

Full Outcome Proposal to the East Suffolk Community Partnership Board - FY2022/23 (Stage 2 Proposal)

1. Details of project / activity:

Project Name	'Ease the Squeeze': Tackling the Rising Cost of Living Programme
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Name of Project / activity lead:	Lead Contact Name: Nicole Rickard Organisation: ESC
Name of East Suffolk Community Partnership Board Member supporting the project:	Name: Chris Abraham CAS

The key outcomes and brief description of the project / activity.

Outline the project that you are seeking funding for (up to 200 words):

Through a series of Task and Finish Group meetings plus three workshops (one for ESC staff, one for ESC Councillors and one for partners), a programme has been developed which sets out 1) Challenges, 2) Existing Activity and 3) Project Ideas, against our four priority themes of Money, Food and Essentials, Energy and Fuel and Housing. The project ideas represent our ambitions to mitigate the impact of the ongoing cost of living rises on the East Suffolk population.

The Ease the Squeeze programme includes a list of 65 project ideas, which have been prioritised to identify 16 projects which received the most votes across the different workshops and events to discuss the emerging programme, these are as follows:

- E3 Network of 'Warm Rooms' for Winter 2022/23
- F1 Food Network Coordinator
- M3 Expand the Family Early Intervention Model
- F3 Expand 'Your Local Pantry' across the District
- M1 Develop a comprehensive ES Financial Inclusion Framework
- E9 Handyperson to fit draught excluders, curtains, LED bulbs etc
- F7 Expand 'Cooking on a Budget' classes
- H5 Use data to identify people who need support asap
- F11 and F15 Fund microwaves and slow cookers (and energy cards)
- F5 'Comfort Food' project – a free hot meal and drink at a local café
- M8 A fund to pay for people to access ID documents
- M7/M12 MECC for key workers / workers to go where people are
- F8 Food to Fork projects – community allotments/gardens/planters
- E12 Access to clean, warm bedding

M5. Build on digital projects (libraries) to make kit and support from digital champions available
F14 Fund School Uniform, Prom and Interview clothes

It is intended that the CPB funding will be used to support the first four of these initially (matched with UK Shared Prosperity Funding) – Network of Warm Rooms, Food Network Co-ordinator, Network of Community Pantries and Handyperson scheme. The Financial Inclusion Framework does not require funding and discussions are underway about alternative sources of funding for the Early Intervention Project, including through the Collaborative Communities Board.

Please detail the key project outcomes (measurable and time specific):

The proposed outcomes that this programme of work will deliver to mitigate/reduce these impacts include:

- Improved resilience to the impact of rises in the cost of living within the East Suffolk population
- Improved mental health and wellbeing for residents due to a reduction in anxiety and stress
- Fewer people reaching the point of extreme, costly interventions e.g. home repossession or eviction due to non-payment of rent/mortgage
- Reduced social isolation and loneliness

Smart outcomes will be identified for each individual projects in the Ease the Squeeze Cost of Living programme.

Project start date: September 2022

Project end date: March 2025 (CPB funding requested for initial 9 months)

How has the need for this project / activity been identified?

The 'cost of living' is the average amount of money that individuals need to be able to cover basic living expenses, such as food and housing. The cost of living is rising across the board – housing costs, energy and water costs, fuel and food have all risen rapidly in price over recent months. The impact of these rises, combined with the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on individuals, families, communities and the voluntary sector is likely to hit hard, particularly in Winter 2022/23. Inflation continues to climb, and the invasion of Ukraine by Russia has further increased pressures at a local and national level.

A wide range of services have been impacted – food banks are seeing higher usage than ever (with lots of first-time users, including those in work), Citizens Advice are dealing with unprecedented demand and our two Disability organisations are struggling to cope with requests for support.

Suffolk County Council has produced a cost-of-living profile for Suffolk which was considered at the May 2022 Health and Wellbeing Board Making-ends-meet-the-cost-of-living-suffolk.pdf (healthysuffolk.org.uk). This includes a wealth of information, but some notable points include:

- The March 2022 Office for Budget Responsibility, Economic and Fiscal Outlook identified that peak CPI inflation could reach 8.7% in the final quarter of 2022, leaving the average household £1,000 worse off than in 2021/22
- As inflation exceeds increases in wages, many individuals face the equivalent of a real term pay cut
- National Insurance contributions rose by 1.25% in April 2022, the energy cap rose by 54% (also in April) and the price of petrol has increased by more than 40p per litre
- Gross weekly pay for Suffolk residents is already £40 lower than England and £55 lower than the East of England

- An additional issue for those on low income is the 'poverty premium', where those on low incomes often pay more for basic goods and services including food, fuel and power - with those in the lowest 10% income decile spending more than double those in the highest 10% income decile
- An estimated four in five households will receive £150 via the Council Tax system and everyone will receive a £200 Energy Bills Rebate this Autumn, however this will not be enough to balance the books for most households
- ONS data from March 2022 indicates that 90% of respondents said that their increase in the cost of living was mainly due to an increase in the price of food. Food accounts for 14% of expenditure in lower income households compared to 8% for the highest income households
- Other key aspects include the rise in heating oil prices, the cost of childcare and the impact on health of cold homes
- 39% of adults in 2018 said that they did not feel confident in managing their money

Through a programme of meetings and workshops, including the Community Partnership Board Task and Finish Group focussing on Inequalities (which has made the Cost of Living increases its immediate priority), the key challenges have been identified against four key themes – money, food and essentials, energy and fuel and housing. These are shown below:

Money – The Challenges

1. Dealing with debt, affordable payment plans, loan sharks, conciliation loans, debt relief orders
2. Reducing spending e.g. energy, phone, TV packages, housing costs
3. Affordable credit and ethical loans
4. Help with budgeting, including in schools/with families
5. Cohorts who are asset rich but cash poor
6. Maximising income – benefits and grants
7. Digital exclusion
8. Lack of access to a bank account and no ID documents
9. Just About Managing families – in work and not on any benefits, miss out on most support provided
10. Parents unable to afford university costs
11. Disposable income squeeze – leisure, health, childcare
12. Potential increase in addictions e.g. substance misuse and gambling

Food and Essential Items – The Challenges

1. Increasing food costs and supply issues
2. Lack of skills to cook healthy meals
3. Reducing donations to food banks and loss of volunteers
4. Lack of cooking facilities/fridge/freezer
5. Access to toiletries and sanitary products
6. Affordability of clothes, even from charity shops, including school uniforms and interview clothes
7. Oral hygiene – lack of access to toothpaste and toothbrush
8. The media telling people that healthy food is more expensive!
9. Loss of volunteers since Covid – fear, need a rest, cost, re-entered labour market

Energy and Fuel - Challenges

1. Increasing cost of gas and electricity and increase in energy cap
2. Increase in heating oil price
3. Cost of wood and fuel for open fires and wood burners
4. Rising cost of petrol and diesel and supply chain issues
5. Impact on VCSE organisations/community hubs e.g. loss of community transport drivers due to increased petrol costs
6. Net zero and climate change activities may disadvantage those on lower incomes

7. Stop start nature of energy efficiency programmes
8. Heat the Person not the Home v avoiding damp/disrepair and resultant health issues
9. Government support not reaching the most vulnerable
10. Volume of potential need due to energy price increases

Housing – Challenges

1. Less Money = non-payment of rent/mortgage
2. End of evictions moratorium and increased evictions
3. Discretionary Housing Payment allocation cut by 30%
4. Increase in families presenting as homeless
5. Rapid increase in house prices (second homes issue), rental values and larger gap in LHA rates
6. Lack of private rented and social housing / pressure on temporary accommodation / insecurity of tenure
7. Net Zero – landlords selling up/increasing rents to cover energy improvement costs
8. Homes falling into disrepair because people can't afford to maintain
9. HMO issues – quality, unregistered, occupants not eligible for refunds/benefits
10. Lack of supported housing beds

Cross Cutting Projects

In addition, there are a number of important cross-cutting projects/activities that underpin the programme:

1. Take a data-led approach to identifying both those in crisis and those who can be supported through prevention and early intervention activities to ensure that they do not slip into crisis
2. Develop a simple referral form (based on HBNA during Covid) and case management system
3. Develop a webpage which brings together information about all areas of 'cost of living' challenge into one portal
4. Use Suffolk Information Partnership (SIP) Warm Handover process to refer to other organisations where relevant
5. Targeted East Suffolk-wide campaigns e.g. 'Max Your Money', 'What to Donate', 'Food Myths', 'Home Energy Efficiency', 'Loan Sharks' focussed on messaging about being thrifty and helping others rather than needing help/charity
6. Co-production through the Connect workshops in each town in East Suffolk Summer 2022, information giving, advice, engagement
7. Use East Suffolk Neighbours network to get information out into communities

What organisations have agreed to be involved and how (through time / money / facilities etc)?

We are working with a wide range of partners, including through the Suffolk Poverty Partnership Group. Specific input from local partners includes:

Community Action Suffolk – Board sponsor and potential host of the Food Network Co-ordinator post

Suffolk Community Foundation – Task and Finish Group partner

Citizens Advice East Suffolk - collaborating on the Money / financial inclusion aspects of the project

Suffolk County Council – data and lead for countywide programmes that complement the local programmes e.g. Local Welfare Assistance Scheme, allocation of funding through the Suffolk Household Support Grant

Businesses – potential support, financial or in kind, for East Suffolk programme or individual projects

Town and Parish Councils – potential partners in specific projects in their communities

VCSE organisations – lead for individual projects e.g. food projects, warm rooms, cooking on a budget classes.

East Suffolk Council – money from Councillor Enabling Communities Budgets and Covid Recovery Funds

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Who and how many people will benefit from the project / activity?

We anticipate that thousands of people will benefit from the programme overall. Individual project proposal forms will detail this, for example we anticipate that the funding proposed for Warm Rooms over 6 months will benefit 16,000 people (albeit some will be repeat visits) and that the funding package for Comfort Food will support more than 5,000 people to access a free hot meal and drink over a six month period.

Each Project Lead (in the East Suffolk Council Communities Team) is currently working up a detailed proposal including costings and beneficiaries and this information will be available by end August.

2. How the project / activity will be resourced:

Provide information about match funding here (including in-kind staff time):

Source of match funding	Funding confirmed?	Amount (£)
Covid Community Fund/Covid Corporate Reserve	Yes	£196,000
Covid Community Recovery Fund	Yes	£44,000
Enabling Communities Budgets (2021/22)	Yes	£18,000
Enabling Communities Budgets (2022/23)	Yes	£52,500
Boost Sustainable Food Funding	Yes	£40,000
Household Support Fund 2022/23	Yes	£25,000
Donation from EEM	Yes	£1,600
Reallocated from Hidden Needs	Yes	£5,000
Household Support Fund 2021/22 (underspend)	Yes	£94,301
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	No	£228,100

Total project / activity cost	£804,501
Total of confirmed match funding	£476,401
Total amount of East Suffolk Community Partnerships Board funding required	£100,000

Explain here how the project / activity will be sustained after the funding period (if appropriate).

The programme consists of 16 projects, each of which has their own timescale and plans for future sustainability. Up to £130,000 of the overall funding allocation will be spent on the Food Network Coordinator post and funding for the start-up of the each of the Community Pantries. We hope that once a network of these have been established around the District, they will become self-sustaining through the weekly membership fees.

As outlined above, we have submitted a bid to UK Shared Prosperity Fund for over 200,000 and this funding is over a 2.5 year period which will enable some of the projects to last well beyond the initial funding period for the CPB Funding.

3. Communications and stakeholder engagement

How information is conveyed to the relevant people or teams involved, how there is adequate consultation with users, and successes are publicised.

Identify the key people / groups that need to be aware and involved in the project / activity, and how they will be communicated with effectively.

The key target group for the programme is the residents of East Suffolk - particularly those individuals and families who are struggling to manage the rising costs of living. Alongside the project activity outlined in various sections above, East Suffolk Council is developing an 'Ease the Squeeze' section of its website which will include a wide range of useful information and sources of support against the four themes as well as an opportunity for people, who can afford to, to help others. The website will also include a self-referral form for help which in most cases is likely to lead to support with budgeting, accessing benefits and/or grants, debt managing and accessing credit from the Financial Inclusion Officers.

We are also planning to engage local businesses as relevant in the East Suffolk wide programme and individual projects in specific locations to understand how they could support the programme.

Detail how and when the project / activity will be promoted / publicised.

We will start to promote the website and the key projects in the programme from September onwards. We are keen to involve wider partners, for example businesses, through workshops in September to help them to understand our ambitions and potentially sponsor the programme or individual projects in particular locations e.g. Warm rooms or Comfort Food in a specific town.

Detail how the project / activity will report on lessons learned?

Lessons learned will be captured for each individual project in the programme (outlined on Page 1 above) – these will be captured in an overall report.

4. Monitoring and reporting on progress

Identify how the impacts, issues and risks of the project / activity will be gathered, monitored and reported. (Quarterly monitoring information will be required):

Each project has specified target outcomes and outputs as set out in the proposal forms currently being developed. Progress against these will be monitored on a quarterly basis and reported to the Board and to the funding partners, including (in anticipation of the project being supported) UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Wherever possible we will look for opportunities to involve other partners and to secure additional funding for the programme as a whole and the individual projects within it.

5. Equalities impact assessment

Has an Equality Impact Assessment of the project been carried out?

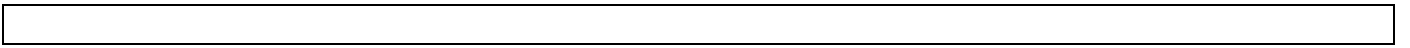
YES:

Where can the document be accessed?

NO: No EqlA has been carried out on the overall programme

Justification

It is intended to complete EqlAs on the individual projects as relevant, but the aim of the programme is to make a positive impact on the 10th East Suffolk 'protected characteristic' which is deprivation/socio-economic disadvantage.



6. Identify measurable outcomes and show specifically where the East Suffolk Community Partnerships Board budget will be spent (quarterly financial monitoring information will be required):

Outcomes (MUST be measurable)	Action / outputs to deliver the outcomes (include by who and by when)	Breakdown of costs to deliver the outcomes here (£):
1st quarter Clear outcomes defined for each project in the programme	Project proposal forms completed by the Project Leads in the Communities Team and assessed against budget available. Launch of overall Ease the Squeeze Programme Start of delivery of each of the projects in the programme	£25,000
2nd quarter To be defined	On-going delivery of the 16 projects	£50,000
3rd quarter To be defined	On-going delivery of the 16 projects	£25,000
4th quarter To be defined		
5th quarter		
6th quarter		
Add more quarterly outcomes for longer projects / activities below.		

8. Declarations:

I confirm that all information contained in this proposal is accurate and that the proposal has my support.

East Suffolk Community Partnership Board Member

Name: Christine Abraham

Date: 11th August 2022

Signature:



Lead Organisation Data Protection Declaration:

I am authorised and eligible to sign and approve this proposal on behalf of the lead organisation and declare the information included in this proposal is true and accurate.

By signing below, the information you have supplied is being collected to allow us to process your application. By completing this form, you consent to East Suffolk Council using your information in this way.

I understand that in the assessment of this proposal the Council may share information contained within it, with other core funders for funding programmes we have applied too, relevant Council directorates and committees. If you do not provide your consent, we will not be able to process this proposal. Your information will not be used for any other purpose unless we obtain your consent. Your information will be retained for 7 years.

Data will be processed and held securely and in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (and any updates).

Further information about data protection can be found on the East Suffolk Website <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Your-Council/Access-to-Information/Privacy-Notices/Communities-Privacy-Notice.pdf>

Please enter your name below only if you agree to be bound by the terms set out in this form. We will treat this as your signature of the form.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Please submit this proposal to the Funding Team grants@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Hard copies can be submitted and returned to: Funding Team, East Suffolk Council, East Suffolk House, Station Road, Melton, Woodbridge, IP12 1RT.