causes and impacts of poverty – responding to day-to-day issues whilst planning for prevention.
9. Whilst we will continue to take forward this wider work, the unprecedented cost-of-living crisis means that rapid stepping up the city's response is critical if we are to support citizens and communities.
10. We recognise that we do not control all the necessary levers, and our response must be focused on the steps we can take as a city to alleviate the effects of the CoL crisis, and in particular, the impact that it is having on routine day-to-day income and expenditure decisions for households.
11. A **Cost-of-Living Crisis Strategy Group** has been established and had its first meeting on 23rd June 2022. The purpose of the Group is to oversee an incident management response to the CoL crisis to:
 - Take co-ordinated action where we can now while planning for autumn and winter
 - Set collective strategic direction for operational actions and interventions
 - Harness and gather shared intelligence and community insight
 - Get ahead of the challenge and give vital structure and focus through an emergency-style response
 - Use our networks of influence, for example in lobbying central Government
12. The Cost of Living Crisis Strategy Group Terms of Reference are included in [Appendix 1](#).
13. A tactical level partner group is also being established. This group will have responsibility for coordinating planning and activity in support of the overall strategy developed by the Strategy Group.
14. Further, to support the development of a whole city approach, we have connected to neighbourhoods and key partners, including:

- **Health and Wellbeing Board** – the Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board discussed the cost of living crisis as part of their meeting agenda on 23rd June 2022. The HWBB and health sector see the response to the cost of living crisis as central to their agenda and recognise the immediate and long term implications for the city’s wellbeing. Strong commitment from health partners and will be part of citywide effort. HWBB paper available here - <https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s52959/Item%206%20Cost%20of%20Living.pdf>
- **Local Area Committees** – there is a vital role for Members and the LAC Teams that work with communities across the city. In particular, LACs are keen to play a role in supporting communities, particularly in identifying communities most at risk/impacted and using local assets/networks to find solutions which work for specific communities and areas of the city.
- **VCF sector** – the city’s VCF sector are a critical partner in supporting communities. Demand on the VCF sector is significant and many organisations are stretched, particularly following the Covid pandemic. However, our networks and relationships from the pandemic are strong with significant experience and practice which can be built upon in our response to the CoLC.

Developing a strategy and action plan

At its first meeting the Cost of Living Crisis Strategic Group discussed a proposed strategy and action plan as set out below.

Aim

15. The overall **aim** is to work with the people and communities of Sheffield through the Cost of Living crisis to help mitigate the significant challenges they will be facing, with a particular focus on those who are struggling the most.

Objectives

16. To meet this aim we will focus on the following **objectives**:
 - a. Support people to make the best possible choices about how they use the income they have
 - b. Help people maximise their income further (including but not limited to benefits maximisation)
 - c. Provide a central place to gather information about the scale and nature of the crisis, especially how it is developing over time, in order to prioritise actions and to amplify personal stories
 - d. Do what we can to ensure that emergency support is available when people are in financial crisis

- e. Co-ordinate support for the people and communities that need it the most
- f. Put people experiencing the cost of living crisis at the heart of Sheffield's approach to recovery and delivering clean, inclusive growth including supporting people to respond to rising fuel prices, while preparing the whole city for long-term trends.

Principles

17. We will prioritise our efforts according to the following **principles**:

- a. **Identify where we can pull levers in the city** – there are many wider forces which are beyond our control so we need to focus on what we can influence.
- b. **Focus on scale of impact** - This might be small impact on a large number of people (e.g. communications), or larger impact on people who are struggling the most or who are more vulnerable. This includes understanding and addressing the distinct impacts on different communities in our city.
- c. **Prevention where possible** – are there smaller actions we can take together now to prevent more severe crisis later? Recognise, though, that people are, and will be, in crisis and require emergency support too.
- d. **Prioritise actions that enable people to draw on their own strengths** rather than treating them as a passive recipient of something that someone else has decided is best for them. Strive to be a gateway rather than gatekeeper to the support people are entitled to.
- e. **Inform our actions using data and intelligence** - recognising that sometimes our best knowledge, particularly in a fast-changing situation, is based on personal stories.

Action Plan

18. An initial draft action plan has been developed. It is a live document which will be continuously updated. A version is included as [Appendix 2](#).

19. The action plan is structured according to the following **workstreams**, each of which support the overall strategic objectives and are in line with the principles described at paragraph 18:

- a. Communications and information sharing – guidance and promoting the support available
- b. Providing direct and indirect access to emergency support – Council Tax energy rebate, making access to financial support easier, support for foodbanks

- c. Supporting people to move away from crisis towards longer-term financial stability – welfare rights advice, employment support, food ladders
- d. Data and Intelligence – harness data and insight from all partners, national data and evidence, citizen voice and insight
- e. Response as a landlord and creditor – support for tenants (for example, Council Housing).
- f. Response as employers – support for vital frontline staff in the city exposed to cost increases in their work
- g. Responding to what matters to specific groups – responding to needs and impacts on different communities (this includes communities of interest and also geography, incorporating the vital role of Local Area Committees in co-ordinating responses in their areas)

Housing Support Fund

- 20. Accompanying this report is a separate paper that seeks the committee’s approval for the spend of £5.2m Housing Support Fund award made by the Government. This will directly contribute to the Cost-of-Living Strategy outlined above by providing emergency support for vulnerable households (including tranches of funding reserved for households with children and for households including somebody of state pension age).
- 21. The funding aims to assist households via small grants administered by Sheffield City Council to meet daily needs such as food, clothing, and utilities where these cannot be afforded by households or where other local hardship support cannot be secured.

Food Access Plan

- 22. The Cost-of-Living response includes work on a Food Access Plan established as part of the 2022/23 budget in which Full Council agreed to invest £200k in supporting food access in the city.
- 23. Building on the work on food poverty undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, the Full Council resolution on the “Right to Food” in September 2021 and the recent Food Ladders Project in Sheffield ([see Appendix 3](#)), our developing Food Access Plan will focus on three areas:
 - **Responding to immediate need**
 - **Responding to underlying causes of food poverty**
 - **Co-ordination and capacity building**

24. The table sets out below a proposed approach to investing the £200k from the 2022/23 SCC Budget in supporting food access and the wider cost of living crisis in Sheffield. Further detail is included in [Appendix 3](#).

Key theme	Proposed investments	
<p>1. Responding to immediate need Rising demand coupled with reducing donations means that food banks are struggling to source enough food and need support.</p>	£50,000	Support members of the food bank network to ensure food banks are able to provide sufficient food to meet current levels of demand
	£20,000	<p>donation to the South Yorkshire Community Foundation's Cost of Living Crisis Fund which will be accessed by food banks and other types of support organisations in the city to enable them to continue their work and respond to increasing demand</p> <p><i>(NB agreed by S&R on 31st May 2022).</i></p>
<p>2. Responding to underlying causes of food poverty Food poverty is a result of financial hardship and we are committed to preventing and tackling poverty in Sheffield. Accessing a food bank can be a gateway to other support services that may be able to help people with their financial situation e.g. employment, financial or mental health support.</p>	£40,000	allocation for the expansion of outreach support provided through food banks.

<p>3. Co-ordination and capacity building</p> <p>Dedicated staffing capacity will allow detailed and up to date information to be held on emergency food provision in the city, the scale of the demand for this provision and the challenges being faced by providers and users. This will enable the city to tailor support to need and build collaboration between projects. Aim will be to:</p>	<p>£30,000</p>	<p>enable an external organisation to deliver these objectives for a period of 18 months</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build resilience through prevention - • Expand use of food as a tool to access other support and services, including financial support and mental health services. • Provide increased choice, opportunities for participation and minimise the risk of stigma. • Build collaboration and shared expertise 	<p>£60,000</p>	<p>used as a food bank/ food relief development fund. The specific funding criteria will need to be developed but in general, the funding will be awarded to food banks and other food relief projects who wish to develop their offer to move away from a dependency model of emergency food provision to one of prevention.</p>

25. Over time we will also be situating this work within the context of a broader Tackling Poverty Action Plan (which we committed to develop in the Tackling Poverty Framework). This will seek to capture and co-ordinate the range of activity across the city focused on tackling poverty and its impacts, and will offer a wider and longer-term focus.

Cost of living crisis response - next steps

26. The action plan will continue to be developed in a flexible and iterative way, to respond to the uncertain nature of the crisis, and will evolve in line with the input and recommendations of the Cost of Living Crisis Strategy Group. The Tactical Group will be established to drive activity and practical action to support our communities.

27. Over time we will also be situating this work within the context of a broader Tackling Poverty Action Plan (which we committed to develop in the Tackling Poverty Framework). This will seek to capture and co-ordinate the range of activity across the city focused on tackling poverty and its impacts, and will offer a wider and longer-term focus.

RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

Equality Implications

28. The cost-of-living crisis is likely to have a more significant impact on some groups of people in the city than others. This is likely to include people who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act, including women, disabled people, people from certain ethnic minority backgrounds, and both older and younger people. People with caring responsibilities are also likely to be disproportionately impacted as their income tends to be lower than the population as a whole.
29. The council's response to the cost-of-living crisis is intended to mitigate the worst effects of the crisis on people and communities across the city, including those who are most exposed to it. As described above this will include people who share certain protected characteristics. Therefore, the proposal set out in this report is intended to have an overall positive impact on equality within the city, although this will be within the wider negative context of the cost-of-living crisis.
30. A full Equality Impact Assessment is being prepared and will be included as part of the cost-of-living crisis action plan as set out at Recommendation 6.
31. The recent food ladders mapping research identified that women, other marginalised genders and refugees and asylum seekers may at times feel excluded from certain types of food relief. It also acknowledged that BAME-led emergency food support was underrepresented in the research and this is something that the food bank development work would need to address.
32. It is therefore important that the co-ordination and capacity building elements of this proposal and subsequent grants that are made through the food bank development fund have ensuring equality of access and ensuring that all groups are represented as a focus.
33. Reporting on demographic data will be a funding requirement wherever it is appropriate.

Financial and Commercial Implications

34. There are no new financial implications arising from this report. The Food Access Plan is in line with funding commitments made by Full Council at their meeting of 2nd March 2022.
35. The other measures in this report will be funded from existing budgets.

Legal Implications

36. There are no legal implications arising specifically from this report. There may be legal implications of the further decisions required to implement the action plans. These will be addressed at the time those decisions are made.

Climate Implications

37. There are no climate implications directly arising from this report. Any climate implications arising from the development of the strategy and action plan will be considered at the next meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Food Access Plan

38. Focus the Food Access Plan purely on immediate need and allocate the full £200k to purchase food. This would support food banks in the short term but would not address any of the systemic issues or underlying causes of food poverty. The approach proposed seeks to strike a balance between addressing underlying causes, building capacity within the current system and ensuring that food banks and food relief projects are able to cope with anticipated increase in demand.
39. Focus the Food Access Plan and resource purely on prevention and addressing the underlying causes of food poverty. There is consensus that prevention should be a priority and that in an ideal world there would be no need for food banks to exist. However, the reality of the current cost of living crisis means this is no short term prospect of eliminating poverty and there is a very real need for emergency food support that cannot be ignored. These proposals mean that we can provide real support to food banks in the short term so that emergency food provision is accessible to those who need it, but where possible can also try to continue to shift away from a dependency model of emergency food provision to one of prevention.
40. Do nothing. The cost of living crisis affects those on the lowest incomes the most as they have the least amount of disposable income. As food is often one of the more flexible items in a household's budget (compared to rent or utility bills for example) this often leads to food poverty and households being unable to purchase sufficient nutritious food for their needs. This has both physical and mental health consequences.

The Wider Cost of Living Strategy and Action Plan

41. Do nothing – this was rejected as communities across Sheffield are being impacted on by the cost-of-living crisis. Working with partners, we hope we will help mitigate impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on communities and co-ordinate support and interventions around those that need it the most.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

42. The recommendations build on the commitments made by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 31st May to support Sheffielders through the cost of living crisis. Working with communities and partners across the city, the recommendations ensure that SCC will play a leading role through the strategic and tactical incident-type response.
43. The recommendations also propose investments in supporting food access in the city in line with the developing Food Access Plan.

Appendix 1

Sheffield Cost-of-Living Crisis Response

Strategy Group Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Strategy Group is:

- To provide strategic direction for a whole city response to the cost-of-living crisis
- To ensure coordination and effective joint working across the various organisations and sectors who have a contribution to make to the city response
- To ensure that there is effective community and stakeholder voice and involvement in the development of the city response
- To agree and seek assurance for delivery of the resulting action plans
- To ensure that the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of the city's response to the cost-of-living crisis

2. Chairing and Membership

The Strategy Group is chaired by the Leader of the Council. In the Leader's absence the Deputy Leader of the Council will chair.

The membership of the Strategy Group includes VCF and statutory partners and includes representatives from other committees. The Group may want to engage additional members as the cost-of-living crisis response develops, bringing in expertise and appropriate.

3. Role of members of the Group

Members of the Group should:

- Listen carefully and contribute freely to all discussions of the Group
- Provide their own perspective and supportive challenge to the issues and solutions being considered by the Group
- Aim to reach consensus on the key issues facing the Group
- Treat all members of the Group and others who may be contributing to conversations with respect and understanding

- Take the work of the Group and seek commitment to the outcomes agreed by the board into their own committees, organisations, and sectors

4. Meeting frequency

The Group will meet on a fortnightly basis initially. The frequency of meetings may be altered by the Group. The Group will operate initially for a six-month period from June 2022 to December 2022, at which point the requirement for it will be reconsidered.

5. Decision making

The Group does not have formal decision-making responsibility. However, it is expected that once the Group has reached a conclusion on a given issue that members of the Group will take that decision back to their own organisations and seek any formal decision required to enable implementation.

6. Relationship with the Operational Group

This Group will provide the overall strategic direction for the city's cost of living response and will agree the action plans required to deliver that strategy. Responsibility for delivery will sit with the Operational Group, with the Strategy Group supporting and holding the Operational Group to account for delivery.

7. Resources and Support

Secretariat support to the CoL Strategy Group will be provided by Sheffield City Council's Policy and Partnerships Team. However, the cost-of-living crisis is a citywide challenge and it is intended that the role of the Strategy Group is to co-ordinate the city's resources to best support those in most need and pool resources where appropriate to maximise impact for the city.

Appendix 2

Draft Cost of Living Action Plan

As a council, and a city, we have a long-standing commitment to tackling poverty, as set out most recently in the Sheffield Tackling Poverty Framework. We have been working together as partners before and throughout the pandemic to support people in crisis across the city and have focused on both the causes and impacts of poverty – responding to day-to-day issues whilst planning for prevention.

Whilst we will continue to take forward this wider work, we are now facing an unprecedented cost-of-living crisis which also necessitates an emergency response, which is being co-ordinated by a Cost of Living Crisis Strategy Group.

Aim

This action plan sets out how we will focus our efforts in the coming months to respond to this crisis and how we will work with the people and communities of Sheffield to help mitigate the significant challenges they will be facing, with a particular focus on those who are struggling the most.

How will we prioritise our effort?

- **Identify where we can pull levers in the city:** There are many wider forces which are beyond our control so we need to focus on what we *can* influence.
- **Scale of impact:** This might be small impact on a large number of people (e.g. communications), or larger impact on people who are struggling the most or who are more vulnerable. This includes understanding and addressing the distinct impacts on different communities in our city
- **Prevention where possible, while responding to urgent crisis:** Identify smaller actions we can take together now to prevent more severe crisis later, which recognising that people are, and will be, in crisis and require emergency support too

- **Draw on people's strengths:** Prioritise actions that enable people to draw on their own strengths rather than treating them as a passive recipient of something that someone else has decided is best for them. Strive to be a gateway rather than gatekeeper to the support people are entitled to.
- **Evidence-based interventions:** Inform our actions using data and intelligence, recognising that sometimes our best knowledge, particularly in a fast-changing situation, is based on personal stories.

What do we want do?

Objectives

1. Support people to make the best possible choices about how they use the income they have
2. Help people maximise their income further (including but not limited to benefits maximisation)
3. Provide a central place to gather information about the scale and nature of the crisis, especially how it is developing over time, in order to prioritise actions and to amplify personal stories
4. Do what we can to ensure that emergency support is available when people are in financial crisis
5. Co-ordinate support for the people and communities that need it the most
6. Put people experiencing the cost of living crisis at the heart of Sheffield's approach to recovery and delivering clean, inclusive growth including supporting people to respond to rising fuel prices, while preparing the whole city for long-term trends

How will we do this?

We will approach this work through the following workstreams:

- Communications and information sharing
- Providing direct and indirect access to emergency support
- Supporting people to move away from crisis towards longer term financial stability
- Data and intelligence
- Responding as landlord and creditor
- Responding as employers

- Responding to what matters to specific groups

The table below sets out the actions we are planning to take across all of these workstreams, with a focus on how we are delivering against the objectives described above. This includes areas of work which are already underway, as well as planned activity and/or areas for further development.

This action plan is still having details added – if something is missing that does not necessarily mean there is no activity to address it

Workstream	Objectives supported by workstream	Actions	What has been done?	What could be done/is planned	What difference are we expecting to make?
<i>Communications and information sharing</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting people to make the best possible choices about how they use the income they have 2. Helping people to maximise their income further (including, but not limited to, benefit maximisation) 	<p>Targeted, consistent communications directing people towards helpful resources and links – some resources will be national and some local</p> <p>Includes direct messaging and also information via employees – to inform themselves and also households they are supporting/in contact with.</p>	<p>An email newsletter on Rising cost of living: How to get help if you're struggling was sent on 7 April to all Sheffield residents who are subscribed to SCC's alerts</p>	<p>Continued communications promoting the most up-to-date sources of information</p> <p>Can we do anything more direct around budgeting?</p>	<p>Some of this is prevention – helping people who have been coping financially before but are now struggling with CoL and who may be able to reduce outgoings, particularly before the Winter (Important here not to give the message that households are to blame for this crisis: this is about encouraging people to think about changes they're able to make, especially before the coming winter pressures)</p>

		'Worrying about Money?' leaflets –	New batches have gone to all GPs and schools		
		Promote https://sheffieldmoneysupport.co.uk/			
		Information for frontline staff/those who are supporting others on financial support available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing frontline worker briefings being developed. Some are targeted at anyone supporting households; some are for specific SCC staff. - Are there opportunities to link up these communications across organisations in the city? 	Different types of signposting information developed	Promote versions that already exist, depending on needs Update briefings to keep up with changes	
		Include Council Tax Support information in communications to residents and explore other ways to improve CTS take-up.			
Providing direct and indirect access to emergency support	3. Do what we can to ensure that emergency support is provided when people are in financial crisis	Payment of £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate nearly complete. This is Government money announced by the Chancellor in February. A new system has been set up to make the	So far paid £19.8M paid to DD customers = 132,000 households. 12,000 households are being sent letters with Post Office Payout vouchers. Sent £7M so far and around £4.5M have been cashed. If	All £150 payments should be made by end of June. Discretionary scheme currently being developed that will be administered	This is money going direct to households who are affected by the cost of living crisis.

	payments via SCC Revenues and Benefits service.	vouchers are not cashed after 3 months their Council Tax account will be credited.	alongside Household Support Fund.	
	<p>The 'One Route In' project to review SCC hardship schemes is underway. This project aims to simplify access to SCC crisis support (creating a 'one route in') and to direct people towards schemes that maximise their income beyond their immediate crisis.</p> <p>Other hardship schemes provided by SCC include Council Tax Support, Council Tax hardship scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments, Local Assistance Scheme and Homelessness Prevention Grant.</p>	The project will use learning from the Household Support Fund which has worked very closely with voluntary sector partners as 'Trusted Assessors' to make the application process more efficient and easier for people in crisis.	'One Route In' pilot due to start mid-July to run for 3 months, which will test the concept of managing schemes side-by-side. Learning from this pilot will inform next steps.	
	Holiday food vouchers for Free School Meals families.	They have been funded via central Government Covid funding and then Household Support Fund. They have been provided since the start of the pandemic.	Some of the current HSF will cover this; but other funding may be needed for 2022 summer holiday. Longer-term, what happens when Government money runs out and we can no longer afford to cover holiday food vouchers?	This is a very effective way of directing financial support to people who are struggling the most: vouchers are well understood and take-up is good.
	Support for Food banks and other schemes that are providing emergency help.	South Yorkshire Community Foundation fund set up: £20K	Food Access Plan: £50K for Food Purchasing Fund	Food banks are facing increased demand at the same time as reduced

			donation from SCC and open to donations from Sheffields	for distribution to food banks via Sheffield Food Bank Network	donations. This funding will help them continue to provide emergency food. Demand and supply will continue to be monitored.
		Work to tackle loan sharks – working alongside the Stop Loan Sharks regional team to provide easier access to their support for people being exploited by loan sharks and increase intelligence about activity in the city.	Session 12 July through VAS for frontline workers from Vol Sector orgs Meeting with firvale Foodbanks links	Building networks in the city, including focused activity in particular areas.	
		Holiday Activities and Food programme https://sheffieldhealthyholidays.org/ provides some free healthy food to families alongside activities – promoting these sessions to low income families.			
Supporting people to move away from crisis towards longer-term financial stability	2. Helping people to maximise their income further (including, but not limited to, benefit maximisation)	Funding for welfare rights and debt advice and other VCF organisations to ensure that people receive the financial support they are entitled to. Welfare rights and debt advice are crucial for people to know what they are entitled to and to challenge the system when it does not get it right (between 2018 and 2021, 7 out of 10 disability benefit appeals in the UK were successful).	SCC provides approx. £800,000 grant funding to Citizens Advice Sheffield.	Are there other sources of funding in the city to help meet increasing advice demand in the face of reduced central government funding?	
				Food access plan to include £40,000 for Sheffield Citizens Advice to provide advice in reach to food banks	

	Food ladders work to link people using food banks towards other 'rungs' on the ladder, including community pantries, social eating projects and income maximisation – working closely with food banks and food bank users to enable community responses.		Food Access plan to include £60,000 Food bank / food relief project development fund to be distributed by SCC and £30,000 for Voluntary Action Sheffield (TBC) for supporting the development of a comprehensive network of food support across the city inc more systematic data collection	
	Work that schools are doing to support families (further detail to be added)			
	Work to support people into employment support (further detail to be added)			
	Increase take up of Free School Meals by using Council Tax Support data			
Data and Intelligence	3. Provide a central place to gather information about the scale and nature of the crisis, especially how it is developing over time, in order to prioritise actions and	Collation and analysis of data and intelligence to better understand the issues faced - Up-to-date intelligence from partnership groups – strategic and operational - National data sources that is extrapolated down to local level	- Ongoing collation of national and local data on Cost of Living crisis – some of this is statistics but much is qualitative/anecdotal	Food Access Plan worker will work closely with food banks to gather consistent data about demand

<p>to amplify personal stories</p> <p>5. Co-ordinate support for the people and communities that need it the most</p>		- Initial workshop with SCC heads of service to	Explore how we can better use service data (SCC and elsewhere) to capture levels of financial difficulty and identify appropriate solutions	
	Co-produce responses with people who are affected by the cost of living crisis Develop a reference group?			
	Poverty Truth Commission – initial conversations have been held in the city.			
<p>Responding as a landlord and creditor</p> <p>2. Help people maximise their income further (including but not limited to benefits maximisation)</p> <p>3. Do what we can to ensure that emergency support is provided when people are in financial crisis</p>	Support for SCC tenants – further details to be added. Tenants who are struggling to pay their rent are encouraged to contact Council Housing – support with income maximisation, debt and other help is available.	Further details to be added		
	Support that other social landlords provide to their tenants			

		SCC approach to debt. Corporate debt policy – where a household is in debt to more than one part of the council, there is an approach in development to ensure that SCC is not making their situation worse.	Policy has been drafted		
Responding as employers	2. Help people maximise their income further (including but not limited to benefits maximisation)	Support for our staff (SCC and others) It is becoming increasingly difficult for front line workers to purchase fuel due to increased prices. We are hearing anecdotally that there is a concern about how they are going to carry out visits, some staff have started accessing foodbanks themselves	Frontline worker briefings provide information for staff as well as those they support. Information is available on Development Hub for staff.	More work needs to be done here to understand and respond to impact on employees	
Responding to what matters to specific groups	5.Co-ordinate support for the people and communities that need it the most	Support for disadvantaged groups in the city, including diverse communities and people with disabilities			

<p>3. Provide a central place to gather information about the scale and nature of the crisis, especially how it is developing over time, in order to prioritise actions and to amplify personal stories</p>	<p>Further detail to be added here. Activity here is also reflected into workstreams above.</p> <p>Groups who are particularly affected by this crisis include (not comprehensive)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private renters - People with disabilities - BAMER communities - Working poor <p>Young people, single parents,</p>			
	<p>Local community work to respond to the Cost of Living Crisis – further detail to be added here. Activity here is also built into workstreams above.</p>	<p>East LAC have held a Cost of Living Action meeting and are proactive in providing useful community information</p>	<p>Planned activity in Burngreave about Loan Sharking and other issues related to CoL</p>	
			<p>Ward Pots have been launched and Elected members are considering 'cost of living' crisis as a Ward priority. There may be issues in some wards without large pots - there is hidden need in Fulwood, Dore & Totley e.g older people who are asset rich and cash poor, so cannot afford to heat their</p>	

			properties effectively	
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What's next and how does this fit with wider work?

This is a living document and the content will be regularly updated. The plan will be flexible and iterative, to respond to the uncertain nature of the crisis, and will evolve in line with the input and recommendations of the Cost of Living Crisis Strategy Group.

Over time we will also be situating this work within the context of a broader Tackling Poverty Action Plan (which we committed to develop in the Tackling Poverty Framework). This will seek to capture and co-ordinate the range of activity across the city focused on tackling poverty and its impacts, and will offer a wider and longer-term focus.

Appendix 3

Food Access Plan and funding proposals

Purpose

1. This provides an update on the development of the Food Access Plan which will form part of Sheffield's response to the cost-of-living crisis. In SCC's 2022/23 budget, the Council agreed to invest £200k in supporting food access in the city and the outline Food Access Plan proposes how this will be invested.

Background

2. The cost-of-living crisis is beginning to have a significant impact in people in every part of our city and this includes on their ability to afford food.
3. Sheffield has a rich tapestry of community food provision including "traditional" foodbanks, social eating spaces, surplus food re-users and local food producers. These community-led initiatives form a vital part of the safety net for those who find themselves in financial hardship. We are hearing that food bank use is increasing whilst donations are falling. This is leading to increasing pressures on food banks and food relief projects which were already stretched.
4. In March 2021 a Food Poverty Working Group of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee produced a report that included a number of recommendations in four key themes: Strategy & Culture; Developing a comprehensive network of food support – mapping and development; Navigating the system; Leadership. These recommendations were formally adopted by the council as part of the resolution on the Right to Food (Sept 2021). As a next step in delivering on the recommendations research was commissioned to map existing food bank and food relief provision in Sheffield against the "food ladders" model (the food ladders model was endorsed in the recommendations from scrutiny). This research had 2 aims – firstly to understand what emergency food provision there is in Sheffield and secondly to identify what additional support and development would help food relief projects address some of the challenges that they face and that their users face.
5. The *Food Ladders Project: Mapping the Geographies of Food Provision in Sheffield* report written by Lydia Leather and Selina Treuherz in May 2022 made recommendations that were debated at a feedback workshop with the research participants. Recommendations are being finalised but themes include:
 - Support the implementation of a supportive network of community food spaces that are committed to the Food Ladders model and principles, with particular focus on the community pantry model

- Undertake ongoing mapping and recording of food projects in Sheffield including regular and consistent collection of usage data. This will also need to include recognising and trying to address gaps in provision for minority or marginalised groups
 - Consider scope for systematic changes to food bank referral processes
 - Expand the hyper-local food system to improve food resilience and community engagement with the food system
6. Through the emerging Food Ladders network the recommendations will be refined, prioritised and developed into a set of clear actions and asks.
 7. There are many differing priorities amongst food relief projects and therefore there is ongoing need for facilitated discussion and building consensus amongst the diverse range of food projects in the city. The current rising cost of living means that the priorities in the short term are likely to focus on addressing immediate need.

Proposal - Food Access Plan

8. In September 2021, [a Council resolution regarding the “Right to Food” SCC committed to developing a Food Access Plan](#). This report outlines the themes that will form the basis of this Food Access Plan.
9. The three themes are **responding to immediate need, responding to underlying causes of food poverty and coordination and capacity building**. The initiatives that are funded by the food access funding will allow us to make progress towards the plan’s aims and will also help to inform subsequent actions that need to be taken.
10. Development of the Food Access Plan will be continuous as will implementation of projects that are associated with it. It is intended that the Food Access Plan will become a key part of Sheffield’s revised Food Strategy which is expected to be presented to Members in September 2022.
11. ShefFood, Sheffield’s Food Partnership will also support the ongoing development and implementation of the Food Access Plan.
12. The proposed Food Access Plan themes are as follows:
- 13. Responding to immediate need**
14. Rising demand coupled with reducing donations means that food banks are struggling to source enough food and need help with this.

15. It is proposed that approximately £50,000 is given to members of the food bank network to ensure food banks are able to provide sufficient food to meet current levels of demand.

16. South Yorkshire Community Foundation have created a fund that will support individuals in need and to encourage people to donate their £150 Council Tax energy rebate or any other amount to this fund. SCC have supported the creation of this by donating £20,000 from the food access funding to add to the money raised from individuals. The funding generated by the fund will be given to food banks and other types of support organisations in the city to enable them to continue their work and respond to increasing demand.

17. Responding to underlying causes of food poverty

18. Food poverty is a result of financial hardship. The council's poverty strategy and cost of living crisis incidence response both outline ways the council can prevent poverty or support those experiencing poverty. Specific to food it is clear that accessing a food bank can be a gateway to other support services that may be able to help people with their financial situation e.g. employment, financial or mental health support. Sheffield Citizen's Advice have a history of providing outreach into food banks and therefore could be approached to discuss expansion of this work. The estimated cost of this is £40,000.

19. Co-ordination and capacity building

20. Dedicated staffing capacity will allow detailed and up to date information to be held on emergency food provision in the city, the scale of the demand for this provision and the challenges being faced by providers and users. This intelligence and conduit between the council and the diverse range of food support in the city will enable us to provide that right kind of support. It will also support networking, collaboration and the sharing of learning and expertise between projects, in particular those who want to develop their provision in response to the food ladders model. The desired outcome will be community food spaces that increasingly:

- Build resilience through prevention. We must still ensure emergency food provision is accessible to those who need it, but where possible we should also try to shift away from a dependency model of emergency food provision to one of prevention.
- Expands the use of food as a tool to access other support and services, including financial support and mental health services.

- Provide increased choice, opportunities for participation and minimise the risk of stigma.
- Are supported to collaborate and share expertise

21. It is proposed to allocate £30,000 to enable an external organisation to deliver the above objectives for a period of 18 months. Voluntary Action Sheffield had previously taken on a similar foodbank support role during the pandemic, and more broadly are a strategic partner for capacity development in the sector including organisational development, volunteering support etc, so this could be a natural development of that work.

22. It is proposed to reserve up to £60,000 to be used as a food bank/ food relief development fund. The exact funding criteria will need to be developed but in general the funding will be awarded to food banks and other food relief projects who wish to develop their offer to move away from a dependency model of emergency food provision to one of prevention. This might include establishing a community pantry, social eating space or formalising links with other support and services beyond food such as financial support.

23. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows

Responding to immediate need	
Donation to South Yorkshire Community Foundation cost of living fund (already approved)	£20,000
Food purchasing fund for distribution to Sheffield Food Banks	£50,000
Responding to underlying causes of food poverty	
Provision of advice in reach to food banks	£40,000
Coordination and capacity building	
Development of a comprehensive network of food support and community food spaces across the city	£30,000
Food bank / food relief project development fund	£60,000
Total	£200,000

24. Costings are estimated and there may need to be some adjustment as more detailed plans are made and/or in response to the ongoing impacts of the cost of living crisis. The only potential significant change would be if there is higher than

anticipated demand for the food purchasing fund. In this scenario funding may be moved from the food bank development fund into the purchasing fund.

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