

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

WINTER WARMTH BANK



Report Reference C-22-15
Meeting Date 5th September 2022
Agenda Item 10
Prepared by Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

Members will be cognisant of the current cost of living crisis and, particularly, the dramatic escalation of energy costs through the repeated raising of the energy price cap. In October, the price cap will increase from £1,971 to £3,549 per year and a further increase is anticipated in January. This increase in fuel costs will undoubtedly create additional pressures on households within Knutsford.

The concept of a 'warmth bank' is to provide a public space where those who are struggling to afford heating costs can spend time to reduce the necessity for individual homes to be heated. Whilst a warmth bank will not solve the underlying issue, it will help reduce the impact on individuals.

2.0 PROPOSED CONCEPT

It is proposed that the Town Council convert the Heath Room and Moor Room into a Warm Bank from October to February (inclusive); the council already pays to heat the entire building over winter and would not incur significant additional costs. The rooms would be open for members of the public to utilise during office hours within this period.

The Town Council would seek donations of items to make the rooms into a 'living room' with comfortable seating and tables and tea/coffee facilities.

The intention would be to convert the rooms at nil cost and at the end of the period, depending on the success of the initiative and perceived necessity for it in 2023, the items could be stored or donated to charity. The capacity of the rooms would likely be around 25 people; the town may need a network of warmth banks dependent on demand.

A small budget of £250 would be allocated for the promotion of the service, including to print a banner to display outside the council offices. The council would utilise community networks, social media, social prescribers and the Knutsford Guardian to publicise the service.

3.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

Council should consider:

- a) Does it wish to create a warmth bank as outlined
- b) Does it wish to undertake any further action to support the community