

Western Area Committee Funding Scheme – Member proposal form 2022-23

Title of project	Assisting homeowners in the Western area with energy costs
Proposer (Area Committee Member)	Councillor Corrie Woodford
Relevant Heads of Service/Lead officer	Sarah-Jane Radley – Interim Community Development Manager Charlotte Hudson – Head of Housing & Community Services
Project Proposal	<p>At the September 2022 Western Area Committee meeting, Members requested that officers research relevant charities who could assist households who use alternative fuels in the Western area with their energy costs as part of their response to the cost-of-living crisis. After looking into this it was found there are no local charities who provide this assistance. Local foodbanks can provide fuel vouchers for residents in need who use pre-paid energy meters but not alternative fuels.</p> <p>The national organisation, The Fuel Bank Foundation, work with local partner organisations such as foodbanks and the Swale Fuel and Water Home Advisor Service to provide financial assistance to households in need using all fuel types including alternative fuels. The local partner organisations will assess the household seeking assistance and if they meet certain criteria, then The Fuel Bank Foundation can give financial assistance. Although The Fuel Bank Foundation would be happy to receive donations, they would not be able to use those funds for a specific geographical area, the funding would be allocated to any household in the UK who meet the criteria to receive assistance.</p> <p>Swale Borough Council (SBC) provide a Fuel and Water Home Advisor Service, managed by Swale charity Children and Families, more information can be found via this link Fuel & Water Home Advisor. One of the services provided by the Advisor is to give households advice on ways to reduce their use of energy and thereby reduce costs. As part of the service, energy efficient packs can be given out which contain things like radiator reflectors, draft excluders, LED light bulbs and timers etc. The content of the packs are tailored to the needs of the household. Each pack costs on approximately £50.</p> <p>Following discussions with the Swale Fuel and Water Home Advisor, assistance with the following would help residents in the Western area reduce their energy costs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allocate funds to the SBC Fuel & Water Home Advisor Service via the charity Children and Families so that the Advisor can provide energy efficient packs to households requesting assistance with reducing their energy costs in Western area. It will be possible to ensure this funding goes to residents in the Western Area. 2. Get the message out to residents in the Western area that they can apply to receive energy efficient packs tailored to their needs. This can be done via the SBC Communications Team. 3. Currently packs are distributed via drop off points and the closest drop off point for the Western Area is the Swale CVS office. If the Area Committee are able to assist with identifying one or more alternative drop off points it would be easier for residents to collect the packs more locally. They would need to be venues which are open most days of the week, have the ability to store packs and have staff in attendance to hand out the packs. <p>The Western Area Committee may wish to consider the above proposal.</p>

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Anticipated officer resource required	Publicity via the SBC Communications Team
Cost £	Figure to be agreed by Western Area Committee
Planned Start Date	December 2022
Due Date for Completion <i>(Please note the funding will need to be spent by May 2023)</i>	May 2023
Please note there is a requirement to consult with the relevant Head of Service to ensure this proposal does not conflict with strategic priorities and will not put undue pressure on officer resource.	
Agreed by relevant Head of Service (Name, date and signature)	Charlotte Hudson Head of Housing & Community Services  17/11/22