

Notice of Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order No8(1)(b)

Amended Motion to Council **29th September, 2022**

Proposer – Councillor Sir Steve Houghton CBE

Seconder – Councillor Higginbottom

Community Warm Spaces

This Council notes:-

- a. The ongoing cost of living crisis is dramatically impacting the people of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough, and is predicted to get worse
- b. The impact of fuel and heating prices, a major contributor to the cost of living crisis, has pushed residents into fuel poverty, and has resulted in some people stopping heating their homes – resulting in worsening physical and mental health, and reducing the productivity of workers and education outcomes of children
- c. Despite limited measures recently introduced by the government, the £2,500 cap for average use is still over double the amount many residents were paying last year
- d. Whilst local authorities cannot solve the cost of living crisis, Barnsley Council is committed to helping residents where it can despite facing its own major financial (£13m) pressures caused by that cost of living challenge

This Council congratulates the Labour administration for the work it has done in supporting people through the existing budget but further proposes the Council will utilise the £2.3m from our Household Support Grant to prioritise the most vulnerable in our society over the winter period. This will include:

- £150 energy rebates (bank transfer), to those households who were not entitled to the Government's £150 Council Tax energy rebate. (This scheme is designed to support those in Council Tax bands E and above not on LCTS, and those who became eligible for council tax on or after 2nd April 22. This would be delivered on an application basis.)
- £326 cost of living payment (bank transfer) to those in receipt of qualifying benefits who were not eligible for the first Government cost of living payment due to becoming eligible after the qualifying date. (This scheme would be delivered on an application basis, applicants would need to demonstrate they become eligible between 26th May and 31st August 22.)
- £150 cost of living payment (bank transfer) to those in receipt of a disability benefit that were not eligible for the Government scheme due to becoming eligible after the qualifying date. (This scheme would be delivered on an application basis, applicants would need to demonstrate they become eligible between 26th May and 31st August 22.)
- £650 cost of living payment (Post Office Vouchers) to those in receipt of Housing Benefit but did not qualify for the Government cost of living payment. (This payment would be made via automatic award and not application based. Proposed to make this payment in 2 instalments similar

to the Government scheme, with the first payment by 31st October 22 and the second 31st January 23.)

In addition, this Council will also utilise the funding to:

- offer £500k grant support to community groups working to protect the most vulnerable to provide practical things such as food, fuel, clothing, white goods, household goods.
- provide Christmas holiday club places through the Healthy Activities programme for non-free school meal children.
- extend the funding available through the Local Welfare Assistance scheme, to a total of £240k, providing crisis support with the cost of essential bills and white goods.
- provide a £15 food voucher to families during the October 22 and February 23 holidays which aren't covered by the government's Healthy Holiday government funded scheme.

Furthermore this Council will shortly bring forward a Cabinet report to introduce a £3m Affordable Warmer Homes scheme. This will provide residents with financial support to help with energy debts, and inefficient heating systems by providing sustainable solutions that help to reduce energy consumption therefore reducing energy bills, this would make an immediate and long-lasting sustainable impact to addressing fuel poverty.

This Council has already introduced the valuable resource which is the 'More Money In Your Pocket' website which provides an up to date account of all the support available in one place through easily navigated tabs. The promotion of this resource is currently being cascaded to front-line teams, partners, large employers and community groups with 32 briefing sessions currently arranged. In addition this support is being widely publicised including for example, livery on Berneslai Homes vehicles and a free bookmark in every loaned library book.

With regard to the proposal to introduce 'Community Warm Spaces'. This Council has already introduced Barnsley's Welcoming Spaces which promotes our existing public buildings as places that people can utilise, free of charge, for as long as they wish. This initiative helps in promoting our excellent existing offer and encouraging people to utilise their community assets.

Finally, the Council will continue to lobby Government both directly and through SIGOMA to secure a fair funding system for local government and a fair deal for Barnsley.