

Barnsley's Community Offer

On 8th August 2014 a team of leaders from across Barnsley Council gathered to consider Barnsley's 'Community Offer'.

What do we think it means to make a Community Offer?

In making a Community Offer **we recognise the value and assets that exist already in our communities**, and **our crucial role** in helping to shape and support our communities if we're to achieve our vision of a brighter future and a better Barnsley. **We also recognise the importance of how we go about doing this**, and are determined to work in a way that enables residents and communities to shape and improve their own futures. We will need to work as 'one council' if we are to do it well.

Our Community Offer is what we create when **communities is everyone's business**, when we work together across all our business units to understand and provide **an integrated offer to communities which truly reflects their needs and aspirations**.

What does this mean for how we work together? We think it means:

1. We must focus relentlessly on residents and customers

This means that we need to understand what our communities really need and want and use that knowledge to organise ourselves in what we do and how we do it.

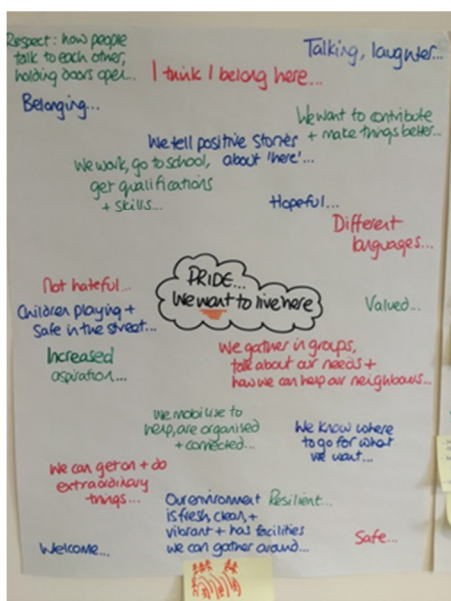
2. We must focus on building capacity within communities

This means that we work to break dependency on public services in favour of creating vibrant communities and supporting people where necessary to be engaged in their communities (seeking to build capacity where it doesn't exist). We provide services within our communities only where these provide real value because they're absolutely necessary, and no-one else can provide them.

3. We must work as 'one council' and alongside partners

This means that we know that we do not have sole community leadership responsibility, and that we cannot design or deliver our services without working across business units and with partners to be sure that we're adding value to the whole 'community offer' and not either duplicating or providing unnecessary services or support.

Our hope is that our future communities look and feel like this:



Questions to ask ourselves in Business Planning and Check and Challenge:

- How much have I included communities as part of the solution (viewing communities as themselves having and being assets)?
- How much does my plan build capacity and encourage connectivity within communities, rather than create dependency?
- How much have I worked alongside other business units (a One Council approach) to shape joined-up services?
- How much have I planned to work alongside communities and partners to increase capacity and create solutions, as well as deliver services?
- How much is my planning based on our 'old' way of thinking, rather than what we need for the future?

We recognise that there are implications of this for us:

Implications for the public sector generally	
1	We must listen and better understand
2	We must change our contribution and engage the contribution of communities (including in design)
3	We must 'shape' (including structure ourselves to provide real public service)
4	We must be responsive and adaptable
5	We must consider leadership (there are democratic leadership issues here as well as organisational arrogance)
6	We must be local focused and tailored to people's needs, not buildings focused
Implications for us as a council – for how we work (internally) and what we do	
1	We must work in a flexible, adaptable, more transparent/open way, accepting that we need/will have difficult conversations.
2	We must have respectful regard for individuals, families, communities and our workforce – and stop defining ourselves purely by rules and structures.
3	We must work from an asset and strengths based approach.
4	We must make 'think community' everyone's business and be self aware (eg 360 on Council).
5	We must think about the language we use, model the behaviour we want to see, and build rapport.
6	We must not remove individuals' independence; behave in a way that creates dependence; label or hide behind language, rules and regulations; or be organisationally arrogant.
Implications for us as a council – for how we behave with our communities	
1	We must have clarity of purpose.
2	We must speak a language people understand and get everybody on the same page.
3	We must work with trust, respect and empathy.
4	We must focus on getting it right first time, together (internally and externally).
5	We must give precedence to protect and support the most vulnerable.
Implications for us as a council – for how we work with our partners	
1	We must answer this question with partners.
2	We must focus on the customer – customer perception.
3	We must shift to a community offer – to bring together the many partners.
4	We must have a community-led presence.
5	We must join up the offer and empower to do.
6	We must find out what can partners offer.
7	We must have empathy (collectively) for customers' needs.
8	We must have a whole system approach to re-design.
9	We should create the conditions for maximum independence.