



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

2 October 2023

Report of the Director - Public Health

2022/2023 Derbyshire Warm Spaces Grants Programme: Evaluation report – 2022/23 progress update, and request for funding for 2023/3024 grants programme.

(Cabinet Member for Health and Communities)

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 County-wide.

2. Key Decision

2.1 No.

3. Purpose

To ask the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities to:

- I. Note the key headline achievements of the Derbyshire Warm Spaces Grants Programme in 2022/23.
- II. Endorse the recommendations outlined in this report
- III. Approve further investment of £0.150m from Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) to support Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners to provide Warm and Welcoming Spaces in the winter of 2023/24

4. Information and Analysis

Introduction

- 4.1 Heading into winter 2022, the Local Government Association (LGA), together with the Directors of Public Health, warned that some of the most vulnerable people may be more at risk from cold due to the rising cost of energy resulting in people putting on their heating less frequently than in previous years. They determined that this would have a detrimental impact on both physical and mental wellbeing.
- 4.2 As part of its response to this, on 17 October 2022 Derbyshire County Council set up a Warm Spaces Grants Programme. An initial £0.050m was allocated from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to fund the Scheme. Due to the number of applications received, a further £0.100m of COMF grant funding was approved on 28th November 2022 bringing the total funding available up to £0.150m.
- 4.3 Grants were made available to organisations with accessible and appropriate community venues for the creation or improvement of warm spaces for local communities in Derbyshire during the winter. A maximum of £1,000 per organisation was awarded, and this could be spent on a variety of project costs including:
- Additional energy costs
 - Furniture and improvement to facilities
 - Additional staffing costs to cover extended hours
 - Additional cleaning costs to ensure compliance with health protection guidance
 - Activities and refreshments
 - Additional activity costs

The corporate grants approach was used to distribute funding to the VCSE in a consistent and co-ordinated manner. Officers from Public Health, Commissioning and the Corporate Grants team formed a panel that was given delegated responsibility for assessment of applications and making recommendations for determination of award. Decisions were ratified by Public Health SMT. The team used the small grants accelerated process for awards, and therefore payments were responsive and issued swiftly to successful applicants.

- 4.4 A Derbyshire Warm Space is a free, warm, and welcoming space for people across Derbyshire who were struggling to heat their homes during the winter months. Warm space provision was located in a

variety of settings across Derbyshire including charities, community venues, places of worship, council buildings, NHS facilities, leisure facilities, food banks, cafés and other hospitality venues that committed to the Derbyshire Warm Spaces Pledge.

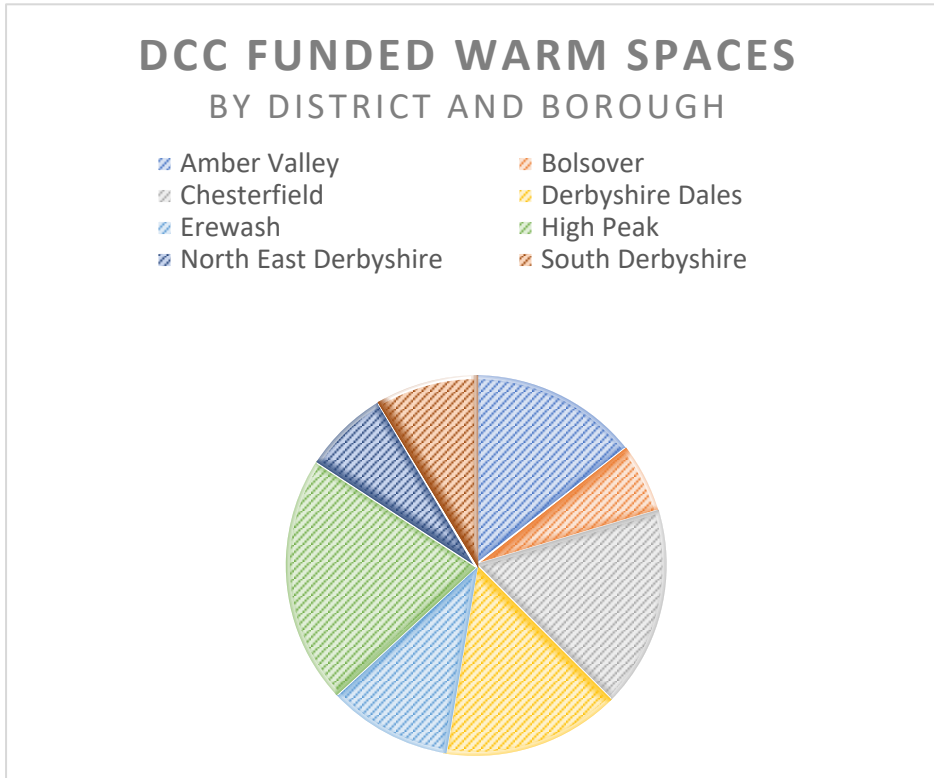
- 4.5 To support all organisations to understand their obligations, the Council developed a Derbyshire Warm Spaces Pledge (appendix 2). The panel applied certain requirements for award, relating to opening hours and venue capacity. It also included a requirement to follow public health protection advice on infection control (appendix 3). In line with all grant awards across the corporate grants programme, a basic condition of grants process was used to award, monitor, and evaluate the scheme and its impact on Derbyshire residents.
- 4.6 Whilst the Council provided some warm spaces via DCC owned venues, central to achieving the warm spaces approach for Derbyshire were VCSE partners who provided the majority. The Derbyshire grant funding aimed to strengthen existing work and enable VCSE partners to achieve more.
- 4.7 Derbyshire utilised examples of good practice to inform its approach, notably Gateshead Council, who through the Local Government Association, showcased their innovative approach and were receptive to sharing their learning and insight with DCC Public Health colleagues.

2022/2023 Warm Spaces programme – Key achievements

- 4.8 Funded Warm Spaces provision was available to the residents of Derbyshire from 1st November 2022 to 31st March 2023, providing nearly 17,000 hours of provision
- 4.9 The Warm Spaces Fund received a total of 158 applications. Analysis by district/borough is summarised in Figure 1. There was good geographical spread across Derbyshire.
- 4.10 In total £110,451 of the available £150,000 budget was allocated. As expected, applications increased during the coldest spells of winter. £39,549 remains unspent, with applications reducing steadily from February onwards as the fund approached its conclusion on 31st March 2023.
- 4.11 Warm Spaces were mapped also against a range of cost of living indicators to ensure appropriate coverage and to ensure that areas of deprivation had sufficient provision. This map included both spaces

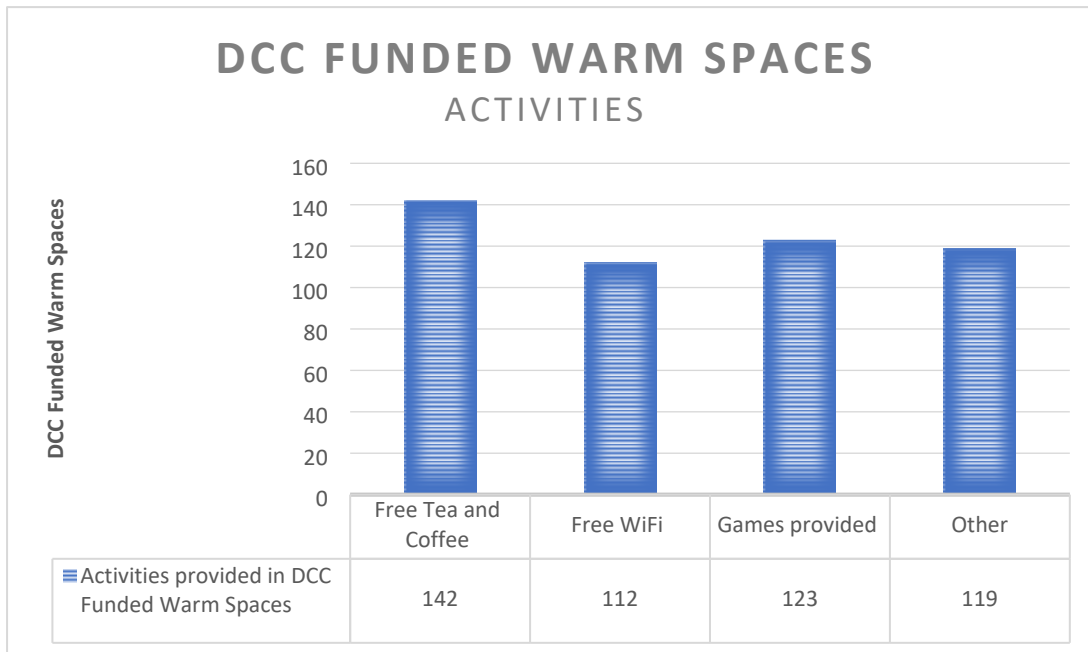
funded by DCC, and warm spaces that had been set up independently in the community. The final version of the map can be accessed here: [Derbyshire Warm Spaces](#)

Figure 1 – Warm Spaces funded by District/Borough area



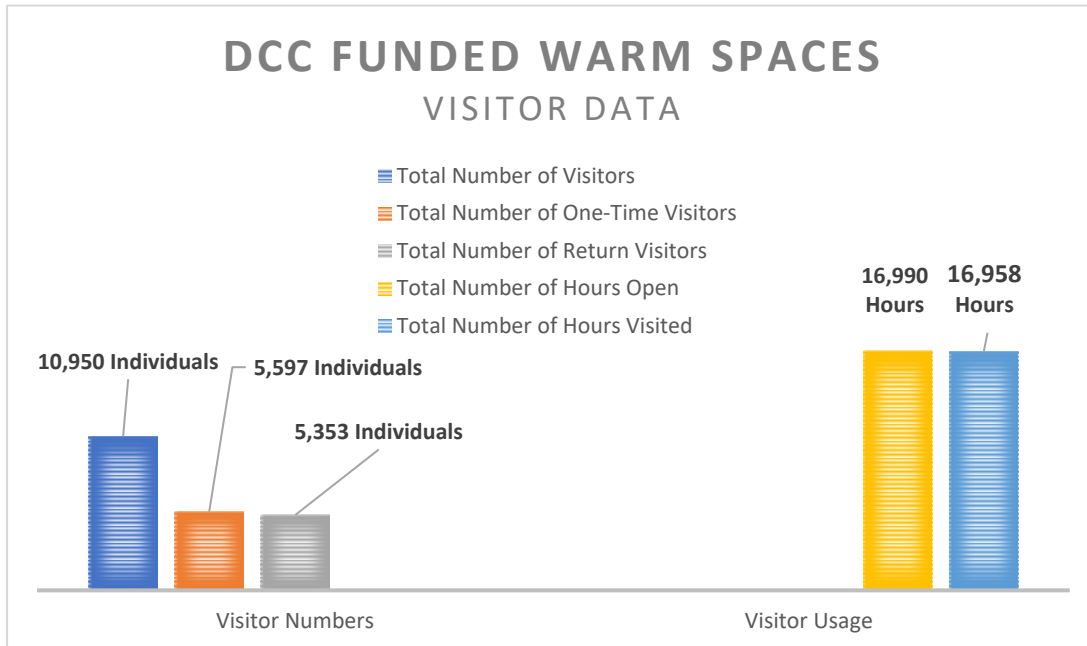
4.12 Warm spaces also provided a wide range of other activities alongside the basic offer which varied from site to site. This included hot drinks, food, free Wi-Fi, games, arts and crafts and reading material such as newspapers or books. Some venues also provided an enhanced offer that included access to computers, sessions on budgeting and managing finances, warm packs, guest speakers including Citizens Advice Bureau and other social prescribing services, physical activities, English lessons and family activities for children. These wider offers have been labelled under 'other' in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Activities



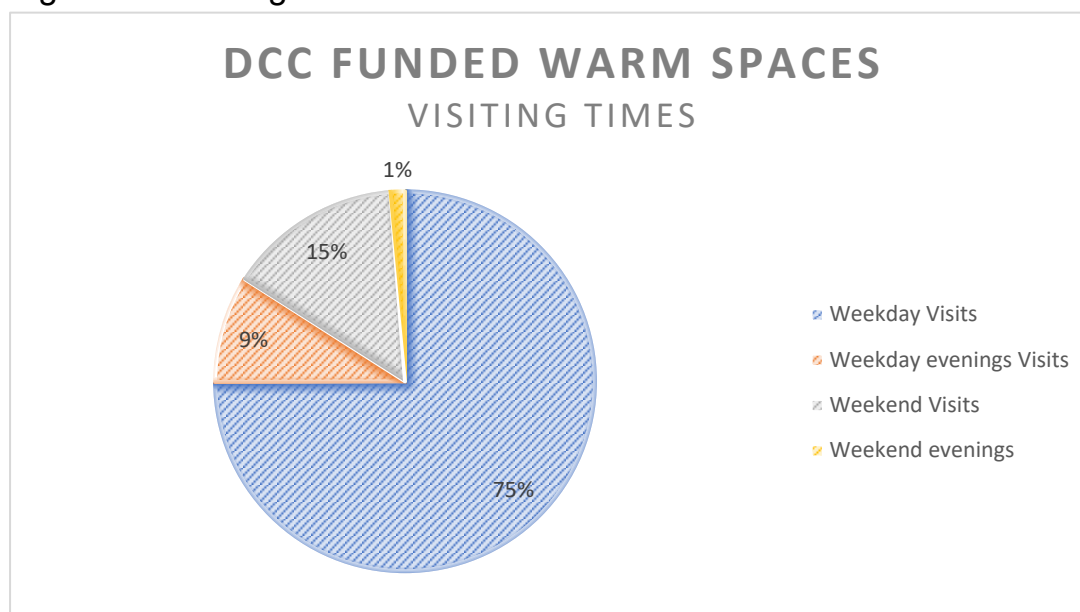
4.13 10,950 individuals were recorded as attending a DCC funded Warm Space, with 5,353 of these individuals returning more than once. It should be noted that this is likely to be a significantly under-reported figure as a number of VCSE partners did not complete all of their monthly monitoring returns.

Figure 3 – Visitor data



- 4.14 Most individuals (75%) attended on a weekday basis during the daytime. Warm spaces were available to the public at the weekend and in the evenings, however this was limited and therefore attendance during these times was significantly lower as summarised below in Fig. 4.
- 4.15 Whilst attendance was positive, some challenges still remained, for example there was no community transport as part of the programme, and there was recognition that there would be vulnerable people in cold homes during the winter, who could not access a warm space.

Figure 4 – Visiting times



4.16 Case studies collected as part of the monitoring (appendix 4) identified a number of additional themes and positive outcomes of the scheme including:

- volunteers supporting individuals to access further support around mental health, benefit claims, digital inclusion, reducing isolation
- the benefits of having warm spaces within existing VSCE settings where social prescribing can flourish.
- the wide-ranging backgrounds of residents who accessed warm spaces, and their appetite to return to these venues despite the improvements in weather.

Conclusions

4.17 An integral part of the entire approach was the 'collaboration of the willing', without the leaders and volunteers within the VCSE, the creation of this network of warm spaces for Derbyshire residents would not have been possible. Furthermore, the innovation and variety of offers of provision for Derbyshire residents was encouraging to see and the passion to help local communities during a difficult period for many was evident.

4.18 Despite the timescale challenges DCC colleagues, led by Public Health, demonstrated an excellent cross-departmental approach which resulted in a Derbyshire Warm Spaces Grants Programme being effectively delivered. This rapid collaborative work, between VCSE partners, Public Health, the Corporate Grants Team, Commissioning, Communications,

and many others, had similar principles to the Covid-19 response as it showcased what can be achieved in tight timescales when resources are targeted.

- 4.19 Monitoring demonstrated that there was a significant appetite within our local communities to attend and/or provide a warm space. Evaluation also recognises that the Derbyshire Warm Spaces Grants Programme along with the critical support from VCSE partners, has supported many people who were under financial pressure last winter, and unable to adequately heat their homes.

Key recommendations

- 4.20 Derbyshire residents face ongoing cost of living pressures which are forecast to continue throughout 2023 and potentially into 2024. According to the latest updates from the 'Public Opinions and Social Trends Survey' (April 2023), over 7 in 10 (73%) adults reported being somewhat or very worried about rising costs of living in the last two weeks. Furthermore, half (49%) of adults who pay energy bills found it somewhat or very difficult to afford them.
- 4.21 This report therefore seeks endorsement for the following recommendations to ensure appropriate support is available for vulnerable residents over the next winter period: -

1. Approve further investment from Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) to support the programme in Winter 2023

Provide grant funding to support Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners to provide Warm and Welcoming Spaces in the winter of 2023/24 (£0.150m). This will be allocated using the methodology developed in 2022/2023 using the Council's existing corporate grants framework and processes.

2. Move from 'Derbyshire Warm Spaces' to 'Derbyshire Warm and Welcoming Spaces':

Anecdotal evidence both locally and nationally has indicated that many people were reluctant to visit a Warm Space through fear of being stigmatised. Therefore, this report recommends that we replace the reference to 'Warm Spaces' in our future approach and replace it with the more generic, inclusive title 'Warm and Welcoming Spaces'. This will also better reflect that reducing social isolation is also a key element of the programme.

3. *Engagement with the VCSE*

Continue to build on existing relationships with VCSE partners and recognise the significant contribution they play in driving forward this agenda. VCSE partners have expertise in working with vulnerable residents and are well placed locally for community consultation.

4. *Reaching the most vulnerable*

Adopt a more intelligence led, evidence-based approach which targets areas of deprivation and communities in need more directly in 2023/2024. For example, this year, a big proportion of funded warm spaces in Derbyshire were open during weekday hours only, which excludes many lower income working households.

5 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 Option 1 Do Nothing – Risk that vulnerable residents without alternative options will struggle in cold homes over winter. (Not preferred)
- 5.2 Option 2 Agree recommendations – support the future development and funding of the scheme to address significant cost of living pressure on most vulnerable households (Preferred option)

6 Implications

- 6.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

7 Background Papers

- 7.1 [Report to the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities, Support for Cost of Living in Derbyshire through Warm Spaces Grant Funding, 17 October 2022](#)
- 7.2 [Report to the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities, Support for Cost of Living in Derbyshire through Warm Spaces Grant Funding \(2\), 28 November 2022](#)

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Implications
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Derbyshire Warm Spaces Pledge
- 8.3 Appendix 3 – Derbyshire Warm Space Grant Programme Criteria
- 8.4 Appendix 4 – Derbyshire Warm Spaces Case Studies

9 Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities:

- I. Notes the key headline achievements of the Derbyshire Warm Spaces Grants Programme in 2022-23.
- II. Endorses the recommendations outlined in this report
- III. Approves further investment of £0.150m from Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) to support Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners to provide Welcoming Spaces in the winter of 2023/24.

10 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 10.1 To put in place the budget and resources required to enable VCSE and other partners to support Derbyshire residents, by responding to current cost of living pressures through a series of Warm and Welcoming Spaces and other locally developed cost of living interventions.

11 Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

- 11.1 No

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 Since the start of the pandemic, the Council has received a number of different grants to support the response to Covid-19, a number of which are managed by Public Health. At the start of 2022/23, £20.8m remained available.
- 1.2 In 2022/23 a sum of £0.150m was allocated from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund for the Warm Spaces Grants Programme, of which £0.110m was spent on approved applications. A further sum of £0.150m will be allocated from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund to support the continued delivery of the Warm Spaces Grants Programme in winter 2023/24.

Legal

- 2.1 The Council has power to provide grants under the general power of competence set out in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.2 The Council's Financial Regulations state that grants below £0.100m require Cabinet Member authorisation.
- 2.3 The Council's standard grant agreement shall be used to set out the terms and conditions for which the grants are made, which provides for clawback of funding in certain circumstances and shall also provide that the Council is not liable for any employment liabilities

Human Resources

- 3.1 The funding enabled local VCSE organisation providers to deliver activities, projects and support their costs.

Derbyshire County Council accepts no employment or future redundancy liability, with all employment and related matters to be managed by the organisation in receipt of funding.

Information Technology

- 4.1 No Information Technology implications have been identified.

Equalities Impact

5.1 No Equalities Impact implications have been identified.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

6.1 The outcomes of the Derbyshire Warm Spaces Grants Programme have supported the delivery of the following deliverables for the next year in the Council Plan:

- Continued to deliver the ongoing Covid-19 response and recovery in relation to health protection, alongside wider partnership action to tackle health inequalities.
- Worked with partners to promote positive mental wellbeing and improve support for local people.

Other

7.1 With regard to any organisation providing services to children or vulnerable adults, approval of financial support was conditional on the existence within these organisations of appropriate procedures assessing suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults.