



Isle of Man Government

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PUBLICATION

Extract of Proceedings: Council of Ministers August 2022

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Extract of Proceedings in the Council of Ministers during August 2022

Part I Decisions made by Council

Cost of Living Response – Manx Utilities Authority

Council considered a paper submitted by Treasury seeking approval for proposals for Government intervention to support the Isle of Man community in respect of the projected increased cost of living.

Council confirmed that any intervention by Government (in terms of a price cap and associated subvention) would be a measure to stabilize short term volatility and offer universal support in face of the cost of living crisis.

After consideration, Council **agreed** to:

- Maintain electricity prices at current levels until 31 March 2023 via a loan over an indicative period of 20 years, subject to agreement with the MUA
- This will be repaid by consumers over a 10-20 year period via energy bills, at an estimated value of £15-£25 per annum (per bill)
- Issue a direction to the MUA to implement this intervention
- Draft an Order under s8(3) of the Fair Trading Act 1996

Cost of Living Response – Discounted Travel

Council considered a paper submitted by the Department of Infrastructure providing proposals for reduced cost public transport.

After consideration, Council **agreed** to cap bus fares at a maximum of £2 per journey from 01 November 2022 to 31 January 2023, with extension of these arrangements to be subject to review.

Cost of Living Response – Provide Targeted Support

Council considered a paper submitted by the Treasury outlining options regarding the uprating of State Pensions and Child Benefit in October 2022.

After consideration, Council concluded that it would be more useful to struggling people if the proposed 10% uprating was replaced with increased Energy/Family Support Payments.

As such Council agreed *not* to implement the proposed 10% uprating of State Pensions and Child Benefit and instead **agreed** to provide a further round of Energy support and Family support payments in December 2022. Treasury will develop proposals for further targeted support payable if required after Christmas 2022.

Energy Support and Family Support Payments for Autumn 2022

In line with the decision above, Council considered and **agreed** a paper submitted by the Treasury seeking approval to draft the relevant legislation to provide for a second round of Energy Support and Family Support payments to be payable in October and November respectively.

Cost of Living Response – Encourage Energy Reduction and Efficiencies

Council considered a paper submitted by the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture outlining mechanisms to encourage energy reduction and promote energy efficiencies. Noting that supporting energy efficiency will have both an immediate and a recurring benefit for consumers, Council **agreed** to:

- Launch a behaviour change and advice campaign
- Implement free energy saving measures, such as loft insulation and draft excluders
- Modify the DEFA Energy Efficiency Scheme to increase uptake
- Engage two 'energy doctors'
- Revise the Green Living Grant to include heat pumps at no additional cost
- Create energy efficiency fund for social housing

Cost of Living Response – Consolidate Advice and Guidance and Prepare Safety Nets

The Interim Chief Financial Officer offered a broad outline of the mechanisms identified to consolidate advice and guidance relating to the Cost of Living Crisis to the public.

After consideration, Council **agreed** to:

- Create a single point of advice web page
- Set up a third sector forum
- Set up a Winter Help Advice Line
- Increase the number of freephone Government telephone numbers, prioritising health and social security numbers
- Introduce a community fund. The initial focus of this fund to be on the warm spaces initiative and explore options to administer the fund via the third sector. This scheme is to be reviewed against the learning from the holiday hunger scheme
- Cabinet Office to investigate 'Warm Spaces' within the Government Estate, with funding to be considered if appropriate spaces identified
- Cabinet Office to engage with energy suppliers with a view to monitoring vulnerable customers and ensuring that they receive advice and support

Cost of Living Response – Maintain our Economy

Council confirmed that messaging needs to be balanced. The economy requires people to spend money *but* promoting personal financial responsibility and budgeting will likely require people to reduce their expenditure.

After consideration, Council **agreed** to:

- Develop proposals for a domestic events fund to be considered in due course
- Promote existing advisory services and support available for businesses
- Monitor any UK support announcements and review for introduction on the Isle of Man

Part II
Council noted the following Matters

No matters were submitted for information only in August 2022.

Part III
Council determined the following Planning Applications

Council was not required to determine any planning applications in August 2022.

Applications are referred to the Council of Ministers on a number of specific grounds which are set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1999. These relate broadly to land use zoning, the size of the proposed development and environmental matters, and are explained more fully on the Planning and Building Control pages of the Government website. The Decision Notice for applications and the Inspector's Report are available online at <https://www.gov.im/onlineservices>.