

## Culture, Leisure & Regulatory Services Directorate

### Cost of Living - response to Strategy Team - July 2022

*What will be the potential impact of the cost of living crisis in your business area?*

*This could include increased demand, but possibly in some areas loss of demand and related income. It would be interesting to know this. How can this be monitored to see whether the issues are increasing / static / reducing etc.?*

We have a number of income generation activities that are likely to see an impact in terms of loss of demand/income - e.g. D-Day Museum (chargeable museum) and Museum Workshops, Museum retail shops, Event (land) hire, Poster Advertising, Room Hire (Library Service, Museum Service), Weekly Beach Hut rental, wedding venue hire (Museums Service & Registrars).

It is anticipated there will be an impact on the income of our partners, which include Community Associations, Revenue Clients (cultural venues such as theatres), Seafront Concessions, Event partners (promoters) and BH Live who manage our sports centres.

Our Leisure Card (free, available to residents on means tested benefits) offers at 40% discount on culture and leisure activities. We anticipate a rise in Leisure Card numbers over the coming months (card numbers are monitored).

The Guildhall run a number of targeted activities for residents and communities. This offer depends on their income from mainstream events. Promoters are likely to be facing increased costs which will affect the offers that the Guildhall can provide. Similarly, although most of our events are free to take part, this may also affect the level of event applications we receive.

The Hive is a critical service provider in the city for low income families. The Community Helpdesk has been an essential support to the Household Grants Programme, through initial contact and follow up. General enquiries to the helpdesk also include receipt of donated furniture and white goods together with low cost white goods.

Links to homelessness support has included referral to local food banks, pantries, hot meals and access to winter clothing etc.

The Hive Portsmouth Uniform Shop is an essential support for the relationship between families, schools and social workers. The shop has enabled direct support to be provided to families in need, including referrals to local charities for baby basics for essential items.

Demand across all Hive services is likely to increase over the coming months.

We also expect to see increased demand on our parks and open spaces that are free to access, including our countryside sites. The impact is likely to be increased litter / anti-social behaviour; the service has limited resources to address this.

**Measured Indicators:** we have the following measures within our KPI set that can be used (per quarter):

- Events: number of events run
- Museums:
  - Visitor numbers
  - D-Day Story income

- Library: number of digital loans
- Hotwalls: visitor numbers
- Hive:
  - School uniform support (number of families supported)
  - Helpdesk contacts
  - Food provision (customers accessing pantries)

*What could be done in service areas to ease the pressures for households and again, what might be the implications (eg. we could relax some requirements - like in the pandemic - but what would be the challenges from this?)*

Our services provide for families on low incomes in several ways:

Museums: the majority are free to enter. The service is also fully engaged in the Holiday Activities and Food programme which provides free holiday activities and healthy food for children from reception to year 11 who are in receipt of benefits related free school meals. If Museums were to discount their retail or chargeable services, this would directly impact the running costs of the service.

Seafront: our seafront is free to access with wide open space and facilities. In terms of easing pressures, whilst we could freeze/limit our various chargeable service fees (beach hut fees / event hire fees / greens fees / sports fees), this would directly impact our revenue budgets for maintaining these services.

We provide the following free sports activities:

- Nine Tennis courts
- Beach Volleyball court
- Hilsea & Seafront splash pools and splash pad at Canoe Lake
- Hilsea Pump track (BMX)

BH Live offer a number of discounted activities and further discounted activity can be obtained, to those on eligible benefits, via a BH Access Card (chargeable) or PCC Leisure Card (free).

Any further discount on sports provision would affect the ability to run the service as it would not be sustainable.

Libraries: for many years our libraries across the city have been havens for the disenfranchised, as 'warm places'. Our libraries are critical to our communities; they provide many free activities, clubs and workshops for adults and children throughout the year. This is subject to continued provision to resource such activities when further budget cuts are anticipated.

Community Centres: our 10 council owned community centres run free & discounted activities - the associations occupy the buildings rent free. If hire of the centres reduces, then this will impact the level of activities offered.

Over recent years, the directorate has had to absorb severe cuts to its budget. To balance our budget, there has been an increased requirement to promote our various income streams. Pressure on income streams is therefore likely to put increased pressure on our services.

*Our workforce are residents too - so how might we work with our workforce on this issue?*

Our directorate has a full complement of staff on the front line - Museums, Parks, Libraries, Registrars, Licensing etc. Further training could be developed to help them with knowledge to respond when cost of living issues come up on enquiry.

The Council could engage by survey and focus groups to engage with staff for their views on possible measures the Council could take.

A significant proportion of the workforce that makes up the Council are on lower bands. The cost of living pressures will affect them considerably in the following areas:

- Energy costs for home working - heating, water, electricity, gas costs
- Commuting costs - rising petrol prices and public transport fares
- Personal debt - taking on or extending personal loans to manage household budgets.