

# Public Document Pack



## Supplement Agenda 1

Dear Councillor

### **EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL - MONDAY, 10TH OCTOBER, 2022**

I am now able to enclose, for consideration on Monday, 10th October, 2022 meeting of the Extraordinary Council, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

<b>Agenda No</b>	<b>Item</b>
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- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 4. | <b><u>Cost of Living Crisis</u> (Pages 3 - 38)</b> |
|----|--|

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

Encs

05/10/22

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# Agenda Item 4

<b>Committee:</b> Extraordinary Council	<b>Date:</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2022
<b>Subject:</b> Cost of Living Crisis	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Report of:</b> Steve Summers – Strategic Director	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author/s:</b> Name: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts – Corporate Director (Finance & Resources) Telephone: 01277 312 500 E-mail: jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk	<b>For:</b> Decision

## SUMMARY

A request was made to the Mayor in accordance with the constitution from five members of the Liberal Democratic Group (Appendix A) on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

*“To call for an Extraordinary Council meeting to be held to discuss the cost of living crisis affecting our Country and what Brentwood Borough Council can do to ease the problems our residents are facing not just now, but in the future years”.*

A report was taken to Policy, Resources and Economic Development on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 on the Cost of Living Crisis (Appendix B), which was resolved unanimously.

The report recommended that the Council responses to this crisis in the development of an action plan across both Brentwood and Rochford to support our residents, businesses, and staff. This will involve a mixture of signposting, guidance, and support to the most vulnerable, working in partnership with Essex County Council, health partners and Voluntary and Community organisations.

Reference was made to what efforts were being made both locally, countywide and nationally.

The action plan will be continuously reviewed and updated with regular reports to be taken to Community, Environment and Enforcement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Members are asked:**

- R1. That any recommendations agreed by the Council are added to the Cost of Living Action Plan (Appendix C).**
- R2. Recommendations that require further financial and legal review to be considered at an appropriate Policy, Resources and Economic Committee.**

## **Main Report**

### **Introduction and Background**

1. At Ordinary Council on 27<sup>th</sup> July the Council recognised the impact of the cost of living crisis on many residents and groups in Brentwood and there could be further opportunities to enhance the support available.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

2. To support our residents, businesses, and staff through this crisis to provide guidance, signposting to support services and assistance. The action plan will provide a clear report to Members on the actions and expected outcomes from each of the thematic workstreams with short, medium, and long-term objectives.

### **Implications**

#### **Financial Implications**

**Name/Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Corporate Director (Finance & Resources) and Section 151 Officer**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk**

3. Consideration will need to be given for any additional financial support that maybe required for the cost of living crisis. Any new additions to the Action Plan which require further financial review would need to be considered at an appropriate Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee.

#### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Steve Summers, Strategic Director**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312500/steve.summers@brentwood.gov.uk**

4. Any work undertaken by the Council, either by itself or in partnership will be in line with statutory legal guidance, this will apply to an additions made to the Action Plan.

#### **Economic Implications**

**Name/Title: Phil Drane, Director of Place**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk**

5. Increases to the cost of living are likely to have significant impacts on the local economy. This is a fast evolving situation and so the council will need to monitor impacts and identify necessary and deliverable measures to support the economy over time. With less disposable income it is likely that residents and visitors will spend less locally, although this needs to be balanced with the increased cost of essential items that may still be purchased and the ability for businesses to identify customer

needs and related opportunities for growth, for example. The Government has introduced an energy cap scheme to limit the price that suppliers can charge for gas and electricity. This provides some certainty on the upper limit of costs for residents and businesses, although electricity prices for business customers are still likely to be double what they were this time last year. The council continues to engage with local businesses via groups such as the Brentwood Business Partnership and Chamber of Commerce, where regular feedback on economic performance is shared, and as above should be monitored to identify support.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

**Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager (Communities, Leisure & Health)**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk**

6. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
  - a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
  - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
7. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
8. The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. More funding is likely to be allocated to pensioners and those with disabilities.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

9. None.

### **Appendices to this report**

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Appendix A | Request by the Liberal Democratic Group to the Mayor on 5 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2022                           |
| Appendix B | Cost of Living Crisis report to Policy, Resources and Economic Development on 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2022. |
| Appendix C | Cost of living Action Plan – as at 4th October 2022.  |
| Appendix D | Information on Government's Mini Budget September 2022  |

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# Appendix A

Councillor Olivia Francois,  
Mayor of Brentwood Borough Council.

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2022

Dear Mayor,

We, the undersigned, formally call for an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council (Section 1.3 of the Constitution) to be held for the purpose of discussing the cost of living crisis affecting our Country and what Brentwood Borough Council can do to ease the problems our residents are facing not just now, but in future years.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Barry Aspinell



Cllr Mark Haigh

Cllr Sarah Cloke



Cllr David Kendall

Cllr Marin Cuthbert



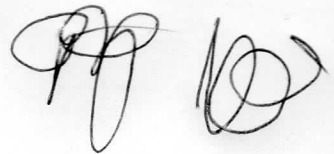
Cllr Jay Laplain

Cllr Nicky Cuthbert

Cllr Mark Lewis

Cllr Vicky Davies

Cllr Philip Mynott



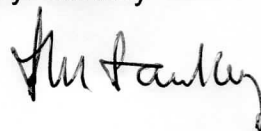
Cllr Andy Fryd

Cllr Dominic Naylor

  
DPN

Cllr Alison Fulcher

Cllr Darryl Sankey



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## Appendix B

<b>Committee(s):</b> Policy, Resources & Economic Development	<b>Date:</b> 14 September 2022
<b>Subject:</b> Cost of Living Crisis	<b>Wards Affected:</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Tracey Lilley, Director of Communities and Health	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author/s:</b> Name: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager Communities, Leisure and Health Telephone: 01277 312634 E-mail: kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk	<b>For:</b> Decision

### Summary

The Country is heading into a cost-of-living crisis and the Council is drafting a response to this crisis in the development of an action plan across both Brentwood and Rochford to support our residents, businesses, and staff. This will involve a mixture of signposting, guidance, and support to the most vulnerable, working in partnership with Essex County Council, health partners and Voluntary and Community organisations.

### Recommendation(s)

**Members are asked to agree:**

**R1. That an action plan will be produced by officers and will be presented to a future committee.**

**R2. That the action plan is regularly reviewed and updated and reported back to the relevant committee.**

### Main Report

#### **Introduction and Background**

1. At Ordinary Council on 27<sup>th</sup> July the Council recognised the impact of the cost of living crisis on many residents and groups in Brentwood and there could be further opportunities to enhance the support available.
2. The cost-of-living crisis is the result of a number of factors. The global demand for oil and the conflict in Ukraine has resulted in an increase in wholesale energy prices.
3. Energy firms have warned that 40% of the population could fall into fuel poverty. It can be defined using the Low-income Energy efficiency (LILLE) indicator. A household is fuel poor if they are living in a property with an energy efficiency rating of band D or below, and after heating their home to an adequate level, they are below the official poverty line. The official poverty line is considered to be a residual income 60% below the median household income

after housing costs. Adequate warmth is considered to be 21°C (70F) in the main living room and 18° C (64F) in other occupied rooms during daytime hours, with lower temperatures at night. Fuel poverty is not just about access to heating as the definition of fuel is taken to include all expenditure on domestic energy, including that used for hot water, cooling, lights, and appliances.

4. It is estimated that a typical spend will increase by 54% based on average usage and from 1 October 2022 an average energy bill will hit £3549 per year or £296 a month.
5. The price cap used to be reviewed every 6 months, but from the 1 October 2022 it will be reviewed every 3 months, so will be reviewed again in January 2023. It should also be noted that due to the review in January 2023 it will mean that everyone will be paying higher bills more frequently in the winter months.
6. The current rate of inflation is 10.1%. Businesses are experiencing increased transport and energy costs and combined with supply problems, many of these costs are being passed to the customer.
7. Food prices have increased significantly with essential items such as bread, pasta, meat and vegetables rising the most.
8. The cost of petrol/diesel has also risen significantly due to the Russian invasion of the Ukraine.
9. The Bank of England has increased the base rate six times since December 2021 from 0.1% to its current level of 1.5%. This has resulted in a significant increase in mortgage rates.
10. Rents across the UK are at a record high with a 3% increase in the last year according to the Index of Private Housing Rent Prices (PHRP) however Rightmove have highlighted that the rate is in fact higher at a 12% increase as the Index only considered new lets.
11. A temporary 1.25% National Insurance increase came into effect from April 2022. This will be replaced in April 2023 by a new 1.25% health and social care levy. This means that workers will see their NI contributions rise from 12% to 13.25%. Pensioners that are still working will also be expected to pay the new levy.
12. The Government is providing a number of support packages which currently include the following (this list is not exhaustive and likely to change):
  - £400 energy discount – 6 installations of approximately £66 deducted from energy bills from October 2022 to March 2023. This will happen at source, so residents do not need to do anything
  - Council Tax rebate of £150 for those households in property bands of A-D
  - £300 one off payment to pensioners
  - £150 one off payment to people with a disability
  - £200 cost of living payment via the Household support fund

13. Officers have developed a cost-of-living webpage for Brentwood covering the following five key themes:
- Support with bills and money
  - Support with food and essentials
  - Support with wellbeing
  - Go Green
  - Support with work
14. A survey has been sent out to Brentwood's Community Support Network for each organisation to complete and the feedback is currently being collated ahead of the next meeting on the 12 September for discussion.
15. Officers from Districts and Borough Councils attended a fuel poverty workshop at Essex University in August with colleagues from Essex County Council and health partners to discuss priority workstreams and opportunities for collaborative working. These meetings are continuing and officers from Brentwood are leading on the mapping of warm spaces across the County.

### **Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

16. It is proposed that officers develop a comprehensive action plan with short, medium, and long objectives and outcomes.
17. This action plan will be a live document and once finalised will be presented to Members at the relevant Committee and a regular review and update report will also be presented to members for monitoring.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

To support our residents, businesses, and staff through this crisis to provide guidance, signposting to support services and assistance. The action plan will provide a clear report to Members on the actions and expected outcomes from each of the thematic workstreams with short, medium, and long-term objectives.

### **Consultation**

Consultation has been undertaken with the Community Support Network in Brentwood to provide feedback regarding the impact to frontline services. As part of the Fuel Poverty Workshop in August consultation was had with borough, District and City Council representatives together with Essex County Council and Health partners. Internal discussion with Corporate Leadership Team and Extended Leadership Team are also being undertaken.

### **References to Corporate Plan**

The Cost-of-Living crisis sits across all the corporate objectives.

### **Implications**

#### **Financial Implications**

**Name/Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Corporate Director (Finance & Resources) and Section 151 Officer**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk**

Consideration will need to be given for any additional financial support that is provided. Any central Government grants may need to be applied for and will need to be allocated accordingly.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name/Title: Steve Summers, Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/steve.summers@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk**

Any work undertaken by the Council, either by itself or in partnership will be in line with statutory legal guidance.

### **Economic Implications**

**Name/Title: Phil Drane, Director of Place**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/philip.drane@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk**

As there is no energy cap for businesses it is expected that there will be a significant impact on all businesses without Government support.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

**Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager (Communities, Leisure & Health)**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk**

1. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
  - a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
  - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

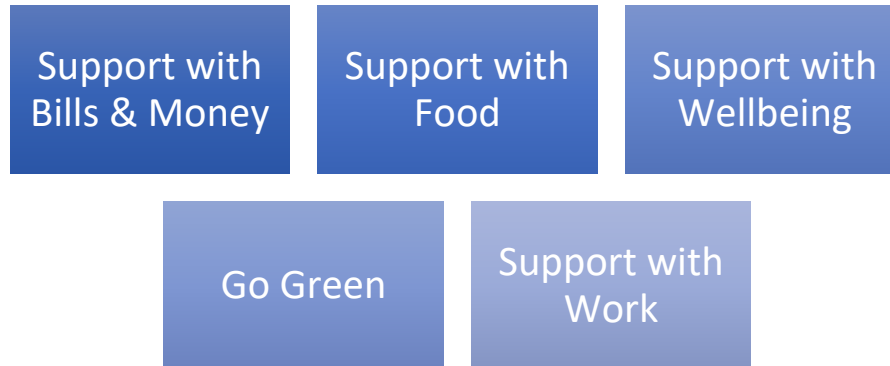
The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. More funding is likely to be allocated to pensioners and those with disabilities.



## Cost of Living Action Plan



As the Country prepares for the impacts of the cost of living crisis both Councils are focused on our response in order to support our staff, residents and businesses. We have developed our response around 5 key themes:



This Action Plan provides a whole system approach to support residents, businesses and staff respond to the cost-of-living issues and enable individual and collective support through a suite of preventative and personalized measures.

This action plan is a live document and will be informed not only from any governmental changes but also a number of sources., such as health colleagues, Housing, Revs and Bens, DWP, CAB and VCSE organisations that are on the front-line providing services to residents.

Although a number of services were digitized as a result of Covid, we also need to make sure that the most vulnerable know how to access the support services that are available to them which may include printed support material or face to face engagement. The following groups are particularly affected: Single people on low incomes (on benefits or in work); Families with children, including lone parents: Those living with disabilities: and Pensioners.

Both Council already provide core funding to organisations such as Citizens Advice and others to ensure that it continues to support people. This compliments current housing/welfare support provision.

This action plan will be regularly presented to Members across both Council's for review.



## Cost of Living Action Plan



Support with bills and money						
	Task	Lead (dept)	Assigned to	Timeframe	Cost & Funding Source	Benefit and potential Impact
B1	<b>Residents that are eligible for Council Tax Energy Rebate of £150 receive it: Bands A-D</b>	Revenues and Benefits	Director of Resources	22/23	Funding from Central Government	Residents can use relief to offset against other living standard issues
B2	<b>Energy rebate</b>	Revenues and Benefits	Director of Resources	22/23	Funding from Government	The scheme is universal, meaning all domestic electricity customers will get £400 off their energy bills from October. It will be paid per property, so even those with multiple properties and holiday homes will receive a £400 rebate on each bill, The rebate is administered by the energy companies directly. Those households on the lowest income will receive an extra payment of £650 to help with the cost of living.
B3	<b>Household Support Fund to support residents against the following categories (Food, Clothing and utilities)</b>	Revenues and Benefits	Director of Resources	22/23	ECC	The fund will help households with the cost of essentials such as food, clothing and utilities (where there is specific need identified).
B4	<b>Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to support those whose rent is restricted due to Local Housing Allowance, Bedroom Tax or Benefit Cap</b>	Revenues and Benefits	Director of Resources/ Director of Housing?	22/23	TBC	DHP can help people with housing costs including those affected by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefit cap</li> <li>• Removal of spare room subsidy in social rented sector(?)</li> <li>• Local Housing allowance (LHA) rates</li> </ul> You may get a DHP to cover housing costs:



## Cost of Living Action Plan



						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where there is a liability to pay rent and rent shortfall exists after Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (UC) Housing Costs are paid and the Household budget is insufficient to meet that shortfall</li> <li>• For a short period to allow time for household adjustments to contracts and subscriptions</li> <li>• To facilitate a move that removes ongoing dependency on DHP</li> </ul> <p>DHPs cannot cover Council Tax or rent arrears</p>
Page 15	<b>Council Tax Reduction Scheme offers up to 75% reduction in Council Tax for low income working age residents and 100% reduction for pension age residents</b>	Revenues and Benefits	Director of Resources	Ongoing	Subject to eligibility	Supports working people on low income that may require support and also pension age residents who meet the criteria for eligibility
B6	<b>Brentwood - New Community Engagement Officer shared with Basildon Borough Council for 2 years (pending decision by PRED- Separate report)</b>	Revenues and Benefits	Director of Resources (\$151 Officer)	22-24	BBC contribution £36.5k (over 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key technical knowledge on Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, and Discretionary Housing Payment new claims, which will give assistance for those who genuinely are unable to help themselves.</li> <li>• Give advice on Welfare Benefits, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction/Support – ensuring customers are claiming for what they may be entitled to.</li> <li>• Assistance with Homelessness and Housing options.</li> </ul>



## Cost of Living Action Plan



Page 16						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in improving customers employability &amp; getting them ready for, or back to work</li> <li>• Organise follow up support for specialist issues from different agencies relating to mental health and debts advice</li> <li>• Drug and Alcohol dependency support</li> <li>• Training to other members of staff within the Council</li> </ul> <p>It is intended that this officer will be available across the borough, in key locations.</p>
	<p><b>Dedicated webpage for Cost of Living to support and signpost our residents, staff and businesses</b></p>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	Ongoing	Within existing budgets	<p>The webpages are live and covers five key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support with money and bills</li> <li>• Support with Food</li> <li>• Support with wellbeing</li> <li>• Go Green</li> <li>• Support with work</li> </ul> <p>All information will be regularly reviewed and updated</p>
	<p><b>Working Group to be established with internal Council departments and key external partners to identify and support our residents, staff and businesses</b></p>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	Ongoing	Within existing budgets	<p>A joint working group will be established for both Councils and will include representatives from Community Services, Housing, Revs and Bens, Communications and Customer Contact Centre. In addition, the working group will work with key partners such as Essex County Fire and Rescue, Brentwood and Basildon Alliance, Rochford and Castlepoint Alliance, Essex Police, CAB and other voluntary sector partners. This</p>





## Cost of Living Action Plan



						working group will help to identify any additional resources required in order to provide targeted support for residents and businesses.
<b>B9</b>	<b>Cost of Living Earmarked Reserve (Brentwood)</b>	Finance	Director of Resources	22/23	Earmarked reserve £100,000	To set aside funds to address any additional internal resources identified by the Cost of Living Working Group
<b>B10</b>	<b>Housing Options Officers support each tenant individually, looking at their situation holistically and not just rent owed. They work with other agencies such as Citizens Advice or Peabody to help to maximise income, better budgeting and negotiating with creditors. This could also utilize the Household Support Grant</b>	Housing/ Finance	Director of Housing	22/23	Within existing budgets	Council officers continue to provide holistic support/early intervention to prevent people from falling into debt or at risk of homelessness. This will be enhanced by partnership working with CAB and Peabody to signpost support available. Work with Revenues and Benefits and Housing departments to look at analytics to stop people going into debt.
<b>B11</b>	<b>Additional support materials for Cost of living to be developed through the Working Group</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	2022/23	Within existing budgets	Supports different communication methods so that we ensure that any information is widely available as much as possible in different format so that we do not exclude those with no digital access. However, we need to bear in mind that information may be subject to change.
<b>B12</b>	<b>Utilising any outreach opportunities such the Community Connect trailer to provide face to face signposting, support and advice</b>	Community Services/ Housing	Director of Communities and Health	22/23	Within existing budgets	Working with Parish and Town Councils and partners to fully utilise any assets that can provide additional outreach opportunities



## Cost of Living Action Plan



B13	<b>Training for frontline staff</b>	Revenues and Benefits/ Community Services/ Contact Centre and Housing	Director of Communities and Health	2022/23	ECC	With funding provided by Essex County Council CAB has been commissioned to provide dedicated training to frontline staff to support them when dealing with cost-of-living issues. This will also provide additional support for those who may not be able to access online services and guidance
Page 18	<b>Survey Community Support Network &amp; communities to understand impact of Cost-of-Living Crisis at a hyper local level</b>	Communities and Health	Director of Communities and Health	22/23	Existing BBC budget	The survey will help inform the local impact and identify where and what support will be required.
					Existing H&WB work to engage residents	Survey to be led by board and partners such as the hub for RDC
B15	<b>Scoping of data with partner organisations to understand which residents may require multi-agency support</b>	Contact Centre/ Community Services/ Revenues and Benefits/ Housing	Director of Communities and Health	22/23	Existing budgets	Survey undertaken with Community Support Network including CAB and CVS and Cost-of Living Working Group
B16	<b>Pensioner support</b>	Revenues and Benefits	Director of Resources	22/23	Funding from Central Government	There will be an extra cost of living payment for pensioners. Pensioner households who receive the winter fuel payment will get £300. If you receive pension credit, you can get £650 one-off payment on top of this £300, as well as the £400 energy bill rebate.



## Cost of Living Action Plan



						<p>This means a low-income pensioner household will receive a total of £1,500 this year in extra support.</p> <p>This extra £300 payment is designed to help households who are disproportionately affected by higher energy costs.</p>
Page 18	<b>B17 National insurance payments</b>	N/A				<p>The Government has reversed the 1.25% increase to employer and employee National Insurance Contributions (NICs) in this financial year and dropped the Health and Social Care Levy that was due to succeed it in 2023-24.</p>
	<b>B18 Support for businesses</b>	Economic Development	Director of Place	22/23	Funding tbc.	<p>Identify any funding that is available to businesses and identify additional support required.</p>
	<b>B19 Consult local businesses to establish support required</b>	Economic Development	Director of Place	22/23	Within existing resources	<p>Undertake a survey of local businesses with Brentwood Business Partnership to ascertain additional support.</p>

Support with Food and Essentials						
Task	Lead (department)	Assigned to	Timeframe	Cost & Funding Source	Benefit and potential Impact `	



## Cost of Living Action Plan



F1	<b>Work with Active Essex and ECC (Essex County Council) to continue to provide the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) during the school holidays for children and young people</b>	Communities	Director of Community and Health	22/23	DFE via ECC / Active Essex	The school holidays can be pressure points for some families. The HAF programme which provides free activities and meals during school holidays to young people who are eligible for free school meals. The HAF programme provides a positive impact on children and young people
F2 Page 20	<b>Map any green spaces and allotments (working with Parish Council's) to identify sites that can bring communities together to grow their own produce- reinvest in initiatives that have been successful which can be repeated elsewhere through the use of community grants/civic crowdfunding platform</b>	Communities & Environment	Director of Communities and Health Director of Environment	Ongoing	Discretionary Funding	Utilising both Council's green spaces supports mental and physical health. Some projects are funded through VSG and PH grants each year to support activities in communities, some in green spaces. RDC rents out many green spaces for sports.
F3	<b>Maximise funding to local foodbanks, Foodshare and identify locations for possible community fridges</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	Ongoing	Government funding allocated (tbc)	Support residents to access food support in the borough which will be informed by the Cost-of-Living Working Group



## Cost of Living Action Plan



F4	<b>Work with Communities across both Council's to provide assets that can be utilised to support local residents to cook cheap and healthy meals</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	Ongoing	Funding TBC	Work with Children's Centre, Manna Meals, and CVS to identify families that would benefit from additional support.
					PH Funding RDC	PH funding is regularly provided to projects under the outcomes of the CP&R H&WB strategy to projects such as man with a pan
F5	<b>Work with partners such as Lighthouse furniture Company to maximise, reduce and reuse of materials and the Essential Living Fund funding</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	22/23	ECC/ Brentwood Community Fund	Support residents on low incomes to access furniture at low cost

Support with Wellbeing						
Task	Lead (department)	Assigned to	Timeframe	Cost & Funding Source	Benefit and potential Impact	



## Cost of Living Action Plan



W1	<b>Work with our partner agencies to support the most vulnerable residents</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	22/23	Brentwood Community Funded projects Core funding to CAB and CVS	Work with the VCSE organisations to signpost and support mental health and wellbeing and build community resilience. Utilise the Community Support Network and Hub developments to identify and support our more vulnerable residents.
W2 Page 22	<b>The Council with partners to promote a range of community engagement events to provide positive engagement and participation</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	22/23	Within existing budgets	Utilising the Community Connect Trailer in more rural areas, Community Events, and other community engagement days to extend the reach to our residents.  Working alongside our partners to realise opportunities such as local events etc.
						Budgets for this and resources would need to be identified for RDC.
W3	<b>Promote the community Physical and Mental Health and wellbeing projects through our partners such as the local Health and Wellbeing Boards and our Leisure Service providers</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	22/23	Within existing budgets or through Brentwood Community Fund, funded projects	Supports the borough's more vulnerable residents to lead more healthy lifestyles.



## Cost of Living Action Plan



Page 23					Within the work of H&WBB and partners in Rochford & contract for Leisure services	Supports the borough's more vulnerable residents to lead more healthy lifestyles in line with the priorities for the CP&R Health and Wellbeing Strategy <a href="https://www.rochford.gov.uk/community-and-people/health-and-wellbeing/castle-point-rochford-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2022">https://www.rochford.gov.uk/community-and-people/health-and-wellbeing/castle-point-rochford-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2022</a> The mental Health Concordat and the livewell work <a href="https://www.rochford.gov.uk/community-and-people/health-and-wellbeing/live-well-link-well">https://www.rochford.gov.uk/community-and-people/health-and-wellbeing/live-well-link-well</a>	
	<b>W4</b>	<b>Continue to support staff through the Employee Assistance programme</b>	HR	Director of Law and Governance	22/23	Within existing budgets	Support staff through the Employee Assistance Programme <a href="http://www.vivupbenefits.co.uk">www.vivupbenefits.co.uk</a>  RDC Livewell channel
	<b>W5</b>	<b>Promote activities across both Council's where residents can go ensuring buildings are fit for purpose</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	Ongoing	Within existing budgets	Supports resident's mental health and social wellbeing at hyper local level utilizing existing community support network and the activities that they provide at their support hubs. This is linked to the warmer spaces.
	<b>W6</b>	<b>Work with partners to promote Winter Warmth campaign and establish small working group</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and Health	22/23	ECC funding to CVS	Small working group to allocate funding across the borough for projects to support residents.
		<b>Development of warm spaces/hubs (welcome hubs) in order to reduce stigma associated with fuel poverty</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and health	Ongoing	Potential Health/ECC funding	There is a countywide mapping exercise being undertaken by anchor organisations such as Districts, Borough, ECC and Health to ascertain which assets can be utilised to provide these warm spaces. The Council is not intending to create additional sites but to utilise the existing



## Cost of Living Action Plan



						spaces which meet the criteria where there is support already provided.
<b>W7</b>	<b>County wide summit to address cost of living crisis</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and health	November 2022	N/A	To understand the wider implications of the cost of living crisis.

Go Green						
	Task	Lead (department)	Assigned to	Timeframe	Cost & Funding Source	Benefit and potential Impact
<b>G1</b>	<b>Promote the green spaces across both Councils as places where people can meet to</b>	Parks and Open Spaces	Director of Environment	22/23	Within existing budgets	Supports physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents





## Cost of Living Action Plan



	<b>support physical health and wellbeing</b>					
<b>G2</b>	<b>Promote the use of allotments and work with the local horticultural societies in the development of spaces.</b>	Parks and Open Spaces	Director of Environment	22/23	Within existing budgets	Supports residents to grow their own and reduce their food bills where possible and signpost
<b>G3</b>	<b>Promotion and development of community orchards</b>	Parks and Open spaces	Director of Environment	22/23	Within existing budgets	Allows communities to access free fruit
<b>G4</b>	<b>Retrofit of residential properties</b>	Housing (tenants)	Director of Housing	Ongoing	ECC/ LAD funding	Assists residents to retrofit properties to reduce their utility costs. Work with Essex County Council Warmer Homes programme, which helps Essex residents to save energy and reduce their bills. This can include home improvements, financial help and tips on energy saving. Work with approved providers on the longer-term retrofit programme for the Council's housing stock. Continue the programme to build zero-carbon homes in the borough.
<b>G5</b>	<b>Work with ECC to promote the Warmer Homes programme of support that is available</b>	Housing/ Environmental Health	Director of Environment	Ongoing	ECC funding	Assists residents to retrofit their own properties to reduce their utility costs
<b>G6</b>	<b>Identify approved support services to provide free energy advice</b>	Community Services	Director of Communities and health	22/23	Within existing budgets	To provide a free service that assists residents in keeping warm and reducing their energy bills, without costing them any money.
<b>G7</b>	<b>Approve the Environmental Strategy</b>	Director of Environment	Director of Environment	Ongoing	Within existing budgets	Identify energy efficiencies and reducing carbon output and green incentives.



## Cost of Living Action Plan



Support with work						
	Task	Lead (department)	Assigned to	Timeframe	Cost & Funding Source	Benefit and potential Impact
S1	<b>Work with Department of Works and Pensions and Job Centre Plus support</b>	Revenues and Benefits	Director of Resources	Ongoing	Government Funding	Provide advice and support to help you work such as funded childcare vouchers, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance when you start work.

# Appendix D

## Information on Government's Mini Budget September 2022

Afternoon Members,

I attach various briefing notes from DCN, DHLUC and LG Futures, following the announcement made at the mini budget.

Although most of the Chancellors statement was focussed on national measures with little direct effect on local government some of these announcements will affect the Budget monitoring update report (forecasted up to period 4 – July) which has been published on the PRED agenda for 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

Although we are not in a position to quantify the full implications at this stage, we've pulled together a few points of areas which may affect our finances.

### Mini Budget

- Energy Bill Relief Scheme – (providing a discount on wholesale gas) The Council's annual energy contract was renewed in July, and the projected impact was included within the PRED report forecasts. The new relief scheme can be applied to local authorities, and we are in the process of quantifying this impact.
- Reversal of National Insurance increase – The government introduced a 1.25% increase to employer and employee National insurance contribution (NICs) from April 2022, which has now been reversed. Savings on the actual payroll will be approx. £30k between Nov- Mar. With higher savings expected on the budgeted position.
- Investment zones – further information to be circulated regarding selection criteria; zones will be chosen following an expression of interest process.

### Cost of Living Crisis

The PRED agenda also gave a financial update on the Cost of living crisis as well as data included within the budget monitoring report.

- The bank of England have now risen the base rate to 2.25% from 1.75%
- Current UK inflation rate is 9.8% (compared to 10.1% for July 2022)
- The current proposal of the 2022/23 NJC pay award of an increase of £1,925 on basic salary (average 7%-8%) has been agreed by unison (National position approved subject to Unite's and GMB's agreement); BBC current budget assumes a 2% pay award.

### Budget Consultation

Due to the death of her Majesty the Queen, the Budget consultation has been extended until 16<sup>th</sup> October 2022. Please see link below for you attention.

I would be most grateful if you could promote this to the residents/businesses in your ward areas, and across your wider networks within the borough.

<https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/-/setting-a-balanced-budget-for-2023-24>

If you have any questions please do get in touch.

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## Overview

- This briefing summarises key announcements affecting DCN councils made by the Government this week (commencing 19 September). It covers investment zones, the reversal of the National Insurance increase, and the Energy Bill Relief Scheme.
- It also provides information about ministerial appointments and the DCN's early engagement with new ministers.

## Investment Zones and The Plan for Growth

### Investment Zones

- The Government aims to create more than 40 investment zones across England. They will be low-tax, low-regulation zones with streamlined planning processes designed to incentivise investment and growth.
- Reliefs and incentives available in designated sites will be:
  - **Business rates:** businesses will benefit from 100% business rates relief on newly occupied and expanded premises; councils will retain 100% of the business rates growth above an agreed baseline for 25 years.
  - **Stamp duty land tax:** businesses will receive full tax relief on land bought for commercial or residential development.
  - **Employers National Insurance Contributions:** employers will pay a zero rate for contributions on new employee earnings up to £50,270 per year.
  - **Allowances:** there will be 100% first year enhanced capital allowance relief for plant and machinery used within designated sites and accelerated Enhanced Structures and Buildings Allowance relief of 20% per year.
  - **Planning:** the need for planning applications will be minimised and, where they remain necessary, they will be radically streamlined; designated development sites will be created to release more land for housing and commercial development.
- The Government says that further detail on planning changes will be announced in the coming weeks. It has not announced details of the timing for implementing investment zones but it's clear that it wants to move quickly. It will shortly set out the selection criteria for becoming an investment zone.
- The Government has produced a factsheet with more detail about the policy. It includes a list of the 38 areas initially in discussion with the Government (more areas may follow). DCN councils are present in 15 of these areas. You can find the factsheet [here](#).
- As part of its Plan For Growth (mini budget), the Government also gave a commitment to streamlining local growth funds and to introduce a new Bill to speed up the planning process for major infrastructure projects.

### DCN commentary

- The DCN supports the Government's ambition of boosting growth. In principle, investment zones could be a positive way to achieve that.

- The policy is being developed quickly and a lot of the detail is unclear, particularly around planning changes. What is certain is that district councils must play a vital part given their role as local planning authorities and their delivery capabilities.
- For investment zones to succeed districts must be true delivery partners and must play a full and active role in developing detailed proposals.
- The DCN will work closely with central government to ensure the investment zone concept is developed in a way that will work for local communities and that DCN councils are fully engaged and supported.
- You can find a link to the DCN's press statement [here](#).

## Reversal of National Insurance increase

- The Government has reversed the 1.25% increase to employer and employee National Insurance Contributions (NICs) in this financial year and dropped the Health and Social Care Levy that was due to succeed it in 2023-24.
- The income intended for the NHS and social care system will come from general taxation instead.

### DCN commentary

- All councils will feel the benefit of lower-than-expected employer NICs this year and in future years. We estimate it will be worth around £20m per year to DCN councils collectively.
- DCN councils still face substantial budget pressures due to the impact of general inflation and pay inflation. The reversal of the NICs increase helps. But DCN councils will need significant further funding and flexibilities from the Government to ensure we can preserve the local services our communities need and deserve.
- It is welcome that the Government has committed to preserve the level of funding for the NHS and care system that would have been provided by the NICs increase.

## Energy Bill Relief Scheme

- Under the Energy Bill Relief Scheme the Government will provide a discount on wholesale gas and electricity prices for all non-domestic customers. The support will be equivalent to the Energy Price Guarantee for households. The discount will be automatically applied by energy suppliers.
- **All councils will be eligible for the relief.**
- It will apply to fixed contracts agreed on or after 1 April 2022 as well as to variable and flexible tariffs and contracts.
- The support will initially be available for six months. After this period, the scheme may be extended for the most vulnerable non-domestic customers.

### DCN commentary

- Support to tackle the rapid rise in energy bills is welcome. It will be particularly helpful for DCN councils who own and operate leisure centres (directly or through contracted providers).
- It also provides much needed help to the businesses on which our local economies rely.
- But the scheme only tackles one element of the inflationary pressures our councils face. Energy costs are dwarfed by the impact of wider price inflation and rising pay on council budgets.
- Many district councils still face substantial budget pressures for at least the next two years. The DCN will continue to engage with the Government to secure the additional support our councils will need to sustain our services.
- You can find the DCN's press release [here](#) and the full Government announcement is [here](#).

## New Ministers

- The Government has now appointed a full set of ministers in the Department for Levelling Up (DLUHC) and their portfolios have been confirmed:
  - **Secretary of State: Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP** – he was previously Minister of State with responsibility for local government in 2020.
  - **Minister of State: Paul Scully MP** – he is responsible for local government finance and funding. His full responsibilities are:
    - Local Government policy and finance, including Office for Local Government and business rates
    - Building Safety – remediation and regulation regimes
    - Climate change, net zero and energy efficiency (building regulations)
    - Grenfell recovery and rehousing
  - **Parliamentary Under Secretary of State: Dehenna Davison MP** – she is the minister for levelling up with responsibility for:
    - Local growth funding design and simplification
    - Local growth funding delivery, including UK Shared Prosperity Fund
    - Devolution deals and county deals
    - Planning casework
  - **Parliamentary Under Secretary of State: Lee Rowley MP** – he is the housing and planning minister and will have responsibility for investment zones. His full responsibilities are:
    - Overarching responsibility for housing strategy, including supply and home ownership
    - Investment Zones
    - Housing funds, including Affordable Homes Programme
    - Homes England stewardship
    - Planning reform and casework
    - Leasehold and freehold
    - Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill
  - **Parliamentary Under Secretary of State: Andrew Stephenson** – his responsibilities are:
    - Homelessness and rough sleeping
    - Refugee housing – Ukraine and Afghanistan
    - Social housing, including Social Housing Regulation Bill
    - Supporting Families and Changing Futures
    - Private Rented Sector
    - Electoral Integrity Programme
    - Lead Minister for Secondary Legislation
  - **Parliamentary Under Secretary of State: Baroness Scott of Bybrook** – she is the minister in the Lords. She was previously Leader of Wiltshire County Council and its successor Wiltshire Council unitary authority. Her responsibilities are:
    - Integration, communities and faith, including Hong Kong BNOs
    - Local resilience and emergencies, including winter preparedness
    - COVID-19 inquiry
    - Planning casework
    - Lords work for the Department

- It is worth noting that MPs representing district council areas have been appointed to Cabinet posts, notably Thérèse Coffey MP (Secretary of State for Health and Deputy Prime Minister) and Chloe Smith MP (Secretary of State for Work & Pensions).
- Influential district MPs have also been appointed to ministerial roles in departments that are important for local government, for example Neil O'Brien MP and Robert Jenrick MP at the Department for Health and Social Care.

## DCN engagement with new Government

- The DCN has written to the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Levelling Up and other key ministers to set out how district councils can help the Government deliver national priorities in a way that works for our local communities.
- Our overarching message is that:
  - District councils are the leaders of place.
  - We have repeatedly shown that we have the local knowledge, convening power and delivery capability to respond quickly and flexibly to urgent national priorities.
  - We are local government's delivery specialists with proven ability to collaborate and work as a trusted partner with government, other councils, local public sector bodies, and businesses.
- We have outlined five ways that we deliver for our local communities:
  - Cushion the impact of cost-of-living pressures on local residents, including the most vulnerable.
  - Drive economic growth and recovery in local places, fostering jobs and tackling economic inequality.
  - Deliver better health and social outcomes through early intervention and preventative services, staving off costs for the NHS and other public services.
  - Improve the local environment and deliver net zero through clean growth.
  - Integrate refugees from Ukraine and other countries successfully into our communities.
- We have emphasised that DCN councils face substantial budget pressures in the next two years (at least), primarily due to energy and fuel inflation, wider price inflation and rising pay bills. This has the potential to diminish essential frontline services, including those that help our residents with the cost of living. It also risks disrupting our ability to invest in economic growth. We are pushing the Government to work with us to provide the additional financial support that will allow us to preserve and enhance our vital local services.
- We have reiterated the DCN's support for devolution deals provided district councils are given the full and active role that will help to deliver the best outcomes for local communities, working closely with our local partners. The previous administration's approach counter-productively marginalised the role of district councils. We continue to push for the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to be amended to allow district councils to be full members of Combined County Authorities with appropriate rights of consent.



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## The Growth Plan

23 September 2022



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. On 23 September 2022, the Chancellor delivered [The Growth Plan](#) which implements a number of measures announced by the new Prime Minister during her campaign in July and August 2022, as well as a number of further policies.
- 1.2. The Government's stated aim is for this package of measures to help deliver trend annual GDP growth of 2.5%.
- 1.3. This note sets out the main announcements made by the Chancellor as part of The Growth Plan, with a specific focus on measures that could affect English local government.
- 1.4. This week, the Government has made a number of other announcements which might be of interest and they are also briefly mentioned in a separate section below.

## 2. Announcements with a direct impact on local government

- 2.1. Most of the Chancellor's statement was focussed on national measures with little direct effect on local government. Some of those measures are mentioned in the next section, but a full list can be found [in the full document](#).
- 2.2. In terms of measures with a direct impact on local government, the Government:
  - Confirmed that the Health and Social Care Levy, due to be introduced from April 2023, has been cancelled. In addition, the increases to National Insurance contributions implemented from April 2022 will also be cancelled from 6 November. The Government has committed to the maintaining the additional spending on health and social care that was associated with the introduction of the Levy.
  - Committed to streamlining local growth funds and giving local government more flexibility over the next two years.
  - Will introduce a Planning and Infrastructure Bill to streamline and speed up the planning process for major infrastructure projects.
- 2.3. The Chancellor also announced that the Government will work with devolved administrations and local partners in England to introduce Investment Zones across the UK. These Zones will receive tax incentives (in tax sites) and liberalisation of planning rules (in development sites). All Investment Zones will include tax and development sites. In terms of local government,
  - Newly occupied premises in English Investment Zone tax sites (and certain existing businesses where they expand in English Investment Zone tax sites) will benefit from 100% business rates relief for 10 years.

- Councils will retain 100% of the business rates growth above an agreed baseline for 25 years in designated sites. The Growth Plan does not detail how this reconciles with the 100% relief on business rates in the tax sites. Past practice of implementation of national reliefs suggests that this would be done through section 31 compensation grants which count towards business rates retention, but this is to be confirmed by the Government.
- Regarding the business rates measures above, these are listed as ‘tax incentives under consideration’ so could be subject to change.
- Subject to demonstrating readiness, Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) hosting Investment Zones will receive a single local growth funding settlement in the next Spending Review period.
- The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will shortly set out more detail on liberalised planning in Investment Zones.
- Investment Zones will be delivered in partnership with upper tier local authorities and MCAs in England, who will work in partnership with relevant districts and/or constituent councils.
- Investment Zones will be chosen following a rapid expression of interest process open to everyone and after local consent is confirmed.
- The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will shortly set out the selection criteria to become an Investment Zone, and the process for designating sites within it.

2.4. In addition to The Growth Plan, the Government confirmed a number of other policy measures this week that might be of interest:

- The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced a [Plan for Patients](#), which included a £500 million fund to support discharge from hospital into the community and bolster the social care workforce, to free up beds for patients who need them. The fund is intended to be used flexibly by local health and care systems – although there is yet to be confirmation of which bodies will hold the funding.
- The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced an [Energy Bill Relief Scheme](#), which will benefit businesses and other non-domestic energy users, including public sector organisations by providing a discount on wholesale gas and electricity prices for six months. There will be a review of the scheme in three months to inform decisions on future support after March 2023.

### 3. Other announcements at a glance

3.1. The Chancellor confirmed other national measures as part of The Growth Plan. The following summarises some announcements, but the full list can be [found in the Government's full publication](#):

- The planned increases in Corporation Tax have been cancelled. Corporation Tax will remain set at 19%, with an 8% bank surcharge.
- From April 2023, the top rate of income tax (45%) will be abolished and the basic rate of income tax will reduce to 19%.
- Off-Payroll working reforms (IR35) will be repealed from 6 April 2023.
- The Government has raised thresholds above which Stamp Duty Land Tax must be paid from 23 September. The basic threshold is now £250,000 or, in the case of first-time buyers, £425,000. First-time buyers' relief is now applicable to properties valued up to £625,000.
- The Administrative Earnings Threshold for Universal Credit (UC) is being increased to 15 hours a week at National Living Wage for an individual claimant (and 24 hours a week for coupled) from January 2023. This means that around 120,000 more low earning UC claimants will be moved to the Intensive Work Search labour market regime. The Government will also strengthen the sanctions regime and will expand the DWP 50+ offer of work coach support.

### 4. Approach to public spending and future statements

4.1. Alongside the measures announced in The Growth Plan, the Government has supplied costings, coming to a total of £19 billion this year, growing to £45 billion by 2026/27. This excludes the costs of the reliefs to energy bills, with the Treasury estimating this to be at around £60 billion for the period between October 2022 and March 2023.

4.2. There are no Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) reports accompanying the announcement, but the Chancellor has commissioned the OBR to produce a forecast by the end of the year. The Government will provide an update on its position on the fiscal rules in response to the forecasts.

4.3. In addition, while there were no announcements about the trajectory of public spending in response to the tax-cutting measures, the Chancellor confirmed that the Government will publish a Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) at the next fiscal event.

## The Growth Plan

- 4.4. It is possible that the publication of the MTFP could happen alongside the Government's response to the full OBR forecast, but as there were no specific timings attached to either the forecast or the MTFP, they are not necessarily linked events.
- 4.5. It is also unclear if the MTFP could reopen the spending settlements for public services made as part of the 2021 Spending Review.

## 5. Further information

- 5.1. LG Futures will continue to update subscribers as and when new information is published on the Government's announcements (such as details of the Innovation Zones process) and will provide briefings on future fiscal events, the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan and the Government's response to OBR forecasts where local government is directly affected.
- 5.2. If you have any queries regarding this briefing, please do not hesitate to contact us at [aivaras.statkevicius@lgfutures.co.uk](mailto:aivaras.statkevicius@lgfutures.co.uk)

### Note on implications of announcements week commencing 23 September for local government

#### Energy Bill Relief Scheme

1. Through the new Energy Bill Relief Scheme, the Government will provide a discount on wholesale gas and electricity prices for all non-domestic customers, including local authorities, whose current gas and electricity prices have been significantly inflated in light of global energy prices.
2. It will apply to fixed contracts agreed on or after 1 April 2022, as well as to deemed, variable and flexible tariffs and contracts.
3. It will apply to energy usage from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, running for an initial six-month period for all non-domestic energy users.
4. The level of price reduction will vary depending on the contract type.
  - a. For non-domestic customers on existing fixed price contracts agreed on or after 1 April 2022, provided that the wholesale element of the price the customer is paying is above the Government Supported Price, their per unit energy costs will automatically be reduced by the relevant p/kWh for the duration of the Scheme. The Supported Wholesale Price is expected to be £211 per MWh for electricity and £75 per MWh for gas. Customers entering new fixed price contracts after 1 October will receive support on the same basis.
  - b. Those on default, deemed or variable (i.e. inflation-linked) tariffs will receive a per-unit discount on energy costs, up to a maximum of the difference between the Supported Price and the average expected wholesale price over the period of the Scheme. The amount of this Maximum Discount is likely to be around £405/MWh for electricity and £115/MWh for gas, subject to wholesale market developments.
  - c. For businesses on flexible purchase contracts, typically some of the largest energy-using businesses, the level of reduction offered will be calculated by suppliers according to the specifics of that company's contract and will also be subject to the Maximum Discount.
5. Local authorities do not need to take action or apply to the scheme to access the support. Support (in the form of a p/kWh discount) will automatically be applied to bills.
6. The Government will publish a review into the operation of the scheme in three months to inform decisions on future support after March 2023. The review will focus in particular on identifying the most vulnerable non-domestic customers and how the Government will continue assisting them with energy costs.

#### Adult Social Care Discharge Fund

7. To help people get out of hospitals and into social care support, the Government are launching a £500 million Adult Social Care Discharge Fund.
8. This first step will inform further action from next year to rebalance funding across health and care, to establish a strong and sustainable social care sector with greater accountability for use of taxpayers' money.
9. The fund can be used flexibly by local health and care systems, targeting the areas facing the greatest challenges and strengthening the sector's ability to recruit and retain staff. This will improve pathways for people to leave hospital when they are ready, and with the right care and support in place.

10. The Government has also announced measures: to support more people to work in care; use IT to reduce bureaucracy; and deliver the 'cap and means test' reforms by October 2023.

#### Investment Zones

11. Investment Zones will drive growth and unlock housing across the UK by lowering taxes and liberalising planning frameworks to encourage rapid development and business investment.
12. Areas hosting Investment Zones will benefit from lower taxes, accelerated development and wider support for local growth.
  - a. Businesses in designated areas in Investment Zones will benefit from 100% business rates relief on newly occupied and expanded premises.
  - b. Local authorities hosting Investment Zones will receive 100% of the business rates growth above an agreed baseline in designated sites for 25 years.
  - c. Businesses will receive full stamp duty land tax relief on land bought for commercial or residential development.
  - d. There will be a zero rate for Employer National Insurance contributions on new employee earnings up to £50,270 per year.
  - e. To incentivise investment there will be a 100% first year enhanced capital allowance relief for plant and machinery used within designated sites and accelerated Enhanced Structures and Buildings Allowance relief of 20% per year.
  - f. We will set out further detail on the liberalised planning offer for Investment Zones in due course.
13. The Government is in discussion with [38 local and mayoral combined authority areas](#) in England including Tees Valley, South Yorkshire and West of England who have expressed an interest in setting up Investment Zones in specific sites within their area.
14. We intend for local areas to get involved in our ambitious plan for growth and will shortly launch a rapid expression of interest process to invite all upper tier authorities and MCAs to come forward with proposals, working closely with council leaders.
15. Investment Zones will only be chosen following that expression of interest process open to everyone, and after local consent is confirmed.
16. The Secretary of State will shortly set out the selection criteria to become an Investment Zone, and the process for designating sites within it.