

COST OF LIVING AND FUEL COST CRISIS BRIEFING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents members of the Council with a briefing on the Argyll and Bute specific issues of the cost of living and fuel crisis which shows that 70% of our households are at risk of fuel poverty or extreme fuel poverty. The briefing is for members' information and for use in any situation that may be appropriate and useful in influencing policy decisions and conveying the particular impact that the cost of living and fuel cost increased in Argyll and Bute.
- 1.2 The briefing highlights the particular on-costs facing people who live in our remote rural and island communities that exacerbate the current, unprecedented increases in the cost of living, particularly fuel costs.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Council agree the attached briefing for use in conveying the additional impact that the cost of living/fuel cost crisis has on Argyll and Bute's communities and households.
- 2.2 That Council agree the four key asks of Government to alleviate the particular impacts of the cost of living/fuel cost crisis faced by our communities.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 Argyll and Bute has the second largest mainland area of Scotland, the highest number of inhabited islands and the highest percentage of people living in Remote Rural Areas of all mainland councils.
- 3.2 We have the third lowest median pay rate (gross) of all Scottish Local Authorities and were ranked most vulnerable to post Covid economic shock. The on-costs of living in our communities range from 13% to 185% above costs in urban UK areas. Because of this, and issues of heating fuel and housing types, nearly 70% of all households in Argyll and Bute are at risk of fuel poverty or extreme fuel poverty.

- 3.3 The briefing note sets these statistics out and identifies 4 key asks of Government to recognise these issues when they are implementing support and/or policy change to alleviate this crisis.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Argyll and Bute has a large number of structural geographic and socio-economic issues that exacerbate the high risks to households from the cost of living and fuel cost crisis. The attached briefing note provides a summary of key facts about this that can be used to inform and influence decisions on policy and support on these issues to help our communities.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy: None
- 5.2 Financial: None
- 5.3 Legal: None
- 5.4 HR: None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics: None directly from this report
 - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty: This paper highlights the additional costs faced by remote and rural communities in cost of living and fuel costs.
 - 5.5.3 Islands: This paper highlights the additional costs faced by remote and rural communities in cost of living and fuel costs.
- 5.6 Climate Change: None
- 5.7 Risk: This paper highlights risks to households from the cost of living and fuel cost crisis
- 5.8 Customer Service: None

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Cost of Living/Fuel Cost Briefing