



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Executive 24 September 2025

Wards affected: All wards

WARM WELCOME PROJECT UPDATE 2024-25

Report of Director, Community Services

1. Purpose of report

To update Executive on:

- 1.1 The work undertaken in response to the cost-of-living crisis through the Warm Welcome project.
- 1.2 Key achievements during the winter season 2024/25.

2. Recommendation

That Executive:

- 2.1 Acknowledge and endorse the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Acknowledge the extensive work that has been undertaken to coordinate the work across the borough in relation to Warm Welcomes.
- 2.3 Note the recent submission to the Association of Safety and Compliance Professionals (ASCP 2025) Safety & Compliance Awards, which culminated in the Warm Welcome work being highly commended in the category 'Best Initiative to Combat Fuel Poverty Crisis'.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 During the winter 2022 to 2023, with the concerns of increasing costs of living, there was an emergence of local interventions to establish warm spaces. The authority took a proactive approach to provide support for warm spaces which were later rebranded as Warm Welcomes.

- 3.2 Warm Welcomes are typically run and managed by volunteers within community centres, churches, villages halls and community libraries.
- 3.3 The remit for a Warm Welcome is that they are inclusive, warm, welcoming and a safe environment. The offer varies at each venue, but they always include the opportunity to meet with other people and have a hot drink. Warm Welcomes are much more than just a warm space, they provide scope to combat social isolation and connect with others, feel part of a community, access services, get practical support and advice, as well as having a hot snack and learning a new skill.
- 3.4 This winter Warm Welcome season ran between October 2024 and 31st March 2025.
- 3.5 The council has a dedicated cost of living webpage which provides details of the Warm Welcome venues and the offers available within the borough [Warm welcome | Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council](#)

4 Key Achievements 2024-25

- 4.1 The Warm Welcome project is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which funds a Warm Spaces Support Officer working within the Community Services and Safeguarding team, alongside an operational budget to provide Warm Welcome grants. The officer was recruited in October 2023 to drive the project forward and provides support to Warm Welcome leaders and volunteers to enable the development and sustainability of Warm Welcomes across the borough, liaise with local partners and the voluntary and community sector and co-ordinate the delivery of grants.
- 4.2 During this winter season there has been a significant increase in the achievements from those seen in 2023-24. The data shown below has been compiled from 36 out of the 62 venues who submitted returns, therefore the project results would be a lot higher than what has been recorded. This is an increase from 2023-24 where 24 venues out of 51 provided reports.

Outcomes	2023-2024 achievements	2024-2025 achievements	Increase in % from 2023-24 to 2024-25
Venues listed on the website	51	62	22%
Sessions every week	100	125	25%
Visits to warm welcome sessions	8931	16,033	80%
	11,768 including community libraries	18,428 including	57%

		community libraries	
No of volunteers	100 234 including community libraries	287 374 including community libraries	187% 60%
No of volunteer hours	5693 8344 including community libraries	9907 13,218 including community libraries	74% 58%
No of households received support	1546	3974	157%
No of grants approved	24	42	75%
Amount of grant funding distributed by the borough council	£28,800	£63,000	119%

4.3 287 volunteers have supported the running of the sessions, this number may be a lot higher as it is assumed that the same volunteers are involved each week, so the volunteer hours are cumulative. Including the community libraries the number of volunteers is 374.

3974 households received support, examples included hot meals, emergency food parcels, community pantries, community fridges, debt advice, wellbeing support, energy efficiency advice and warm packs.

4.4 During one of the coldest weeks of the winter, (the second week in January) the total number of individuals who attended a session was 778 at 27 venues which increased to 932 when including the community libraries.

4.5 The positive increases can be attributed to many variables which include:

- Since the Warm Spaces Support Officer came into post, the officer has increased awareness and promotion through a range of social media channels including magazines such as The Local Rock and The Graphic which are aimed at rural areas as well as urban areas.
- The officer has formed relationships and links with partner agencies such as Local Area Co-ordinators, Social Prescribers, LCC's Warm Homes team, RCC Leicestershire and Rutland, the borough council's Welfare Support Team, wellbeing teams and the Food Poverty Officer.

- The officer has been instrumental in forming links with ‘hard to reach’ areas and introducing new venues to the Warm Welcome initiative such as the Hinckley Area Foodbank which has multiple venues.
 - An increase in demand for services due to current and continued cost of living.
- 4.6 During 2024-25 it became apparent that many of the venues did not qualify for the grant as the number of hours which they provided fell just short of the 12 hours per month that formed part of the grant criteria. Therefore, the grant application was reviewed and refreshed, and the changes were made from 12 hours to 8 hours per month to reflect this and the time criteria relaxed. During 2024-25 this small change enabled many more Warm Welcome venues to apply and successfully receive the funding. The grant was also increased to £1500 to help with the associated costs of providing sessions. Recently, a short survey with warm welcome leaders found that most of the grants were allocated to the following:
- Heating costs
 - Provision of food and hot drinks
 - Extra heating devices
 - New equipment including fridges and comfortable seating
- 4.7 Warm packs are distributed via Warm Welcome venues to those most in need who either have no heating, use temporary heaters or are in debt with their energy suppliers and unable to heat their homes. 33 warm packs were distributed to Warm Welcomes, Hinckley Area Foodbank and social prescribers. Checks were made when each kit is distributed to ensure that safeguarding and referrals to support agencies are made if appropriate. The warm packs are made up of thermal socks, gloves, hat, a flask, blanket, hot water bottle, travel mug and a gilet.
- 4.8 Information is shared with Warm Welcomes on an on-going basis on a range of topics appropriate for their organisation, volunteers, and visitors, for example about funding opportunities, energy efficiency advice, how to source volunteers, the welfare support service, neighbourhood mental health newsletters, VCS Forum, Virtual Village Hall and grants. Work has been ongoing to support the wider cost of living work streams and residents can access further support through the sessions including mental health matters, community pantries, the Rural Community Council’s (RCC) WOW project and groups led by the council’s community development team providing activities such as cooking and arts and crafts. The Warm Spaces Support Officer has attended financial wellbeing events, the VCS Forum and the ‘support sofa’ within the Britannia Centre which is supported by the BID to raise awareness of the project.
- 4.9 Warm Welcomes feel better connected and the officer receives requests for advice and signposting on all sorts of issues such as transport, health, welfare

support, housing, setting up activities and publicising sessions and links in with support agencies. The officer has created a multi-agency poster for different areas of the borough which can be shared via parish council notice boards which promotes the warm welcomes in that area.

- 4.10 A summary of some of the key achievements for 2024-25 are detailed within this report and provided as an infographic at Appendix 1.
- 4.11 Photographs of some of the warm welcome sessions are attached at Appendix 2.

5. Celebration & Networking Event

- 5.1 The second Warm Welcome networking and celebration event took place on 20th May at Newbold Verdon Methodist Church, bringing together Warm Welcome volunteers and leaders. This year the event proved to be even more successful and was attended by more than 50 people to celebrate the achievements and great work that has taken place over the winter season. The event was opened by Executive member for Housing and Community Services, Cllr Michael Mullaney.
- 5.2 The event provided time for networking with other Warm Welcome leaders and volunteers and with representatives from Clockwise Credit Union, Leicestershire County Council's warm homes team, the borough council's welfare support, wellbeing and food poverty team, Active Hinckley & Bosworth and Local area Co-ordinators who provided stalls.
- 5.3 Table discussions generated some interesting debates about issues and concerns that warm welcomes face along with potential solutions, such as how to make people feel welcome when using Warm Welcomes and retention of volunteers.
- 5.4 Feedback from the event was extremely positive and some feedback from volunteers and leaders is provided in Appendix 3.
- 5.5 Warm Welcome leaders and volunteers have included their top tips for sustaining Warm Welcome sessions and a copy is attached at Appendix 4.
- 5.6 An article to celebrate the key achievements and the event was published in the June edition of the Borough Bulletin. Photographs from the event are attached at Appendix 5.

6. Best Initiative to Combat Fuel Poverty Crisis

- 6.1 The Warm Welcome initiative recently formed the submission of an application to the Association of Safety and Compliance Professionals (ASCP 2025) Safety & Compliance Awards. On 15th May 2025 at the ASCP awards ceremony which took place in Newport, South Wales the borough council was

highly commended for the 'Best Initiative to Combat Fuel Poverty Crisis'. The award recognises an organisation that has implemented successful initiatives to support residents and reduce fuel poverty. A press release to celebrate this achievement was published.

7 Some key areas of work 2025-26

- 7.1 Many venues will continue to provide continuity and consistency throughout the summer, and promotion of the sessions as community welcomes will be updated on the Council's cost of living web page.
- 7.2 A community welcome poster will be produced to promote throughout the Borough.
- 7.3 Another round of grant funding will be launched at the start of the 2025-26 winter warm season.
- 7.4 Working in partnership with the Food Poverty Officer to support the pilot of a 'coat exchange scheme' that will be based at appropriate warm welcome venues across the borough. This is similar to the uniform swap shop methodology but for warm coats for adults and young people.
- 7.5 Ongoing promotion of the 'what's app' group which has been established for Warm Welcomes to connect and share information.

8. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

- 8.1 This report will be taken in open session.

9. Financial implications [CS]

- 9.1 The following table details the external funding secured per year towards these workstreams:

Workstream	Funding Body	2024/25	2025/26	TOTAL
Warm Spaces grants	UKSPF	£93,670	£95,023	£188,693

10. Legal implications [ST]

- 10.1 None.

11. Corporate Plan implications

- 11.1 This report relates to priority ambitions of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2022-25, namely:
 - People

- Place
- Prosperity

12. Consultation

- 12.1 Relevant council teams have been consulted in the preparation of this report, alongside relevant information and intelligence from key partners such as warm welcomes, voluntary organisations and service user data.

13. Risk implications

- 13.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 13.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.
- 13.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks

Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Co-ordination of Warm Welcome support and associated grant funding is reliant on temporary external funding	Continue to look to identify and access external funding opportunities to sustain the project	AE/RB

14. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 14.1 Warm welcomes are inclusive and accessible to all and are promoted and delivered across the borough. Work is carried out through engaging with support agencies, parish councils and community libraries to ensure accessibility of warm welcomes are available in rural areas.
- 14.2 Service user feedback informs the work that is carried out to ensure any gaps in provision or access can be identified and rectified.

15. Climate implications

- 15.1 Work will be delivered to limit carbon impact where possible, for example virtual methods of engagement and paperless systems,
- 15.2 Warm Welcomes enable residents to stay warm whilst reducing their energy consumptions and fuel costs at home.

- 15.3 Information about energy efficiency advice is shared with Warm Welcomes to help educate users about the support available.
- 15.4 The coat exchange scheme will help users to stay warm and reduce the number of coats going to landfill.

16. Corporate implications

- 16.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:
- Community safety implications
 - Environmental implications
 - ICT implications
 - Asset management implications
 - Procurement implications
 - Human resources implications
 - Planning implications
 - Data protection implications
 - Voluntary sector
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Background papers:

Appendix 1 Infographics

Appendix 2 Photographs of warm welcome venues

Appendix 3 Feedback from the Warm Welcome Celebration & Networking Event

Appendix 4 Feedback and top tips from warm welcome volunteers

Appendix 5 Photographs from the Warm Welcome Celebration & Networking Event

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