

Appendix 2 -Warm Banks- considerations

As advised in the body of the report, setting up a warm banks network is not a simple or straightforward proposal and also carries with it significant potential risks and additional costs. There are a number of issues to consider including:

1. **Covid** Incidences of Covid are expected to increase again in the winter alongside other infections such as flu. The council's own severe weather facility (SWEP) for rough sleepers is therefore provided on a 'non-congregate' basis with separate rooms provided for service users. Providing open access and encouraging congregation in council or CVS buildings therefore needs careful consideration in light of the potential to increase the transmission of infections.
1. **Leased or licenced** Many council and CVS properties are leased or licenced which will normally preclude them from being used for public access due to the terms of the leases or licences unless specifically provided for.
2. **Safeguarding** will be an important issue in some buildings, particularly where other personal care or community services are also provided for children, young people and families.
3. **Appropriateness for open access.** Similarly, some buildings provide venues or services for customers, local groups or clients such as drop-in services, registration services, registry office weddings, community events or groups and so on and may not be appropriate for open access.
4. **Financial constraints** Due to the severe financial constraints on both council and many CVS organisations, not all buildings or services are open all day. There could therefore be significant additional staffing/security, heating and lighting costs to extend the opening hours of many buildings. This is likely to restrict possibilities to those buildings and services that already have longer opening times and staff, volunteers and/or security on site.
5. **Consideration needs to be given to linking food and drink provision** to the availability of warm banks as this could further contribute to the prevention of negative health impacts. This may be through providing facilities for people to cook or heat food or linking to emergency food provision which could be cost effective (e.g. addressing food and fuel poverty in one place). However, this requires further co-ordination and planning and may need to be a secondary aim in the first instance.
6. **Facilities** Similarly, consideration will need to be given to **fire regulations**, availability of **washroom facilities**, and availability of **seating** etc in order to determine safe occupancy numbers for each type of warm bank. Extending these, particularly seating, may require the purchase of additional furniture.
7. **Comms**-A carefully considered communication and reach-out campaign needs to be drawn up to optimise the spaces proposed for use as warm banks for use by people who really need to use them. Also, many CVS spaces are small and run by few people and therefore these services and organisations may prefer to manage communications on a locality level rather than as part of a wider campaign.

