

# Public living rooms planned for North Somerset

With the price of energy set to rise again at the weekend (1 October) North Somerset Council and its partners in the North Somerset Together network are working together to develop a network of public living rooms across the area to help people keep warm this winter.

Public living rooms are safe, welcoming and non-judgemental spaces for people to come together to stay warm and perhaps enjoy a hot drink and a biscuit. These venues will also have information to help people who might be keen to learn more about the support available to tackle the cost of living crisis.

The sorts of venues that might be suitable for hosting public living rooms include community buildings, sports venues, places of worship, libraries and any organisation willing to make a space available for people to use.

Cllr Mike Bell, North Somerset Council's deputy leader and chair of North Somerset's cost of living working group said: "We are a council that cares about people and addressing the cost of living crisis is the top priority for every member of the council's Executive. No-one should have to go cold this winter. We know already that some of our residents are worried they might have to choose between heating and eating, so to help we want to create a network of places across North Somerset where people can keep warm.

"Our goal is to create a directory of all the places available to our residents across the public, private, health and voluntary sectors and to ensure this information is clearly promoted so everyone who is feeling the cold knows where they can go to get warm, stay warm and enjoy a little company and some hot refreshments."

To enable public living rooms to be set up or maintained, grants of up to £1,000 will be available to organisations in North Somerset. The grants are funded by North Somerset Council, supported by Alliance Homes, grant funding.

Applications will be accepted from North Somerset agencies and community-led organisations delivering services for people in North Somerset. More information about the scheme and grant application process is available on the council's website at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/col](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/col).

The North Somerset Together Network will promote the directory of public living rooms as soon as they begin to be established with the hope that more venues will become available as news of the initiative spreads across North Somerset.

Cllr Bell added: "Our ambition is that all communities across North Somerset that need a public living room have at least one that their local residents can use to help stay warm and well."