

## MOTIONS ON NOTICE

1.1 The Proper Officer reports that, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13, the following motions have been received:-

1.2 **Proposed by Cllr J E Newport and seconded by Cllr C M Stanley:-**

'Fireworks are used by people throughout the year to mark various events like Bonfire Night, Diwali and various New Year celebrations. Great public displays, such as the annual Rayleigh Lions display at King George's Park, bring much enjoyment to many people. However, rising amounts of private displays and irresponsible use have led to many residents contacting Councilors in support of an RSPCA public awareness campaign aimed at ensuring people can enjoy fireworks responsibly whilst minimising the risk to animal welfare, horses, farm animals, wildlife and residents.

This Council notes that:-

Fireworks can be legally used on any day between the hours of 7am and 11pm, with extensions in place until on Bon Fire Night, New Year's Eve, Diwali and Chinese New Year.

There are four categories of fireworks in the UK; the first three categories are available to buy, carry, or use (on private property) to any member of the public aged 18 or over.

Fireworks release smoke into the atmosphere, reducing air quality, as well as toxins such as lead and mercury in most instances.

The unpredictable, loud, and high intensity that many fireworks make can cause fear and anxieties, especially within people, horses, and dogs.

Used irresponsibly, fireworks can cause damage to property and do significant harm to people and animals. They also pose a fire risk.

NHS England state that over the 2018 bonfire night and the Hindu festival Diwali period, more than 35,000 people went to NHS.uk for advice on how to treat burns and scalds – a “significant jump.”

This Council resolves to:

Write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays

Write to local suppliers of fireworks to encourage them to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display

Encourage large retailers to follow the lead of Sainsburys in withdrawing the sale of fireworks to the public, especially in convenience stores

Ensure all public firework displays within Rochford District to be advertised in advance of the event, with appropriate advertising for the size of the display, allowing residents to take precautions for people in their care and pets.

Actively promote the RSPCA's public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.'

### 1.3 Proposed by Cllr Mrs D P Squires-Coleman and seconded by Cllr A L Williams

'There is a cost of living crisis in the UK resulting in unprecedented pressures on people, many who are already in poverty. And this winter, despite the support given by the Government, hundreds if not thousands of Rochford residents will be forced to make tough decisions about when and what they eat and when they can afford to heat their home.

Charities have warned that low income families and individuals are already being forced to choose between falling behind on bills, going without essentials or taking on expensive debt.

The Government has already announced some measures of help, including:-

- From 1<sup>st</sup> October Energy Price Guarantee came into force meaning that a 'typical' household will pay no more than £2500 a year on their energy bill but it is understood that this will be reviewed and only run until April 2023. However, this is an average so if a family uses more energy their bills could be higher.
- [council tax rebate](#). (£150.00 for qualifying households.)
- £400 grant to help with the cost of energy bills through the Energy Bill Support Scheme.
- All pensioner households will receive an extra £300.
- People with disabilities will receive an extra £150.
- The Household Support Fund helps households who are not eligible for other kinds of help or need further support.

But the reality is that for most residents, **this support barely covers the increases.**

We propose by this Motion that the Council pledges support for the work being undertaken to address some of these pressures and, in particular, around the creation of 'warm spaces/hubs.'

#### 'Warm Hubs' – What are they?

Sometimes referred to as 'Warm Spaces', 'Warm Hubs' are organised and run by local groups; some may already be in existence.

They are heated, safe spaces where residents are invited to join a regular, inclusive community run event. Residents are given the opportunity to get and stay warm and talk to other residents over a hot drink and maybe a snack.

There might also be opportunities to receive practical tips and advice on saving energy costs and keeping safe and warm at home: how to alleviate food and fuel poverty. It can also be a place where residents can obtain information on where to access more specialist advice.

### **Why do we need Warm Hubs?**

#### **RDC - A Response**

It seems inevitable that RDC will need to think about doing more to help its residents and to continue to deliver its commitment to:-

*‘Support, promote, develop and enable Rochford District’s voluntary sector in providing effective services to meet the needs of local people.’*

To this end RDC will create a ‘directory’ of all organisations providing ‘Hubs’ for our residents.

Organisations that register are added to this directory which could be advertised through RDC. There is also an opportunity to investigate how RRAVS (Rayleigh and Rochford & District Association for Voluntary Service) can support.

These organisations can be from the Voluntary, Community or Faith Sectors.

#### **Conclusion**

‘Warm Hubs’ are not, nor should ever be, a permanent solution to cost of living pressures. But under current circumstances and until the economic outlook improves, or further measures are put into place by Government, we should be showing our commitment to help our residents access the essential and basic requirements of warmth.

#### **Funding**

Following the example of many other District Councils it is proposed by this Motion that the option of offering grants to voluntary organisations to help with costs is established by the Council. A small grants scheme will supplement any potential funding from Essex County Council.

This Motion proposes that the Council operates a similar grant funding process setting aside a fund of £5000, from the Council’s general fund account, which would award up to £500 to successful applicants.



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