

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY

TITLE: AFFORDABLE WARMTH CHARTER

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	19 October 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Regeneration and Culture
Key Decision	Yes
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide details of the Affordable Warmth Charter which aims to help residents in Barnsley live in a warm, healthy, energy efficient home.
- Inform cabinet members of the terms of the Charter and endorse the promotion of the Charter to encourage partners to become members

Council Plan priority

Healthy, Growing, Learning, Sustainable and Enabling Barnsley

Recommendations

That Cabinet: -

1. Endorses the Affordable Warmth Charter as a measure of commitment for achieving affordable warmth across the borough.
2. Agree to the sign-up process for the Affordable Warmth Charter.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Affordable Warmth Charter has been developed with the aim of achieving the following vision:

'A Barnsley where everyone lives in a warm, healthy, energy efficient home.'

In 2019 approximately 18.6% of Barnsley households were classed as fuel

poor. The increase in fuel prices has seen this number dramatically increase to a predicted 37.1%. This is equivalent to 40,000 households in Barnsley. This figure is set to increase further in October with the next fuel price increase.

A recent study in the BMJ has highlighted:

'Evidence strongly suggests that growing up and living in cold homes and poor housing have a direct and detrimental effect on health. For older people, living in cold temperatures increases the risk of strokes and heart attacks. Respiratory diseases, including flu, are more common, as are falls, injuries, and hypothermia. Children growing up in cold, damp, and mouldy homes with inadequate ventilation have higher than average rates of respiratory infections and asthma, chronic ill health, and disability. They are also more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and slower physical growth'

In addition, many households face stark choices between energy and other household essentials such as food and falling into debt. This has significant impacts on residents physical and mental wellbeing.

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.

2. PROPOSAL

2.1 The Affordable Warmth Charter can be found in the Appendix.

The Charter brings together our partners across the borough to share knowledge, expertise and resources to collaborate on tackling the health inequalities caused by fuel poverty. The Charter requires partners to make a commitment/pledge using one or more of the five key priorities listed in the charter. These are:

Energy efficient homes - Partner organisations are committed to energy efficient homes. Residents on a low income, older people, those with health conditions and young families are most vulnerable to the effects of fuel poverty and cold homes. Households that cannot afford to spend money on fuel to keep their homes warm are more vulnerable to cold and damp related illnesses.

Affordable energy - Partner organisations are committed to schemes that ensure affordable energy for all households. Energy affordability is affected by household income, fuel prices and home energy efficiency. Low disposable income is a key cause of fuel poverty in Barnsley and many households are not accessing the benefits they are entitled to. These income related factors affect a household's ability to affordably heat and make their home warm and healthy to live in.

Employment, Education, and skills - Partner organisations are committed to promoting and delivering best practice education and workforce skills development. Straightforward advice and education are effective ways to help

households gain knowledge and skills to save and better manage their home energy. Raising awareness of the help available, particularly amongst vulnerable and marginalised groups can make a substantial difference to help access support for making homes warmer and healthier.

Partnership Working - Fuel poverty and cold homes can only effectively be tackled by a range of services and organisations working together; this helps to maximise and make best use of the resources available and reach those in the greatest need.

Low Carbon Commitments - Partner organisations are committed to schemes that contribute to affordable warmth, energy efficiency and low carbon targets and in the longer-term support low-income households in the transition to low-carbon heating, in line with Barnsley Zero 2045 targets. As part of the commitment, organisations support affordable warmth by reducing energy demand and ensuring homes are thermally comfortable and energy efficient.

Partners who make this commitment will be awarded the Affordable Warmth Charter Mark to display on websites and literature.

- 2.2 Key targets have been set to measure impact of the scheme, as outlined in Section 3.6

3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Risk

- 3.1.1 There are no financial implications beyond the budget allocated from Public Health to promote the Affordable Warmth Charter.

3.2 Legal

- 3.2.1 There are no legal considerations associated with the adoption of the Affordable Warmth Charter.

3.3 Equality

- 3.3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Pre-screening has been completed in consultation with Equality & Inclusion officer. This determined that a full EIA is not required due to the documentation being web-based and fully accessible.

3.4 Sustainability

- 3.4.1 A sustainability assessment has been undertaken using the sustainability wheel. The Affordable Warmth Charter will be the umbrella which pulls together knowledge, expertise, funding, and service provision to prevent health inequalities arising from fuel inefficient properties.



3.5 Employee

3.5.1 There are no direct implications for employees arising from the recommendations within this Report.

3.6 Communications

3.6.1 The Affordable Warmth Charter will be published as a web page, with a direct link to sign up to the Charter on the page. The decision was made to publish online to ensure equality and accessibility to the target audience. The Charter will initially be aimed at businesses within the borough. As a result, there does not need to be a direct marketing campaign to residents at the initial launch.

3.6.2 The promotion of the Charter will be conducted via existing partnership forums such as the Housing Developer Forum. By adopting this approach, costs are reduced, and we can target an actively engaged audience who have a keen interest in affordable warmth. There is a current plan to hold a larger event in Autumn 2022 to celebrate our members commitment to the Charter and encourage new sign ups. The following targets have been set:

- Achieve a sign-up rate of 15% of the attendees from the launch event
- Launch a fully inclusive sign-up procedure which takes no longer than 15 minutes to complete and can be completed on one side of A4.
- Achieve 25 sign ups before the end of the financial year
- 60% of all sign ups within the first year submit evidence to demonstrate actions taken towards the Charter and therefore achieve Charter status.

3.6.3 Enterprising Barnsley have also agreed to promote the Charter to their stakeholders using email leaflets and flyers. In the future, officers plan to use social media to raise awareness of the Charter Mark itself and what it stands for.

3.6.4 The Charter is also being reported into several partnership forums including the Collaborative Cold Weather group, Affordable Warmth Taskforce and Early Help Adults strategy group.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 The action plan has been developed following consultation with stakeholders across service areas with Growth and Sustainability, Public Health & Communities and Core services, along with external partners. The Affordable Warmth Taskforce has also endorsed this report.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 During initial consultation, officers discussed the options of creating either a Charter or a full strategy document. It was felt given the current climate, that a Charter would provide a proactive, practical tool for partners. We also consulted with neighbouring local councils to inform how we would develop our own scheme.

5.2 There were various options discussed about how best to launch the Charter. The initial concept was to launch at a large stakeholder event. However, given the current climate, it felt that a more appropriate approach would be to introduce the concept at a range of existing stakeholder forums to encourage sign up.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The report highlights the impact that energy price increases and the cost of living is having on our residents right now. An immediate response is required to ensure that we can achieve a Barnsley where everyone can live in a warm, healthy, energy efficient home. We need to empower our contractors and suppliers to achieve affordable warmth for the residents of Barnsley both in new builds and existing housing developments.

7. GLOSSARY

7.1 AW – Affordable Warmth

8. LIST OF APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 Affordable Warmth Charter

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Financial consultation & sign off	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date <i>Phil Danforth 27/09/2022</i>
Legal consultation & sign off	Legal Services officer consulted and date <i>Jason Field 18/08/22</i>

Report Author: Leyla Nayeri

Post: Senior Health Improvement Officer

Date: 28 September 2022