

Cost of Living Emergency

Residents of Southend-on-Sea are facing a cost of living emergency.

The rate of inflation in the UK reached 9.4% in June and is feared that come the autumn could reach as high as 12%.

In October the new energy price cap could see average annual bills exceed £3,000, which going into winter leaves many residents facing an unaffordable cost to keep their homes warm. At the same time, food and housing costs are also increasing dramatically, and a record number of children in Southend schools are eligible for free school meals, showing the levels of vulnerability.

There is no one that will be untouched by this cost of living emergency. There is no area of life on which it won't have an effect. This will be the defining issue and challenge of the next few years.

Southend Council notes:

- That the Cost-of-Living emergency is a key issue for us as a local authority, against a backdrop of financial factors at national and international level.
- In these increasingly difficult times, there is a for us as a local authority to ensure advice and appropriate support is available to all residents.
- The disproportionate impact of the crisis on low-income households, which will spend a larger proportion of their income than average on energy and food and will therefore be more affected by price increases and tax rises that result in reduced disposable income.
- That, while many of the economic factors causing the current cost of living crisis are outside of our control as a local authority, it is essential that we focus our efforts on providing the assistance we do have at our disposal to those residents struggling the most.

Southend Council resolves to:

- Declare a cost of living emergency in the City of Southend-on-Sea.
- Set up a working group, including members, relevant senior officers, as well as representatives from the local charity, education, and health sectors to ensure a coordinated and proactive response to the cost of living crisis.
- Continue to address food justice and insecurity in Southend, whilst calling on national government to enshrine the right to food in law, as well as working to address period poverty and inability to afford basic hygiene products.
- Ensure that council decisions are not disproportionately impacting on residents who are struggling the most, through introducing a socio-economic duty and considering socio-economic impacts in all our equality impact assessments.
- Continue campaigning for and championing a real living wage for workers in our city, especially working closely with employers.
- Ensure that cost of living concerns are taken into consideration in all Council decisions.
- Continue to develop and expand Southend-on-Sea City Council's work to provide up to date, accurate information and advice to residents on how to manage personal finances efficiently.

Proposed by: Cllr Matt Dent

Seconded by: Cllr Martin Berry

Cllr Margaret Borton

Cllr Tricia Cowdrey

Cllr Daniel Cowan

Cllr Lydia Hyde

Cllr Aston Line

Cllr Anne Jones

Cllr Kathy Murphy

Cllr Mandy O'Connor

Cllr Maxine Sadza