Andover Town Council

- To **receive** and **review** this report and supporting documentation
- To **approve** the proposed Warm Hub agreement
- To **instruct** Officers to conduct further research if required.

Produced for: Full Council	**By:** Community and Events Officer	**Date of Report**: 16 December 2026

Purpose

As the cost-of-living crisis continues to affect households across the UK, *Warm Hubs* have emerged as a vital community-led response to help individuals stay warm during colder months without the financial burden of heating their homes. These hubs offer safe, welcoming spaces where people can access warmth, social interaction, and often refreshments or meals.

Across Britain, nearly 13,000 Warm Hubs have been established in libraries, churches, community centres, and other public venues. In East and South Cambridgeshire, for example, Warm Hubs have demonstrated measurable impact in reducing social isolation, improving wellbeing, and supporting those experiencing fuel poverty. In Cardiff alone, over 500,000 people accessed Warm Hubs during the winter of 2022, with estimates suggesting usage could have reached 2.5 million nationally across all networks. [independent.co.uk] [cambsacre.org.uk] [journals.sagepub.com]

Local Provision in Andover

Currently, five Warm Hubs operate within Andover, offering warmth, refreshments, and a safe space for residents experiencing social isolation, fuel poverty, or simply seeking community connection. These hubs are run by dedicated local organisations but face increasing pressure to sustain services without a formal funding mechanism.

Proposal Purpose

Andover Town Council does not currently have a dedicated funding stream to support Warm Hubs. The purpose of this report is to propose the introduction of a targeted grant scheme— similar in structure to the existing small/medium grants programme— specifically for Warm Hub provision during the winter months. This funding would help ensure that these essential community spaces remain operational and accessible to those most in need.

Warm Hubs within Andover

- **Andover Library** ***(doesn't provide refreshments)***
- **ACE (Andover Community Engage on Bridge Street)**
- **'The Hub' Methodist Church, Bridge Street**
- **The Bridge, Bridge Street**
- **King Arthurs Way Community Hall**

https://www.warmwelcome.uk/find-a-space#map

Strategic Alignment with Business Plan 2025–27

This proposal directly supports the Council's mission to "help make Andover a great place to live and work" and aligns with several key priorities outlined in the approved Business Plan:

1. Help Make Andover a Welcoming, Safe, and Well-Cared-For Town
   - Warm Hubs contribute to community safety and wellbeing by offering inclusive, supportive environments.
   - They help reduce social isolation and provide a visible presence of care and connection within neighbourhoods.
2. Engage with Key Stakeholders to Provide Targeted Support
   - The proposal encourages collaboration with local organisations, charities, and volunteers to deliver Warm Hub services.
   - It supports the Council's goal to proactively engage with community stakeholders and respond to identified needs.
3. Set Justifiable Budgets to Deliver Cost-Effective Services
   - The funding model proposed is capped and controlled, ensuring responsible use of public funds.
   - It complements the Council's commitment to establishing a grants and sponsorship strategy that targets support to residents in need.
6. Services for Older People
   - Warm Hubs are particularly beneficial for older residents, many of whom are at risk of fuel poverty and social isolation.
   - This initiative supports the Council's aim to explore and deliver services that improve quality of life for older people.

Legislation:

Andover Town Council has the power to provide these Grants under the Local Government Act of 1972 s.137

Proposal

That Andover Town Council approve offering the funding, to 3 of the Hubs above (as Andover Library does not offer food or beverage) to help support residents during the winter months.

The grant fund for Warm Hubs be a one off payment of up to £500 and cannot be awarded more than once during any period, for example 2025-2026, 2026-2027, 2027-2028 etc

Recommendations

- To **receive** and **review** this report and supporting documentation
- To **approve** the proposed Warm Hub agreement and application.
- To **instruct** Officers to conduct further research if required.

It is **recommended** that this funding pot be allocated from the 55+ funding provision.