

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Communities, Housing and Public Protection
<b>DATE</b>	1 November 2022
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Warm Spaces
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/22/239
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Margaret Stewart
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report shares the progress made on the Warm Spaces initiative by the Library and Community Learning service.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the support being offered to communities through the Council's Warm Spaces initiative.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Over the last year the cost of energy has risen significantly. The energy price cap, set by OFGEM, exists to protect consumers by limiting the cost of a unit of energy. In October 2021, the energy price cap rose by 12%, followed by a 54% increase in April 2022. On the 1<sup>st</sup> October it was forecast to rise by a further 80%.
- 3.2 To mitigate against these increases, the Scottish and UK Governments have made a series of protections available to both private and business consumers. These are listed in Appendix 1. Aberdeen City Council has moved to further support residents with the disbursement of £1.1m to tackle food and fuel poverty in the city.
- 3.3 With growing fuel bills contributing to the cost of living, there is an opportunity to ensure that the Council's already heated buildings can welcome individuals, families, and communities to stay warm, share space and potentially so much more.
- 3.4 Warm Spaces is a now recognised term for public spaces where people have a choice of where they go and what they do while keeping warm. Warm

Spaces are welcoming safe spaces offering valuable and varied facilities unique to the venue. The promotion of Warm Spaces complements commissioned work delivered by Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) and Scarf by promoting and connecting people to resources, information and benefits to reduce the cost of heating homes this winter.

- 3.5 Our Library and Community Learning national bodies are also invested in Warm Spaces and it is hoped that approaches, successes and resources can be shared with colleagues across the sector regionally and nationally through; The Association of Public Libraries Scotland (APLS) and Scottish Library Information Council (SLIC) and The Northern Alliance, Regional Improvement Collaborative.
- 3.6 A directory of [Warm Spaces](#) that welcomes people, providing spaces to come and stay warm without judgement is available on the Aberdeen City Council [Help with the Cost of Living](#) web pages. The first of these venues to offer themselves as Warm Spaces are our Central and 16 Community Libraries and four Learning Centres.
- 3.7 These spaces are already being promoted and are available, and our aspiration is that the directory will grow and evolve as more services and organisations contribute and promote their spaces for public use. Invites to be involved in Warm Spaces as hosts or to provide information and experiences have been shared across community, cultural and health partnerships. Warm Spaces will be promoted in a range of languages, to raise awareness and encourage as many people and communities as possible to use the spaces, including those more likely to experience poverty. In doing so, we are promoting these as 'Welcoming, Respectful, Supportive' spaces, as set out in Appendix 1.

## **Libraries**

- 3.8 Our Central and 16 community Libraries remain some of the few public spaces which are free and open to all, already offering a warm and inclusive welcome to all who come through our doors. Library spaces have always been non-judgemental, offering universal free access to:
- print and digital resources
  - programmes of events and activities to inspire people of all ages and abilities
  - free access to PC/internet and wi-fi is available alongside a small number of sockets for charging devices.
  - free period products, including reusable products, in partnership with CFine
  - free toothpaste/brushes for under 5's in partnership with Childsmile
  - all libraries have TV licenses to allow customers to access live TV on iPlayer etc on devices/PCs if they don't have their own TV licence.

- 3.9 With support from volunteers and partners including Community Learning and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector the existing Libraries offer can be extended to offer more targeted activities and workshops for example covering budgeting, food growth, cooking, knitting/sewing etc. Larger libraries could host pop-up stalls with warm clothing etc to take away.

### **Community Learning and Development**

- 3.10 Community Learning staff are working with communities and partners in piloting a Warm Spaces approach at four Learning Centres, starting with: Cummings Park, Rosemount, Kincorth and Seaton. The learning from setting up the successful Ukrainian pop-up community centre has informed the Warm Spaces approach, with the first four centres opening and tested as Warm Spaces from October 2022. Leased Community Centres are also encouraged to open as Warm Spaces with many already having published their offer.
- 3.11 The Community Learning and Development team is working to develop the capacity of willing local community groups to contribute to the success of Warm Spaces. The ambition of all centres would be to operate over as much of the day and evening as possible, and seven days a week, however initially Monday to Thursday is seen as more feasible to test capacity and take up. Where there is a need to adapt our Warm Spaces offer we will look to do so.
- 3.12 Partnerships between Community Learning, ACC and NESCoI have been utilised to match and support students to volunteer at community Warm Spaces. Community Learning will continue to develop the Warm Spaces volunteering offer to include; volunteer recruitment with further ideas to develop a Warm Spaces volunteer pool, identifying and matching training needs, developing volunteering and community action beyond this winter's Warm Spaces.
- 3.13 Warm Spaces present multiple positive opportunities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities in Aberdeen. Our community and cultural services offer so much more than a warm space, with many opportunities for exploration across our cultural and library collections to spark imagination, resource to develop new skills and access to physical and digital information. Our Community Learning staff are in the heart of communities supporting many initiatives including volunteer roles that build community capacity and enhance individuals' employability skills. Warm Spaces' success will be measured not just on the number of people who turn up but also the connections made, the learning opportunities accessed and impacts on individuals' health and wellbeing as a result of maximising resources and working collaboratively.
- 3.14 Communication inviting colleagues, partners and services to host, contribute, resource and promote Warm Spaces has been shared across health and wellbeing, community, employability, education, culture, faith and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector networks, maximising the connections points for services, individuals families and communities to access and build on the diverse Warm Spaces offer across the city.

3.15 As we head further into winter, we will have a better understanding of the demand on Warm Spaces and on the resources required to best support the people who access them. Warm Spaces presents opportunities to listen to and better understand individuals and communities; needs, interests and ambitions and enable them to access the right services to progress these.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

#### 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The current Warm Spaces initiative will have minimal environmental impact. Warm Spaces will maximise use of already open and heated buildings, dependent on demand there may be an increase in the use of electricity as more people come to use library and community centres to plug in devices and more fully use facilities. Additional energy costs for Aberdeen City Council buildings will be monitored throughout the Warm Spaces initiative.

6.2 It is important that Warm Spaces support people to be warm in their own homes, and information and support on how to do so in a way that reduces environmental impact will be encouraged and promoted across Warm Space venues.

#### 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Risk of not fully using the opportunity to support those in most need	Communication plan that includes a wide range of partners across: communities, H&SCP, Education	L	Y
<b>Compliance</b>	Risk of not meeting statutory requirements.	The offer of warm spaces provides evidence that statutory requirements are met and are documented in statutory plans such as	L	Y

		the Child Poverty Action Plan and Equalities Outcome Mainstreaming Report.		
<b>Operational</b>	Staff and volunteer capacity  Impact of winter flu bug and Covid 19	Monitor uptake carefully to determine any remedial action required.  Apply guidance to settings as required	L	Y
<b>Financial</b>	No risks identified		L	Y
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk of being considered as not helping to mitigate the increase in household energy costs being experienced across the city.	The provision of warm spaces is an important mitigation for households, along with £1.1m financial support already committed to communities, and ongoing work such as free school meals, school clothing grants, heat and power network, and financial advice.	L	Y
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No significant risks identified			

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</a></u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	<p>The proposals within this report support the following policy statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to promote diversion activities for youths and adults in our city with enhanced focused on our three locality areas.</li> <li>- Commission an urgent report, to identify how the Council could further support struggling and vulnerable people throughout this crisis.</li> <li>- Ensure the Council follows best practice as a corporate parent to get the best outcomes for looked-after young people, those in kinship</li> </ul>

	<p>care and those with additional support needs such as autism, developmental disorders or mental health problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with communities to establish trusts, community enterprises, charities or other entities that support community empowerment and community wealth building</li> <li>- Support voluntary groups and other partners that help people tackle loneliness and isolation</li> </ul>
<b><u><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</a></u></b>	
1. No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026	Warm Spaces will offer some relief to the cost of heating homes, venues on the Warm Space directory will be encouraged to provide information on financial support and benefits as well as information on insulating homes.
11.2 Increase opportunities for people to increase their contribution (volunteering) to communities by 10% by 2023.	Warm Spaces will provide opportunities for volunteering across libraries and community venues and seeks to build capacity to maintain and extend opening hours and venues.
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	<p>Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024</p> <p>Culture Aberdeen - A Cultural Strategy for the City of Aberdeen 2018-2028</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Stage 1 IIA complete.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	None

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Operational Delivery Committee 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022- [Cost of Living report](#)

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1: Warm Spaces Aberdeen – Welcoming, Respectful, Supportive

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## **Warm Spaces Aberdeen – Welcoming, Respectful, Supportive**

### **Our Warm Spaces will be welcoming**

Everyone will find a safe, supportive environment.

### **Our Warm Spaces will respect your privacy and dignity**

Aberdeen's Warm Spaces are non-judgmental, welcoming places. Staff and volunteers will be available to assist you, but if you prefer to enjoy the space without interruption this will be respected.

### **Our Warm Spaces will support you**

If you have specific needs we will work to address them with you, this may include us working with or introducing you to partner agencies who can offer the appropriate support. We will only share your information with your permission, unless safeguarding policies require us to.