**Motion to Council**

The effects of higher taxes and increasing energy, food and fuel prices are being felt by residents and businesses across the district.

In 2020, almost 16% of households in Mansfield were experiencing fuel poverty, living in homes which have poor energy efficiency and incomes below the poverty line. The year-on-year trend for this data indicates that this figure will be worse today and that is before the effects of the massive energy price increases in April, October 2022 and January 2023 are taken into account.

The Government has suspended the state pensions ‘triple lock’ for the current financial year, meaning that, instead of an 8.3% rise under the triple lock formula, the state pension increase will now only be 3.1%.

In March 2022, the Trussel Trust reported that more than 4,200 food parcels were handed out in Mansfield; this is a staggering 62% increase in just one year.

All this is happening at a time when in the Mansfield district, the average worker saw real wages (excluding bonuses) fall by £988

We would like to thank the officers for the work already taken to support our community including:

* Ensuring the Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Hardship Fund and the NCC Household Support Grant are promoted and administered as quickly as possible.
* The energy rebate has been processed promptly.
* Signposting of benefits and other support to our residents and businesses
* Working with the 3rd Sector and partners to ensure residents are aware of the grants available and the additional support they can get.
* Our 3 Financial Inclusion Officers working with residents to assist them with any debt or income related problems.
* Supporting the Food Clubs and Feeding Mansfield Network to help tackle food insecurity bringing partners and stakeholders together, helping identify problems and find solutions to tackle food insecurity.
* Operating and promoting a Fuel Bank Scheme to help people on pre-payment gas or electricity meters who are struggling to pay their energy bills

**In order to support residents and businesses of the District, the Council is urged to declare a ‘Cost of Living Emergency’ and to write to the Government to ask for urgent action to relieve the cost of living crisis through such measures as:**

1. Provide immediate financial support for our residents to help address the increased household costs in energy.
2. Allocate an increase in support grants to local government, specifically:
   1. Increase funding for Discretionary Housing Payments as a matter of urgency – 82% of MDC’s funding for 2022/23 has already been allocated due to families already in financial hardship.
   2. Increase NCC Household Support Grant for fuel and food vouchers
   3. Increase funding to ‘Feeding Britain’ to support FOOD Clubs and food banks
   4. Increase funding for ‘Call before you serve’ to prevent families being evicted
3. Stabilise the foundations of the economy by providing emergency support for business
4. Consider reducing VAT putting money back into the pockets of our residents and boosting the economy.
5. Provide security for the future through delivering a real an immediate increase in investment in UK insulation, nuclear and renewable energy
6. Put in place a longer-term approach to economic growth and security

Further, to show practical support for declaring an emergency, members are also urged to endorse the Council arranging to hold with its partners, a Cost of Living Crisis open day, in order to strengthen the relationships between the council and its partners and to ensure that residents are able to access support and advice during these unprecedented times.

Proposer – Elected Mayor Andy Abrahams

Seconder – Deputy Mayor Craig Whitby

Supporter – Councillor Marion Bradshaw