

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

26 January 2023

COUNCILLOR SAM SANDELL - CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

For the period 1 December 2022 to 16th January 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

As this is the first Full Council back after the Christmas break, I hope you all had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Housing register

1228 live applications

1 Emergency

165 High

427 Medium

635 Low

Numbers have reduced following a review of the register of those who have not logged into their account for 6 months or more

93 new or change in circumstances received

The register forms were unavailable over the Christmas period as usual hence the reduction in numbers for December

Housing Options

77 applicants given housing advice, of these 42 progressed into homeless declarations and/or are ongoing investigations

Lets advised - 41

Food Bank Update

Both October and November 2022 were busy in comparison to pre-pandemic levels - and increase of 28%. (the comparison is pre-pandemic levels because the foodbank figures have been very variable for a variety of reasons, and this makes general comparisons difficult.)

As expected December was the busiest one to date. During the previous four Decembers (2018-2021) we fed an average of 470 people. However, in December 2022 they provided food for 874 people which represents an 86% increase on those years and a 91% increase on 2021 alone.

Whilst anticipated that they would see an increase on previous years, the scale was unprecedented. The foodbank provided food for 121 people on Thursday 15th alone - normally a 'very busy day' would be 60-65 people.

The week commencing 12th Dec was the cold snap and this was reflected in the number of people the foodbank provided food parcels for - 366 in a week. This is as many as we'd feed in some months.

Those people were very grateful for the energy vouchers which they were able to provide, as supported by the £15,000 provided by us the BCKLWN. During December 2021 21 energy vouchers were provided to those in need. During December 2022 it was 97, a staggering 361% increase.

The energy vouchers are available to people once in 3 months only, and have a value of:

- £50 for those without children 16 and under in the household
- £100 for those with children 16 and under in the household

The vouchers can only be used for energy costs and nothing else and whilst we could provide them more frequently than once in three months, that decision was made to ensure that it wouldn't be taken advantage of. People are also directed towards NAS for further help.

From Nov 1st to December 31st 2022, we spent £11860.60 on energy vouchers for households requiring help from the Foodbank.

Looking forward over the coming months, they have renewed their contract with CAB and have a new CAB worker starting with them soon. The idea behind this is to ensure that those who come to the Foodbank have access to advice that will enable them to resolve the underlying reasons for needing to attend the Foodbank and therefore not need to return in the future.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

6th December Cabinet Briefing
13th December Cabinet Sifting
15th December Active Clean and Connectivity Meeting
15th December Health and Wellbeing Partnership
20th December Cabinet Briefing
21st December Local Plan Task Group

Meetings Scheduled

4th January 2023 Portfolio Holder catch up

9th January Discovery Centre meeting

11th January Cabinet Briefing

12th January QEH Briefing

16th January Cabinet Sifting

17th January Cabinet

18th January Cabinet Briefing

25th January Cabinet Briefing

26th January Full Council