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MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Sustainable Barnsley Workstream
DATE:	Tuesday 11 October 2022
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

AGENDA

Administrative and Governance Issues for the Committee

Sustainable Barnsley Workstream

Councillors Bellamy, Eastwood, Ennis OBE, P Fielding, W Fielding, Hand-Davis, Hayward, Moyes, Newing, Osborne, Pickering, Richardson

1 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

To receive apologies for absence in accordance with Regulation 7 (6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

2 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

To invite Members of the Committee to make any declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest in connection with the items on this agenda.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (*Pages 3 - 10*)

To note the minutes of the previous meeting of the Full Committee held on 13th September 2022 (Item 3 attached).

4 Cost of Living Crisis Report (*Pages 11 - 18*)

To consider a report of the Executive Director Core Services; the Executive Director Growth & Sustainability; and the Executive Director Public Health & Communities.

Enquiries to Jane Murphy/Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officers

Email scrutiny@barnsley.gov.uk

To: Chair and Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bellamy, Bowler, Bowser, Cain, Clarke, Denton, Eastwood, Felton, P. Fielding, W. Fielding, Green, Hand-Davis, Hayward, Lodge, Lowe-Flello, Markham, McCarthy, Mitchell, Moyes, Newing, Osborne, Peace, Pickering, Richardson, Risebury, Shirt, Smith, Sumner, Webster, Williams, Wilson, Wraith MBE and Wray together with Statutory Co-opted Member Ms. G Carter (Parent Governor Representative)

Electronic Copies Circulated for Information

Sarah Norman, Chief Executive

Shokat Lal, Executive Director Core Services

Rob Winter, Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management

Michael Potter, Service Director, Business Improvement, HR and Communications

Sukdave Ghuman, Service Director, Law and Governance

Press

Witnesses

Item 4 – Cost of Living Crisis Report (2pm)

Matt O'Neill, Executive Director Growth & Sustainability, BMBC

Kathy McArdle, Service Director Regeneration & Culture, BMBC

Sarah Cartwright, Head of Strategic Housing, Sustainability & Climate Change, BMBC

Julia Burrows, Executive Director Public Health & Communities, BMBC

Phil Hollingsworth, Service Director Stronger, Safer, Healthier Communities, BMBC

Jayne Hellowell, Head of Commissioning, Healthier Communities, BMBC

Councillor Robert Frost, Cabinet Spokesperson Growth & Sustainability, BMBC

Councillor Caroline Makinson, Cabinet Spokesperson Public Health & Communities

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Full Committee
DATE:	Tuesday 13 September 2022
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bellamy, Bowser, Denton, Eastwood, W. Fielding, Green, Hayward, Lodge, Lowe-Fiello, Markham, Mitchell, Moyes, Newing, Osborne, Peace, Sumner, Webster, Williams, Wilson and Wray

15 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

No apologies for absence were received in accordance with Regulation 7(6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

16 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

Councillor Lodge declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute Nos. 18, 19, 20 and 22 as he is Chair of the Central Area Early Help Delivery Group, a member of the Virtual School Governance Group and an employee of an organisation which supports vulnerable adults and young people.

Councillor Webster declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute Nos. 18 and 19 as he has family members who have used adolescent mental health services.

Councillor Wilson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minutes Nos. 19, 20 and 22 due to his membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Virtual School Governance Group.

Councillor Eastwood declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 18 due to being the Cabinet Support Member for Place Health and Adult Social Care.

Councillor Wilson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minutes Nos. 19, 20 and 22 due to his membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Virtual School Governance Group.

Councillor Moyes declared a non-pecuniary interest in 19, 20 and 22 due to her membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel and School Panel.

Cllr Newing was present for Minute No 18 but then vacated the meeting for Minute Nos. 19, 20 and 22 due to being Cabinet Support Member for Children's Services.

17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the following meetings were received and approved by Members as a true and accurate record:

Full Committee – 26 April 2022

Sustainable Barnsley Workstream – 31 May 2022

Growing Barnsley Workstream – 28 June 2022

Health Barnsley Workstream – 19 July 2022

18 Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) Annual Report 2021-22

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Bob Dyson, Independent Chair, BSAB

Wendy Lowder, Executive Director – Place Health & Adult Social Care, BMBC

Julie Chapman, Service Director – Adult Social Care & Health, Place Health & Adult Social Care, BMBC

Cath Erine, Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board Manager, Place Health & Adult Social Care, BMBC

Cllr Jenny Platts, Cabinet Spokesperson, Place Health & Adult Social Care, BMBC
Superintendent Emma Wheatcroft, South Yorkshire Police (SYP)

Dawn Gibbon, Head of Safeguarding, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (BHNFT)

Becky Hoskins, Deputy Director of Nursing & Quality, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (BHNFT)

Angela Fawcett, Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children, South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

Andrew Osborn, Interim Service Director Commissioning & Integration, Place Health & Adult Social Care, BMBC

Emma Cox, Associate Director of Nursing, Quality & Professions, South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SWYPFT), was also in attendance virtually to answer Members detailed questions.

Members were invited to consider a report of the Executive Director Core Services (Item 4a) and the Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2021 – 2022 (Item 4b).

Councillor Platts and B Dyson introduced the report, which outlined the achievements of the Board in 2021-22 and the ambitions of the Board for the following year. Achievements included the multi-agency training offer, work around self-neglect and hoarding, Safeguarding Awareness Week which was led by Barnsley across the county and a peer review which found various strengths and areas of development that the Board were already aware of.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge the following matters were highlighted:

Berneslai Homes were not represented at the meeting, but Members were assured that Berneslai Homes had good policies in place in regards to concerns about

vulnerable adults and children. Berneslai Homes had their own safeguarding team so they might not need to refer every case to the front door of Adult Social Care. In addition, Berneslai Homes provide the Board with quarterly data evidencing the prevention work undertaken to keep tenants safe. It was highlighted that staff working on new 'Front Door' for Adult Social Care now acknowledge if service users are Berneslai Homes tenants, and the ambition moving forward is to have Berneslai Homes as a partner in the 'Front Door' to strengthen links with officers.

It is a priority for the Board that people who need safeguarding are involved and in control of the process. The Board had focused on making safeguarding personal and use advocacy to embed positive outcomes. It was noted that there are some individuals who are hard to engage with and some who lacked capacity, therefore it was difficult to ascertain what their experience of accessing support had been. The Board had looked at introducing family conferences to support all adults to design solutions centred around the individuals along with their families and friends. Training and supervision for staff also focused on working with those individuals who are more difficult to engage with.

The board had worked closely with the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership to improve transitions into Adulthood, as this had been a concern historically. It was highlighted that a task and finish group was implemented to drive this work forward. A multi-agency Directions Panel was used to provide early intervention for young people. Working together with Children's Services more closely would save intervention down the line with Adult Social Care or Mental Health Services. CAMHS were currently negating with children and young people to map out the services up to the age of 25 and a permanent offer will be available from April 2023. There is partnership working with INSPYRE to provide support to all waiting in CAMHS and to support a seamless transition to Adult Services for young people.

The recent peer review found two areas of improvement which focus on the tightening of agenda planning and working with other Boards to ascertain where agenda items would be best placed. As a result of the peer review the Board would look at data collection, such as reviewing the quarterly dashboard and the end of year data set so that data could be studied not just on a macro level but on an area-by-area basis or by group of individuals etc. Peer Reviews had been less frequent due to the pandemic, but this is now recommencing across the regions and the Board would be sharing their peer review with colleagues across ADASS. Engagement with other Authorities is important, and the Board regularly shared best practice via regional and national forums such as ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services), County and National Safeguarding Forums.

Members were informed that the Board had an underspend, and this would be invested into a safeguarding post that sits outside the Council. This new post would focus on reaching out the public and customer groups around safeguarding, and the hope is that this would increase the number of public referrals.

The increase in referrals is seen as a positive impact of the Board's communication and training plan. Partners from the Hospital and the Police agreed that the increase in referrals showed that front line staff are more effective at detecting safeguarding concerns which is testament to the training offer of the Board. The Police now have a member of staff in 'Front Door' leading to a reduction in the number of concerns that

would not progress beyond the Police. The Board would like to work more closely with the Borough's care homes as a significant proportion of referrals are made via care home staff. Care Homes provide their own safeguarding training, and the board is working with commissioners to determine the quality of this training.

Members have an important role to play in the safeguarding of Barnsley residents, and Members had been invited to complete safeguarding training in person or virtually. Members could undertake training ranging from beginner to advanced and could also do joint training focusing on both Children's and Adult's Safeguarding. It was noted that the email inviting Members to undertake this training should be sent again.

There are staff working with private sector housing colleagues. The Board had increased links with both the Safer Neighbourhoods team and private tenancy team, with a strong focus on identifying self-neglect and hoarding and recognising those who would benefit from early intervention. Joint working had actively been engaged in, such as the self-neglect and hoarding webpage and the D'Clutter club.

The Board had anticipated an increase of safeguarding concerns due to the Cost-of-Living Crisis. A regional approach had been underway, with a Yorkshire & Humber group working on actions that could be taken. The Board had undertaken work to understand the fabric of the local community and who is at risk. Campaigns such as More Money in Your Pocket had been implemented and further communication plans had been discussed to inform local residents of support available.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution and for the excellent work of the BSAB, and;
- (ii) Members be provided with Safeguarding training information to increase uptake.

19 Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2021-22

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Carly Speechley, Executive Director, Children's Services, BMBC
Keeley Boud, Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance, Children's Services, BMBC
Annette Carey, Strategic Safeguarding Partnership Manager, Children's Services, BMBC
Cllr Trevor Cave, Cabinet Spokesperson – Children's Services
Superintendent Emma Wheatcroft, South Yorkshire Police (SYP)
Dawn Gibbon, Head of Safeguarding, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (BHNFT)
Angela Fawcett, Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Looked After Children, South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
Becky Hoskins, Deputy Director of Nursing & Quality, Barnsley Hospital NHS

Foundation Trust (BHNFT)

Emma Cox, Associate Director of Nursing, Quality & Professions, South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SWYPFT) and Jean Imray, Independent Scrutineer, BMBC were also in attendance virtually to answer Members detailed questions.

Members were invited to consider a report of the Executive Director Core Services (Item 5a) and the Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2021-22 (Item 5b).

C Speechley introduced the report, in which it was highlighted that 2021- 22 was a period of challenging circumstances for both families and the workforce. The report summarised the key achievements of the Board, and also set out the priorities for the following year.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge the following matters were highlighted:

Members discussed concerns surrounding digital exclusion that the borough's young people faced, such as lack of access to Wi-Fi and mobile devices. The service undertook a piece of work during the pandemic to provide equipment to vulnerable young people and informed families that they could use Family Hubs to access free Wi-Fi. It was noted that this was an area of work that could be explored in more depth.

Online harms and bullying are a key concern for the Board. One of the most significant areas of contextual safeguarding is online harms, and this was contextualised in the Section 175 Audits. The service had implemented a range of training for both young people and parents which surrounded this. In Safeguarding Awareness Week, workshops with parents which focused on online harm and bullying took place. Students are not allowed to use mobile phones in lesson time at school, but concerns were raised about students accessing mobile phones in downtime, and also smartwatches in lessons, which meant they could experience online harms and bullying whilst in school. Members were assured that work would be undertaken with schools to ascertain policies around mobile phone and smartwatch use. Young people in the Borough had a keen interest in tackling online harms and bullying. The Tackling Bullying Commitment had been implemented by schools with check and challenge provided by young people acting as peer inspectors. These check and challenge inspections by young people would help inform the Board on how well the bullying commitment was being implemented.

Members suggested that the Partnership would benefit from engaging with the Area Councils. Area Councils had specific funds that the Partnership could utilise in specific localities. This would be picked up, with the suggestion that the Executive Director should attend the Area Council Chairs Forum.

The Cost-Of-Living crisis would be a key issue for the Partnership over the coming months. The Partnership provided support for families, such as Family Centres in every locality, and should receive £3 Million of additional Family Hub funding for their early help offer . More parents and carers parenting in adverse circumstances could

mean there is a potential saturation point where demand outstrips level of services. The service would be looking at alternative funding solutions and efficiency and integration to combat this.

Access to schools was more difficult than it had been historically. The Service hold regular meetings with designated safeguarding leads in schools to share information and identify training needs. It was noted that children who had access to family support workers had regular direct contact with practitioners who would speak to them alone and share feedback. It was hoped Front Door services would work towards better connections with schools and a pilot has been undertaken with social workers linked in with schools to improve communication. Health colleagues noted that pre-Covid Partnership meetings took place in schools on occasion, and met with young people after, which provided invaluable insight to the Partnership. Training in schools was provided on issues such as self-harm and bullying, supported by Compass.

Availability of CAMHS services for young people is a national problem, with an increase in the volume and complexity of referrals. To reduce waiting times further, CAMHS had engaged in partnership working with organisations such as Compass who provided support in schools. There had been an increase in EHCPs surrounding children who were unable to go to school or had a fear of school. The service had been working closely with both CAMHS and Compass to bridge the gap in service in this area. This had led to an increase in Elective Home Education across the borough, which was regularly audited by the Partnership.

The Partnership had engaged in a vast amount of work in relation to safe sleeping arrangements. The Partnership reported no deaths since last year's update. The Partnership had undertaken significant work to reduce deaths related to unsafe sleeping and abusive head trauma via the roll out of the ICON programme. Both of these had been significant pieces of multi-agency work, with staff being trained to provide brief interventions and champions appointed to keep the good work of the programme going. The Partnership produced a radio campaign which had been replicated across the country and developed risk assessment tools so practitioners feel confident in having conversations with parents and carers around this risk.

The Partnership collated feedback through various mechanisms. The Council operates various forums such as the Youth Council and SEND Youth Group, which are established groups of young people who regularly feedback into services. Audits, observations of practice, and walk the floor exercises with the Cabinet support Member for Children's Services provided quality assurance for the service. The Council also has a feedback and improvement service in which families could submit feedback and complaints.

Staffing in Children's Social Care services is a national issue. The Council had vacancies in Front Door services, which could lead to sickness and absence due to additional capacity pressures on staff. The service had developed a recruitment and retention strategy, with various communications such as a micro site developed jointly with the Communications and HR teams.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution and the report be noted
- (ii) Members to be provided with information on mobile device usage policies in schools
- (iii) Witnesses, including SYP, investigate the possibility of working with Area Councils
- (iv) Members to be provided with information on self-harm training and education in schools
- (v) Witnesses to further investigate the impact of digital exclusion; including progress against the South Yorkshire Broadband project
- (vi) Witnesses to increase the promotion of good partnership working in annual reports, e.g., the safe sleep project
- (vii) Members to promote the Children's Services recruitment offer
- (viii) Members to consider the added value of the partnership as a whole at future scrutiny sessions, not just focusing on the performance of individual services
- (ix) Witnesses should be cognisant of those living in private rented accommodation and whether they are disproportionately affected by the cost of living crisis; and
- (x) Executive Director to inform the Chair of the Committee of the outcome of the bid to provide support through Family Centres.

20 REDACTED Children's Social Care Performance Report (For Information Only)

Members were invited to consider a cover report relating to Children's Social Care Performance. The redacted report was provided for information only.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

21 Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the items so marked because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the specific paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, subject to the public interest test.

22 Children's Social Care Performance Report Private Member Briefing

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Carly Speechley, Executive Director-Children's Services, BMBC

Keeley Boud, Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance, Children's Services,
BMBC
Cllr Trevor Cave, Cabinet Spokesperson Children's Services, BMBC

Members were invited to consider a cover report relating to Children's Social Care Performance (Item 8a) in relation to the Data Report (Item 8b) and the Explanatory Document (Item 8c).

A strong performance was noted overall despite challenges with staffing. It is anticipated that the Cost-of-Living crisis could create further significant pressures for the service.

The needs of care leavers are under constant review via the Sufficiency Strategy, and areas such as the number of care leavers in suitable accommodation are a key focus for the service.

Challenges in recruiting and retaining staff remain a national issue for the profession. There have been issues with recruiting both permanent and agency staff, particularly experienced social workers. Additional benefits are advertised within the job description, such as the welcome bonus and Local Government Pension benefits. The service had explored adding additional admin capacity to remove pressure from front line staff, however there were also issues in recruiting admin staff. Various options to combat recruitment issues would be explored, such as visibility at local universities and the relaunch of the microsite.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Members note the report; and
- (ii) Witnesses explore working with Job Centres to recruit admin staff

Chair

**Report of the Executive Director Core Services,
the Executive Director Growth & Sustainability
and the Executive Director Public Health & Communities,
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)
on 11th October 2022**

Cost-of-Living Crisis (COLC)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the cost-of-living support available to Barnsley residents and planned interventions over the coming months leading up to winter. Officers are currently preparing a Cost of Living Crisis (COLC) Strategic Response and Action Plan, in collaboration with the Tactical Response Group established in September 2022. This Strategy and Action Plan (currently in early draft) will set out the Council's strategic approach to the crisis over a set period (it will be a crisis response rather than a long-term strategy).
- 1.2 It needs to be very clear that the Council cannot solve the cost-of-living crisis, but it will work collaboratively with Barnsley 2030 partners and alongside existing partnerships such as Good Food Barnsley, Stronger Communities and Early Help to do what it can. A separate report (to the Council's Cabinet) will seek to approve how additional Household Support Grant monies (an additional allocation of £2.3m) will be spent up to March 2023.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Whilst the cost-of-living crisis is having a significant impact across the country, it is disproportionately affecting boroughs like Barnsley where poverty was already increasing before the Covid pandemic, exacerbating inequalities, and disproportionately affecting the poorest communities. Price rises driven by energy price inflation, alongside additional taxation, are having an impact on most households in the borough with the energy price hike in autumn set to amplify these challenges further.
- 2.2 Real incomes are reducing and costs increasing, with inflation at 9.1% (at the time of writing) – this is affecting energy, food, and rent. Over a third of residents in the borough are expected to be in 'fuel poverty' come the autumn, with families and vulnerable households having to make decisions regarding which essentials they prioritise (heat or eat).
- 2.3 Tackling poverty and addressing these inequalities is not new for a borough like Barnsley. However, the scale of the crisis is unprecedented.

The Stats:

- Over a third of residents in the borough are in 'fuel poverty'. This equates to around 41,000 households
- Almost a quarter of children in the borough live in low-income families
- Almost 20% of children are on free school meals (FSM)
- 27% of residents in the borough are economically inactive
- Over 26,000 residents are on Universal Credit

3.0 National Government Support

- 3.1 Central Government has committed to a £37bn assistance package to support households with the cost-of-living crisis and rising energy prices. It is targeted at those in most need, with vulnerable households receiving at least £1,200 this year.
- 3.2 The below summarises the support that has been made available since April 2022:

Low Income Households

- Cost of living payment totalling £650 paid in 2 instalments
- £140 Warm Home Discount (Application based - Oct to Mar)
- Extension to Household Support Grant (£4.6M for Barnsley)
- Healthy Activities Funds (£1M for Barnsley)
- Discretionary Council Tax rebate scheme (£562K for Barnsley)

All Households

- £150 Council Tax rebate for those in bands A to D (90% of households in Barnsley)
- £400 discount to be applied directly to energy bills
- £300 Pensioner cost of living payment (Pensioners only – top up to Winter Fuel Payment)
- £150 Disability cost of living payment (those on disability benefit only)

The above is in addition to existing funding support that is available to households, full details are set out here: Overall Government Support for the cost of living:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-support-for-the-cost-of-living-factsheet/government-support-for-the-cost-of-living-factsheet>.

4.0 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) use of Government Grants

Household Support Grant – April-September 2022

- 4.1 The Council received £2.3M Household Support Grant (HSG) covering the period (Apr to Sept 22), this being the 4th iteration of this scheme. The purpose of this grant is to support low-income households with the cost of food and energy and other essential household expenses.
- 4.2 £2M has been allocated to families in receipt of free school meals or pension credits via a £150 Post Office Voucher, supporting 11,208 households across the borough.
- 4.3 The Council has used a further £318K of the grant to fund community groups to support low-income households via a range of projects and initiatives. Note all the initiatives are targeted at households and they will be promoted on the Council's More Money in Your Pocket (MMIYP) Website which gives more information regarding the support available to the residents of Barnsley across the key areas of:
- Housing Support
 - Support with utility bills
 - Food support
 - Budgeting support
 - Wellbeing support
 - Employment and skills support
 - Household support grants and other support
 - Freebies and money saving ideas

The website also has a dedicated area for Berneslai Homes tenants.

- 4.4 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are encouraged to access the More Money in Your Pocket website for further information relating to specific areas of support - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/advice-benefits-and-council-tax/help-with-the-rising-cost-of-living/>

4.5 **Community group support includes:**

HSG April to September	Approved	
Barnsley Carers Service (Making Spaces)	£8,250.00	Carers Support: Food, energy, and household support (a range of one-off payments) for carers and to low-income carer employees.
Crossroads (Barnsley) Limited	£7,200.00	
Community First Credit Union	£30,000.00	Interest free loans for Credit Union members resident in the Barnsley area. The loans will be for Food, energy costs or purchasing essential items.
The Uniform Fairy, Salvation Army	£2,000.00	To include items such as underwear, sanitary products and water bottles with pre-owned school uniforms that are recycled at a low cost.
Barnsley College	£860.00	Information on cooking on a low budget.
The Salvation Army	£13,450.00	Supporting residents with help towards food, fuel, clothing, white goods, household goods.
Good Food Barnsley	£77,000.00	To franchise Storehouse & Field with the aim of rolling it out into different locations across the borough.
Fuelbank	£49,250.00	The first of its kind in Barnsley. Referrals from across Barnsley will be triaged for energy efficiency, energy and utility grants, income maximisation, with some health and wellbeing support. People will benefit from crisis pre-payment meter top ups with advice and guidance to avoid dependency.
Astrea Academy	£7,000.00	Providing school uniforms and other essential items for pupils. Also purchase additional uniform creating a uniform stock for use throughout the school year.
Dearne Area Team	£1,530.00	Breakfast clubs
Barnsley Council Rose Vouchers	£30,000.00	Funding to continue to offer households vouchers for fruit and vegetables, administered by the family centres.
Barnsley College	£45,000.00	Food, energy and wider essentials.
Coolkidz	£1,793.00	Supplementary funding to Healthy Holiday Clubs to enable access to children who are not on free school meals.
Learning Hotspots	£4,680.00	
Childsplay	£7,407.50	
Momentous	£21,000.00	
Playworks Shafton	£1,344.00	
Barnsley Gymnastics	£2,404.80	
MMIYP	£7,830.70	
Total Committed Spend	£318,000.00	

4.6 The total number of households supported are shown below:

Single applicants	Couples without children	Couples with children	Working pensioners	Families on FSM	Those on Pension Credit	Other Households in need	Total Supported
515	764	1,111	313	89	438	5,327	8,557

5.0 Other Funding Support

Holiday Activity and Food Programme Fund

- 5.1 The Council received £1M Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) grant allocation to deliver the healthy holidays clubs during non-term time periods. The purpose of this grant is to support all children in receipt of Free School Meals with a free place in holiday activity clubs where a free nutritious meal is provided. The programme runs during Easter, Summer and the Christmas school holidays.
- 5.2 During the Easter programme, 59% of places available utilised, supporting 1,013 children, of which 853 were free school meals children.
- 5.3 The Summer programme is still running, to date 26% of spaces have been utilised, reaching 1,581 children, of which 778 are from vulnerable families entitled to free school meals.

Discretionary Council Tax Rebate

- 5.4 Aside from the national £150 council tax rebate scheme to support households in bands A to D with rising energy costs, the scheme also allowed for a £562K discretionary element, allowing local authorities to apply their own discretion when awarding funding.
- 5.5 The Council has implemented a discretionary scheme to extend the £150 rebate to support households in bands E to H in receipt of local council tax support (LCTS). In addition, a further £25 will be awarded to all households in bands A to H in receipt of LCTS, resulting in all LCTS claimants receiving in total £175 council tax rebate (23,175 households).

6.0 BMBC Local Support

- 6.1 The following outlines planned interventions that will be in place to support residents of the borough over the winter period, targeted at those in most need:
- 6.2 **More Money in Your Pocket (MMIYP):** The Council has developed a new dedicated webpage to sign post people to support available to help with the cost-of-living crisis / financial hardship. The website is being widely promoted, with, for example signage being placed on service vehicles, cards being distributed to all Berneslai Homes tenants and spreading the news via Council media channels. See webpage for more details: <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/advice-benefits-and-council-tax/help-with-the-rising-cost-of-living/>
- 6.3 **Food Support:** Through the Good Food Barnsley partnership there are two community shops with plans for a third in Hoyland and potentially a fourth in Kendray. The first community pantry, called Storehouse and Field, has been established and the Council will be looking to use the funding allocated from the HSG to roll this out across the borough. There are also other food support services such as the central foodbank and the Full Crumb kitchen.
- 6.4 **Local Welfare Assistance:** This provides support to homeless households with white goods and furniture. The funding is non-recurring with £101K remaining which is estimated to run out by December 2022.
- 6.5 **Welfare Advice:** Citizens Advice Barnsley (CAB) and DIAL provide a core service funded by the Council's Healthier Communities Service, with the Area Councils providing grants to pay for local services. The welfare advice services provide free, confidential, impartial, and independent legal advice to enable residents to deal with a whole range of issues such as debt and money advice, housing, relationship, employment, and consumer issues.
- 6.6 **Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs):** The Council receives funding from the Government Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support people who are either in receipt of housing benefit or getting housing costs within their universal credit with funding top ups to ensure they can continue to pay their rent or rent arrears. There is £389K funding available for 22/23, 79% of this year's budget has already been spent.

- 6.7 **Discretionary Council Tax Relief Fund:** The Council provides Council Tax discretionary relief to individuals who may be suffering hardship but are not entitled to any other benefit related support due to their individual circumstances.
- 6.8 **Winter Warmth:** The Warm Homes Service provides property related support to those in energy inefficient homes or fuel poverty. The Affordable Warmth Grant (AWG) currently provides first time and boiler replacements to private residents in fuel poverty. This funding is essential in assisting those with underlying health conditions or at risk of illness due to excess cold in their properties, a key cause of excess winter deaths. A sum of £500K is available for 2022/23.
- 6.9 **Berneslai Homes:** The Tenants First Tenancy Support Officers (TSO) at Berneslai Homes have the skills and knowledge to support customers with their finances, budgeting, and benefit maximisation. Berneslai Homes have implemented champion roles for all TSO officers, so they can keep abreast of all changes from legislation to charity grants around 6 key areas – cost of living, food, Discretionary Housing Payments, water, housing benefit and energy.

Berneslai Homes are also running various “drop-in sessions” in community centres across the borough where tenants can access face to face support. They are launching a pilot “hardship fund” for eligible tenants to help with financial hardship, such as difficulty in paying for everyday essentials, with no alternative means of support. A cost-of-living toolkit is used by all Berneslai Homes Officers, and they have updated their webpages and vans to include links to the More Money in Your Pocket website.

- 6.10 **Affordable Warmth Charter:** Alongside these measures aimed at assisting the local residents with the cost-of-living crisis, the Council is seeking approval to adopt and launch an Affordable Warmth Charter. The development of the Affordable Warmth Charter aims to bring together knowledge, expertise and resources focusing on preventing health inequalities arising from fuel inefficient properties. In addition, it will enable residents to seek help in relation to fuel poverty and energy efficiency.
- 6.11 **Area Council and Ward Alliances Response to the COLC:** The six Area Councils are continuing to fund their welfare advice services in each of their local areas. The services are provided by Citizens Advice Barnsley, Dial and Age UK. The ‘offer’ is different in each of the areas depending on the priorities and needs of that area.

They are promoting More Money in Your Pocket in local communities, along with all the other support which is on offer, through social media and at all their events; connecting local partners into the messages and sharing the information with them; and supporting people to access the support and advice on the MMIYP website.

The COLC is discussed at Area Council and Ward Alliance meetings to share innovative ideas to support local communities. Each area is pulling their local partners together to provide a unified and informed response. Some areas are providing Resident Support Fairs where there will be practical solutions to living on a budget, ‘cook and eat’ sessions, and access to different partners to understand what support is on offer. The six areas are sharing good practice and learning from each other.

They are encouraging and supporting applications to the Ward Alliances from community groups wanting to provide support in their local communities to this crisis. All of the Ward Alliances will be supporting their communities in some way to assist with what is most needed locally.

Partnership working is taking place with the voluntary and community sector to understand what their offer is in local communities and how they can be supported to deliver it. Discussions will take place at the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy Group to ensure all partners are aware of the support that is on offer and where this can be found.

‘Warm hubs’ will be promoted in local communities and this information will be shared with providers so they can also direct people to the right places for support. Area Councils will also be delivering winter warmer packs, and winter warmer events, with support from commissioned services. The

commissioned providers will be supporting this agenda through the services they offer through the Area Councils.

Area Councils will be the face of the Council in local communities and will support and direct people into the right support along with shaping and forming responses based on the changing needs of those communities.

7.0 Next Steps

7.1 In response to the COLC, the Barnsley 2030 Board held a workshop with all partners, on Monday 12th September, to coordinate and maximise the Council's impact to tackling the rising cost of living for everyone in the borough. At the meeting, there was a consensus that the more Money in Your Pocket Website will be the one-stop self-serve site for partners to promote advice and assistance and for residents to be signposted to, in the first instance, but also an appreciation that it would not be the solution for all. It was also agreed that the Council would establish a Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG) and develop a wider Cost-of Living Crisis Strategic Response and Action Plan. The first TCG meeting took place on 21st September 2022.

7.2 A Further grant allocation of £2.3M is due to be received to cover the period October 22 to March 23. The specific conditions of the grant have yet to be released by central government, however it is anticipated that they will be along similar lines to previous iterations with a focus on supporting those entitled to Housing Benefits who do not meet the criteria to be eligible for the £650 cost of living payment, with some discretion around supporting other local schemes. Details are expected to be released in the coming weeks. An imminent report is to be circulated to the Council's Cabinet which makes recommendations for how the HSG monies can best support local communities during October to March. These interventions could include:

- Food support: Through the Council's Good Food Barnsley partnership there are opportunities to support the roll out of additional Storehouse and Field facilities.
- The extension to Healthy Holidays Programmes.
- The roll-out of borough-wide uniform recycling programmes.
- Local Welfare Assistance: To maintain the current scheme assuming awards remain at current levels would require around £240K per year or £64K to the end of the current financial year.
- Welfare Advice: CAB and DIAL provide a core service funded by the Council's Healthier Communities service, with the Area Councils providing grants to pay for local services.
- Additional funding to support Discretionary Housing Payments and the Tax Relief Fund.
- Winter Warmth: Officers have developed a proposal to expand the AWG to cover both insulation and boiler installations (including the use of renewable heating technology, where appropriate) alongside debt advice and support, where it is needed. To date in 2022/23, 38 boilers have been installed at a cost of £125,000. Last year, the fund ran out in February. Subject to Cabinet approval, the Council intends to invest £3m to extend the programme over the next 3 years (2022-25).
- Options to create Warm Havens with Barnsley Libraries and our Cultural Spaces.

8.0 Invited Witnesses

8.1 The following witnesses have been invited to answer questions from the Committee:-

- Matt O'Neill, Executive Director Growth & Sustainability, BMBC
- Kathy McArdle, Service Director Regeneration & Culture, BMBC
- Sarah Cartwright, Head of Strategic Housing, Sustainability & Climate Change, BMBC
- Julia Burrows, Executive Director Public Health & Communities, BMBC

- Phil Hollingsworth, Service Director Stronger, Safer, Healthier Communities, BMBC
- Jayne Hellowell, Head of Commissioning, Healthier Communities, BMBC
- Councillor Robert Frost, Cabinet Spokesperson Growth & Sustainability, BMBC
- Councillor Caroline Makinson, Cabinet Spokesperson Public Health & Communities

9.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

9.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- What do you foresee being the biggest challenge of the cost of living crisis?
- What are the wider implications of not tackling the cost of living crisis at a local level and how will this impact upon residents and services? How are services preparing to respond to the potential impact?
- To what extent are services working together as 'One Council' to manage the challenges of the cost of living crisis? What could work better and where does responsibility lie for decision making?
- How is the organisation supporting employees who may be affected?
- What work is being done with partners, to maximise the support local organisations can provide to residents?
- What assessments have been done to target the right support to the right people?
- What evaluation has been done to determine the success of the Holiday Activity & Food Programme, what have you learned and why was take-up low?
- What evaluation has been done to ensure that government funding has been used so that it is most effective and provides value for money?
- Is work progressing at an appropriate pace to deliver support at the right time?
- What more can be done to support those affected? What are the barriers to providing this support?
- When do you expect the interventions, strategy and action plan to be fully embedded into service delivery?
- What feedback have you received regarding the 'More Money in Your Pocket Website'? Has there been an increase in uptake over the last month?
- Given the cohort you are working with, how is the information being communicated to those who are digitally excluded or may need help navigating the support available?
- What sources have you accessed in order to utilise best practice in relation to this work?
- How will the Council ensure an appropriate balance between supporting the needs of communities whilst addressing its own financial pressures as a result of rising costs?
- What are the long-term plans to support residents to move out of poverty and reduce the number of people affected in the future?
- What can Members do to support this work?

10.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

- BMBC More Money in Your Pocket Website:
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/advice-benefits-and-council-tax/help-with-the-rising-cost-of-living/>
- Rising cost of living in the UK, House of Commons Library:
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9428/>
- Cost of Living Hub, Local Government Association:
<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/safer-and-more-sustainable-communities/cost-living-hub>
- Overall Government Support for the Cost of Living - Factsheet:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-support-for-the-cost-of-living-factsheet/government-support-for-the-cost-of-living-factsheet>
- Barnsley 2030 Website:
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/barnsley-2030/>

11.0 Glossary

AWG	Affordable Warmth Grant
BMBC	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
CAB	Citizens Advice Barnsley
COLC	Cost of Living Crisis
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payment
FSM	Free School Meals
HAF	Holiday Activity and Food Programme Fund
HSG	Household Support Grant
LCTS	Local Council Tax Support
MMIYP	More Money in Your Pocket Website
OSC	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
TCG	Tactical Co-ordination Group
TSO	Tenancy Support Officers

12.0 Officer Contact

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03 October 2022