

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

North Area Council Meeting:
22nd May 2023

Agenda Item: 6

Report of North Area Council
Manager

Cost of Living Workshops Developing a North Area Response

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To apprise Members of the discussions that took place at a workshop held in May 2023. Material from earlier workshops is also included. Information may be used to help develop a time limited opportunity funded by the North Area Council.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. **Members note the summary information for workshops held during 2022**
- 2.2. **Member note the more recent update from the workshop held in May 2023.**
- 2.3. **Members agree that the Priority Working Group will develop the North Area project outline to support the cost of living crisis, enabling the Area Manager to make progress.**

3. Background

- 3.1. At the Area Council Meeting on the 10th March Area Council representative received a presentation from Business Intelligence's Jill Bills regarding demography, deprivation, life expectancy and excess winter deaths.
- 3.2. In addition, Members voiced the challenges that they are experiencing in local communities and identified the following:
- Support for fuel, food and the cost-of-living crisis
 - Anti-Social behaviour and the increase in nuisance caused
 - Parking enforcement
 - Careers advice / raising aspirations of 14- and 16-year-olds including information on a variety of jobs and opportunities that would not come out of regular careers advice in school
- 3.3. At the Area Council Meeting on the 14th March it was agreed that any further development work regarding the current priorities and remaining commissioning budget would be delayed until the outcome of the Welfare Review was available.

3.4. At the Area Council meeting on the 16th May 2022 it was agreed that a further workshop would be held to discuss priorities for the North Area. The Area Council Manager was requested to focus the workshop on the Cost of Living.

4. Workshop – 6th July 2022

4.1. On the 6th July 2022, a workshop took place led by Emma Robinson from Business Intelligence. Supported Leyla Nayeri, Senior Health Improvement Officer and the Area Manager.

4.2. The workshop was attended by anti-poverty working group members: Cllr Leech, Cllr T Cave, Cllr Hunt and additionally by Cllr Platts.

4.3. The information session included three main sections:

- Labour Market Profile
- Cost of Living – The ‘squeezed middle’ and poverty
- Impacts on wider determinants of health
- Existing Support

4.4. Labour Market Profile

4,111 people of working age in the North Area are claiming Universal Credit. 14.9% of working age population. (Not all of which will be unemployed)
The North Area overall is under the Barnsley average of 17.7%. However, St Helen's is 24%.

26.8% of Barnsley's working age people are economically inactive. The numbers have increased since the outset of the pandemic. However, the vast majority have expressed a desire to work.

The most prevalent reason for people who are economically inactive is poor mental health, followed by musculoskeletal complaints.

During the pandemic many people have re-evaluated their household budgets and some people have chosen to step back from work before retirement age, many in their 50s.

31.1% of working age adults have a Level 4 qualification or better. (Barnsley)
18.9% of people are earning below the Living Wage. (Barnsley)

4.5. Cost of Living – The ‘squeezed middle’ and poverty

Low Income

Children in low-income families in Barnsley is 24.5%.
However, in St Helen's Ward this is currently 32%.

Fuel Poverty

Low Income and Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) defines a household as fuel poor if:

"The household has a residual income below the poverty line (after accounting for required fuel cost)". AND

"Lives in a home that has an efficiency rating below BAND C".
Barnsley is higher than the national average at 19.2%.
24% of St Helen's Ward households are considered to be fuel poor.

End Fuel Poverty Coalition - April 2022 figures projected that number of Barnsley households in fuel poverty could increase to 37.1%. Equating to 41,000 of households in Barnsley, 7,650 of which would be in the North Area
For single adult households on low incomes - percentage is even higher at 54%

The 'squeezed middle'

Families with a middle-income standard of living are also struggling to manage the surging cost of living. These are typically households with high cost associated with mortgages, childcare and energy and are being forced to make large spending adjustments to cope.

YouGov Poll (2,001 people) of which 55% participants said that their health had worsened owing to issues such as higher heating and food costs.

It is predicted that over-indebtedness will rise during 2022.

The proportion of people experiencing their debt as a heavy burden has increased by almost 5% for those receiving Universal Credit and Tax Credits compared to 3% for those who are not.

There is a two-way relationship between debt and health. Indebtedness can have a significant impact on mental wellbeing.

4.6. **Impacts on wider determinants of health**

Life expectancy at birth in Barnsley:

81.8 for women and 77.9 for men.

However, **healthy life expectancy** is much less.

60.1 years for women and 55.9 years for men. For men, this is 6.9years lower than national average and the lowest in Yorkshire and Humber.

St Helen's Ward has the lowest life expectancy at birth within the North Area. 79.8 years for women and 75.6 years for men.

Debt

It is predicted that over-indebtedness will rise during 2022.

The proportion of people experiencing their own debt as a heavy burden has increased by almost 5% for those receiving Universal Credit and Tax Credits compared to 3% for those who are not.

There is a **two-way relationship between debt and health**. Indebtedness can have a significant impact on mental wellbeing.

Excess Winter Deaths

Further work is underway with public health colleagues to understand why the rates of excess winter deaths for Darton East ward are so high. The Senior Health Improvement Officer advised that work is underway with Healthwatch. A link with industry-related disease is being explored and data has been requested from Integrated Care partners

4.7. The working group had an opportunity to discuss the information that they had received.

5. What were the main priorities identified?

- 5.1. High numbers of low-income families in St Helen's.
- 5.2. St Helen's Ward has the lowest life expectancy at birth within the North Area. 79.8 years for women and 75.6 years for men.
- 5.3. 24% of St Helen's Ward households are considered to be fuel poor.
- 5.4. Concern that if predictions are correct by the end of 2022, 7,650 household in the North Area could be experiencing fuel poverty. (For single adult households on low incomes - percentage is even higher at 54%).
- 5.5. Concern for the 'squeezed middle' group of households who are struggling to cope with inflation.
- 5.6. Increase in indebtedness.
- 5.7. The impact on mental health cause by mounting financial pressures and indebtedness.
- 5.8. The presentation delivered at the May 2022 Area Council meeting by YMCA and Ad Astra was touched upon mentioned. Members were keen to do more to support young people's mental wellbeing as they recover from the wider impacts of covid.

6. What support is already available?

6.1. Household Support Grant (2023/24 Update)

Barnsley MBC has been allocated a total of 4.7 million from the Household Support Grant (HSG) 4th round which is from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). From that a sum of £800,000 will be used to fund community-based services who can support people through the continued cost of living crisis.

6.2. More Money in your Pocket (MMIYP)

Offering advice and signposting for residents.

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/advice-benefits-and-council-tax/help-with-the-rising-cost-of-living/>

Information includes:

- Housing Support
- Support with utility bills
- Food Support inc. Free school meals
- Budgeting Support to help manage money.

6.3. Warm Homes Charter is in draft.

There is a vision which aims to ensure that everyone lives in a warm, healthy and energy efficient home. More information will be available when the charter has been through BMBC's decision making processes.

6.4. Warm Homes Team

Promote, manage and administer grant-funded, fuel poverty energy efficiency schemes (private sector).

Currently recruiting additional Warm homes Officers to work with the most vulnerable residents and engage the community.

6.5. Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Schemes

Funding available for private sector properties for:

- boiler replacements
- 1st time gas central heating
- wall, loft and underfloor insulation
- windows and doors (to replace single glazing only)

Eligibility – Income <£30K, EPC Bands E/F/G (D with health condition)

6.6. More and Better Jobs

An employment and skills strategy for Barnsley aiming to ensure that unemployment in Barnsley is below the national average and there is an increase in apprenticeships, amongst other aims.

6.7. DIAL – Warm Connections

DIAL were able to roll out the Warm Connections project, piloted in North Area, following a successful Energy Redress Grant fund application. DIAL have the ability to support customers with energy switching.

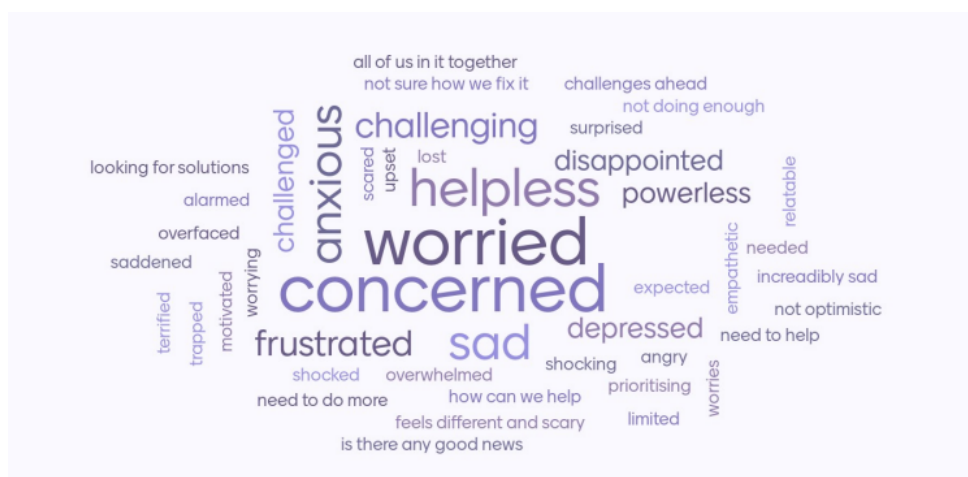
7. Stakeholder Workshops

7.1. Two cost of living stakeholder workshops were held in October 2022. These were aimed at identifying gaps in provision and opportunities for Area Council investment. The theme for both events was learning and sharing; aiming to empower and enable participants.

7.2. Thursday 6th October – Celebrating our assets and identifying gaps in provision

7.3. Attended by Councillors Leech, T Cave, Tattersall, Hunt and Lofts.

7.4. Participants were asked how the current cost of living challenges are making them feel as professionals:



7.5. Celebrating Assets – themes:

- Over Arching – Partnership Working and support for colleagues
- Social Welfare Advice – CAB, DIAL, Romero,
- Assets – Ad Astra, Community Shop, Romero, Community Fridge
- Resources – food banks, food distribution

- v. Activities – Healthy holidays, Health and Wellbeing project work
- vi. Current NAC commissioned services – Housing Cohesion regarded highly
- vii. Energy efficiency providers – Warm Homes, DIAL

7.6. What are the current gaps in provision?

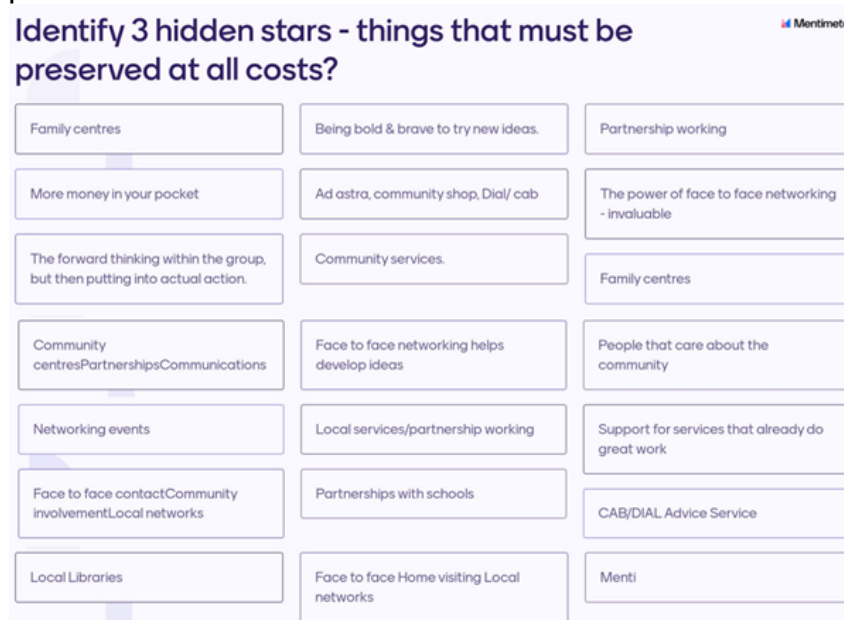
- i. Community Buildings – running costs limit the availability of support for wider community
- ii. Lack of funding to co-ordinate partnership working
- iii. Opening hours of community venues (eg Community Shop)
- iv. Transport – affordability and routes – impacting people ability to connect with services
- v. People being under threshold for support / not meeting criteria for support / falling through the gaps
- vi. Financial support for people in low paid work who can't access welfare provision
- vii. Social Isolation leading to deterioration in personal wellbeing (elderly, men, long term disabilities). Connecting people in the winter months.
- viii. Complex referral process and restricted ability to share information between services
- ix. Digital Inclusion – Access to equipment and broadband and knowledge of how to self-serve online (Internet access identified as a barrier to students completing homework)
- x. Stigma & Pride impacting on people willingness to seek support
- xi. Childcare – no support for people who want to upskill and attending training or improve their own health and wellbeing
- xii. Healthy Activities and Food Programme is not accessible in every ward. Children/ Families are falling through the gaps. Participants interested in more funding for smaller groups to deliver school holiday activities.
- xiii. Hygiene Poverty was identified as a gap

7.7. Addressing the Gaps – Themes

- i. Co-location of provision (resources) multi-disciplined hubs where resources and different services are co-located, improving information flow and access to support [one-stop shops] (mentioned in 3 different round table discussions). [Communities Directorate are currently exploring 'Team Around the Community'].
 - People having issues dealt with within one place
 - Housing/ Health Visitors/ ASB Team / South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue
 - CVS organisations for professionals to spend time in the same place
- ii. More partnership networking and information sharing opportunities within localities
- iii. Early Intervention – Offering support before crisis i.e. psychological wellbeing. Helping to identify people early before deterioration occurs. Participants asked if additional mental health provision could be commissioned?
- iv. Raising awareness of funded provision for Social Isolation & asking residents if we have the right support in place.

- v. Data Sharing – register of vulnerable people (GDPR and data sharing mentioned as a barrier on ½ the tables)
- vi. Out of hours provision for working people
- vii. More support for people who are in low paid work but are struggling financially to survive and manage household budgets
- viii. Fund longer opening hours for community spaces – Welcoming Spaces
- ix. *Helping hands – volunteers to support people with hoarding (clearing out spaces)*
- x. Community Connector model –exciting provider-led- peer support model – employing people to work within their own communities – empower people to pass on information
- xi. Game changer – employing people – linked to 5 ways to wellbeing

7.8. At the end of the session participants were asked that services/ways or working must be preserved



7.9. Thursday 13th October – Identifying opportunities for investment

7.10. Attended by Councillors Leech, T Cave, Tattersall, Newing, Denton, Hunt and Lofts.

7.11. Participants shared money saving hacks in round table discussions. This was intended to get people into a positive frame of mind where they were more likely to be solution focussed.

7.12. Adding Value – Participants were asked: What type of local community provision would help to address the gaps identified and add value to the services that you deliver?

7.13. Consultation

- i. Ask residents what is needed in terms of services / provision

- ii. Are we on the right track?
- 7.14. Partnership Working – Maximise North based resources
(Accessibility of provision)
- i. Connect partners, buildings (multi-service hubs & co-location)
 - ii. One Stop Shops
 - iii. Coordinate activities
 - iv. Rolling programme of service delivery for each building
 - v. Funding to coordinate more partnership working
 - vi. Increase knowledge and understanding of all roles within the North Area.
 - vii. Spread the word about the More Money in Your Pocket provision
 - viii. General Enquiry – Drop In Sessions at community hubs
 - ix. ‘Resident First’ - staff available 7 days both early and late
- 7.15. Community Champions
- i. Community Connectors (Volunteers or paid staff?) – Provider led, peer support model embedded into communities to sign-post, guide and mentor individuals. A successful early intervention model.
A paid model would be similar to the HomeStart offer
 - ii. Mental Health Champions
 - iii. Empowerment provision – How can we help people to help themselves?
 - iv. Training free access, mental health champions, community champions – use existing champions to help deliver training – signpost were to do it
 - v. Travel Buddies to support others on public transport
- 7.16. Cost of Living - Food and Fuel
- i. Coordination of Food Parcels
 - ii. Food Vouchers - Aldi Vouchers (Gift Card 1 can't be used to purchase alcohol) & Rose Vouchers or local scheme similar to Fresh Street Vouchers.
 - iii. Cost of Living Advice Sessions (MMIYP) – Fun, Creative and Empowering
 - iv. Cook and Eat Programme with Slow Cookers (Advise on meal planning, shopping, healthy bulking of meals, store cupboard essentials)
 - v. Grow Your Own
 - vi. Sewing workshops
 - vii. Thrifty Tips – linked to recycling and reuse
 - viii. Household Financial Management Sessions
 - ix. Household Energy Assessments and Advice to householder
- 7.17. Young People
- i. Hygiene Poverty project with schools
 - ii. Inclusive Healthy Holiday programme with more flexible funding solutions.
Prioritise places for parents who work
 - iii. Fund Breakfast Clubs for School Children
 - iv. Free School Meals for all children whose parents are in receipt of Universal Credit
 - v. School Uniform swap shop
- 7.18. Low / Medium Cost
- i. Community Hubs with warm spaces: providing hot drinks/snacks and empowering activities
 - ii. Book Clubs – linked to library provision
 - iii. Free Child Care enabling parents to upskill or attend wellbeing sessions

7.19. High Ticket Items

- i. Re-instate MiCard
- ii. Additional Mental Health provision
- iii. Community Bus (Gap evidenced by ASDA / Yorkshire Rose Bus collaboration)
- iv. 'Resident First' - Service systematically approaching vulnerable households to proactively ask if they are getting the support they need?

7.20. Participants were asked to summarise their workshop experience in 3 words:



7.21. Participants have actively approached the Area Manager and requested more face-to-face workshop-based opportunities to help them be more effective in their roles.

7.22. The Area Manager expresses thanks to the North Area Team, Area Council Managers and all Members who attended the workshops for their support in the facilitation of the events.

8. Practical Support

8.1. At the March Area Council Meeting it was proposed that an underspend from the Housing and Cohesion Officer vacancy would be used to devolve £2,500 to each of the Ward Alliances for a Cost of Living focused project. This is not agreed. A request was made to utilise funding on summer holiday provision. A workshop was requested to explore opportunity more fully.

8.2. 10th May 2023

A workshop was held at the Roundhouse Library. Attended by Councillors: Leech, Denton, T.Cave, Lofts and Newing.

Supported by BMBC officers:

Chris Crookes – Project Officer – Wellbeing (HSG)

Rachel Lancaster – Healthy Food Programme Coordinator (HAF)

Stuart Rogers – Sport and Recreation

Tom Smith – Senior Link Officer to Area Council

North Area Team

8.3. Household Support Grant (2023/24 Update)

Members were made aware of Household Support Grant and how it is designed to support residents. Barnsley MBC has been allocated a total of 4.7 million from the Household Support Grant (HSG) 4th round which is from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the period April 2023 – March 2024 (applications close on the 19th May 2023).

From that a sum of £800,000 will be used to fund community-based services who can support people through the continued cost of living crisis.

Aiming to provide support with the following:

- Food.
- Energy and water costs,
- Wider essentials, these may include but are not limited to
 - Period and hygiene products such as personal hygiene products or household cleaning items
 - Support with other bills such as broadband or phone bills
 - Clothing such as school uniforms, clothing for an interview or children's clothing
 - Essential transport related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle or paying for fuel

Practical projects that encourage sustainability are being encouraged.

Further information is available from: ChristopherCrookes@barnsley.gov.uk

8.4. Food Access

Rachel described the different levels of Food Access and the need to encourage more sustainable access across the borough. She explained that Foodbanks and Food Parcels provided no choice to the recipient and that there was often more benefits to the low cost / high value of the Community Pantry Model. Examples include Store House and Field at Shafton where there are over 70 members paying a small subscription every week and receiving a

higher value of consumables. Worsborough Community Pantry works in a similar way and members must live in Worsborough.

8.5. Healthy Activities and Food

This Department for Education programme is funded by the Department for Education. The opportunities are specifically for children who are eligible for free school meals and are delivered over Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays. In the North Area the current provision is show below. It was identified that there isn't currently any provision in Darton East.

Ward	Provider	Location	Age Range	Number of places
Darton West	Wellspring Academy	The Maker, Barugh Green Road, Higham, S75 1JT	11 to 16	60 (15 per session)
Old Town	Totally Runable	Honeywell Sports Village	7 to 11 Girls	160 (20 per session)
	Mid Yorkshire Community Foundation	Emmanuel Church, Huddersfield Road, S75 1DT	5 to 12	160 (20 per session)
St Helens	Barnsley Gymnastics	Units 7 & 8 424 Carlton Road, S71 3HX	4 to 16	240 (40 per session)
	Grassroots Sports Academy	Holy Trinity School	8 to 14	320 (40 per session)
	Momentous Football Academy	Athersley Rec Football Club	5 to 14	400 (50 per session)
Total				1340

Contact Rachel for further information: rachellancaster@barnsley.gov.uk

8.6. Sport and Recreation

Members were updated on the What's Your Move programme. Over the coming months this includes:

- Ramp Up (Bike confidence, skills and maintenance)
- Walking Festival (May)
- Move More Month (June)
- Summer Cycling and Sports Van Opportunity (July)

Members were keen to ensure that there was adequate provision for children in the summer, specifically the children from the families who are just about managing (JAM).

Members were in agreement to fund the sports van for summer 2023 and very keen that the Ramp Up sessions should be maximised in the North Area. It is recommended that the Area Team and Ward Alliances support the Sports Van and Ramp Up sessions.

Contact Stu for further information: stuartrogers@barnsley.gov.uk

8.7. **Outcomes**

Following the workshop Members wished to explore opportunities further, considering the following points:

- Members were in agreement that funding should be utilised at Area Level not Ward Level in this instance
- Members were interested in assisting people with practical solutions
- Members wanted to ensure that the community were accessing community buildings for support with cost of living
- Members would consider a small grant opportunity for projects that would help address cost of living (food access, and hygiene including personal, home and sanitary) and encourage sustainability, welcoming projects that brought people together with food and warmth.

9. **Risks**

- 9.1. Acknowledge that there are some points raised that cannot be solved in isolation e.g. GDPR and data sharing and core transport offer.

10. **Further development by the Priority Working Group, who will:**

- 10.1. Consider the information collated in the workshops.
- 10.2. How the Area Council's underspend can be used to produce maximum, sustained impact for the community?
- 10.3. Agree which elements the Area Council wish to focus on.
- 10.4. Identify potential project outcomes and existing resources that could be used to support this work.
- 10.5. Define a project for the North Area.

11. **Next Steps**

- 11.1. At the Area Chair's request, the Area Manager will arrange for the Priority Working Group to work together on a project outline that will complement the projects already funded by the Household Support Grant and Healthy Activities and Food programme.

Officer Contact:
RosemarieAdams@barnsley.gov.uk

Date:
12th May 2023