

News Release

Communications and Media Team



Tel: 01803 861368 / 01822 813648

Email: communications@swdevon.gov.uk

Cost of Living - Getting you to the help you need

06/09/2022

Councils taking action now and proposing a co-ordinated response throughout the winter.

The dramatic increase in the cost of living is beginning to have a significant impact on residents across West Devon and South Hams. Both the District and the Borough Councils know that the cost of living which is driven by the increase in energy prices are already having an impact on most households.

Even before this current situation, 17% of Devon households were experiencing food insecurity (2021) and this has been compounded further by inflation which is now at a 40-year high.

Now with the proposed increase on the energy cap expected in October, South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils want to take action and do everything they can to signpost their residents to get the help that they need.

Cllr Leech, West Devon Borough Council's Lead Member for the Cost-of-Living, said: "Responding to the cost-of-living increase is something that we cannot do alone. Communities, government agencies, the voluntary sector, we all need to come

together to ensure that the help which is provided finds its way to those people who need it.

“Sadly, we are not able to solve this national crisis, but what we can do is focus our attention on working with our partners to provide support and guidance to those in need.”

Cllr Nicky Hopwood, South Hams Executive Member for the Cost-of-living, said:

“It is important that we act now to mobilise all of our resources to provide a co-ordinated response to this crisis. Don’t be ashamed to come forward if you think you need help, apply for grants and benefits that you are entitled to and also look at the long-term options for reducing your energy costs.”

“We have already made additional voucher payments to those residents of state pension age who are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction. If you’ve had one of these post office vouchers, it’s important that you cash it before 30 September.”

As through the Covid pandemic, both Councils responded quickly and provided support to residents both with local support and in progressing Government support packages.

Now the Councils are once again mobilising to respond. So far, they have processed the Government energy bill rebates of £150 through Council Tax, Launched a Discretionary Council Tax Rebate Scheme for those households not eligible for the main scheme, launched a Household Support fund to provide rapid, short-term financial support to meet immediate needs with food, energy or water bills and other essentials. They have also promoted a Devon County Council scheme to continue with free school meals throughout the summer holidays.

They have also made a one-off payment of £90 to householders of state pension age who are already in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and are promoting schemes that will increase the longer-term energy efficiency of properties within the Borough.

However, both Councils are aware that this may not be enough for some people and the Councils will be taking a report to their Executive in South Hams and their Hub in West

Devon, setting out the steps they propose to take.

If both Councils agree a detailed plan will be brought back to both committees by November for approval.

Cllr Hopwood added: “It is clear to me that what is needed is action now to get these government schemes moving and signpost residents to the help they need, but in addition to this we need a clear strategic plan to take our action to the next level. This will likely include lobbying Government and further work with our partners to outline what we can each do to support our residents. What is required is a co-ordinated response from now, all the way through the winter and into next year.”

Both Councils have set up a dedicated page where residents can go to get action:

[South Hams Cost of Living Help Page](#)

[West Devon Cost of Living Help Page](#)

Residents are also encouraged to sign up for Council News email bulletins to ensure that they get information as it becomes available to them. [SIGN UP HERE](#)

If you are interested in listening to the Councils’ debate and discussion on this item, you can watch the Executive and the Hub meetings live on You Tube: West Devon Hub agenda and papers are now live, South Hams agenda will be published later this week.

South Hams: www.youtube.com/user/southhamsCouncil

West Devon: www.youtube.com/channel/UCDZEXV47SxBpXUDR6qbhtIA

ENDS

www.southhams.gov.uk

www.westdevon.gov.uk

Please be aware that telephone calls to and from the Council may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

 Follow @SouthHams_DC

 Follow @WestDevon_BC



[Click to Unsubscribe](#)