

## (i) Cost of Living

East Cambridgeshire District Council is determined to ensure the protection of the residents of East Cambridgeshire from the cost of living challenge driven by Covid and Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, the combined effects of which have led to rising energy prices and residents facing significant cost of living pressures.

This Council is thankful for the significant work by the Government to support the residents of East Cambridgeshire. It notes the benefit of the ~~two-year~~ energy price guarantee and the certainty it will give to residents across the district as well as the enormous help that the £400 energy bill discount will provide to every household.

It further notes the additional support of the £650 cost of living payment for those in receipt of means-tested benefits, £300 for pensioner households and £150 for recipients of disability benefits in East Cambridgeshire and thanks the Government for providing equivalent support for those not on the mains energy grid. It also notes the protection of jobs in East Cambridgeshire that the six-month protection for businesses will provide.

East Cambridgeshire District Council welcomes the plans by Government to secure long term energy independence for the country by maximising domestic energy production through North Sea oil and gas, as well as nuclear and renewables.

This Council is also doing its part to protect our residents from the cost of living challenge, specifically, it:

- Continues to invest in our Housing and Community Advice Service fully utilising our Housing and Community Advice Bus, Community Hubs and advisors at The Grange;
- Supports the provision of warm hubs in the District;
- Works with partners in Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) to help residents with energy bills and obtain EPC reports;
- Provides advice to residents through our Energy Advice Officers to access grant funding to undertake energy efficiency measures;

**Furthermore, Council approves:**

- **the immediate allocation of £10,000 to a "Cost of Living Support Fund" to be managed by the Council's Housing & Community Advice service. The criteria for the award of funds to be agreed by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of Operational Services Committee.**

Council notes:

- This Council has frozen its share of Council Tax bills for the last 9 years, the only district, unitary, or county council in the country to have done so;
- This Council has a long track record of having a balanced budget for 2 financial years at a time;
- This Council has no external borrowing;
- This Council has a prudent level of reserves in the General Fund equivalent to 10% of our operating budget.

**Therefore, this Council ~~resolves to freeze its share of Council Tax for 2023/24 for a tenth consecutive year.~~ is minded to freeze its share of Council Tax for 2023/24 for a tenth consecutive year, subject to final decision following the Government budget on 31<sup>st</sup> October.**

Proposer: Cllr Anna Bailey

Secunder: Cllr Julia Huffer