

BARNSELEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Central Area Council Meeting:
17 July 2024

Report of Central Area Council Manager:
Sarah Blunkett

Central Area Council Priority Setting Update 2025-2028

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides Members with the outcomes from a series of Members workshops. These workshops were arranged to review the priorities for the Central Area Council.
- 1.2 This report asks for Members to approve the CAC priorities for 2025-2028.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members note the outcomes of the CAC review of their priorities.
- 2.2 Members agree the priorities for CAC for 2025-2028 inclusive.

Overarching priority **"Healthy and Vibrant Communities."**

Our goal is to foster thriving, supportive communities across all of the priorities.

Priority 1- **Healthy Communities**

We will support and commission services which support people who are social isolated and vulnerable. This will include welfare advice.

Priority 2- **Learning Communities**

We will support and commission services which support young people and families. This will include detached youth work and support young people in transition from primary to secondary school.

We will support people to get make positive steps into learning, volunteering or employment.

Priority 3- **Safe and Enjoyable Communities.**

We will commission support for CAC's most vulnerable people to live in safe and enjoyable homes and communities. This will be through the employment of two Officers. We will also support these Officers with a fund to provide help when needed at first point of contact.

We will commission a clean and green contract which works with volunteers but to include heritage and building attractive and enjoyable communities.

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3. Background

The Area Councils have been in operation for 11 years. During that time there have been regular reviews of each of the priorities.

The Central Area Council agreed to ensure that all current contracts and grants expire at the end of March 2025. This was to enable the Central Area Council to have an opportunity to review all current strategic priorities. This is the first time the Area Council have been in a position to review all the priorities at one time.

4. CAC Priority Review

Workshop 1 – Review of current provision, demand and links wider Council objectives

Members went through a report and had a presentation by the Area Council Managers. They discussed how Area Council commissions should align with the councils Enabling Barnsley's 'Golden thread' and contribute to the 2030 vision for Barnsley – which is Barnsley, the place of possibilities.

This includes the Barnsley 2030 ambitions

- Healthy Barnsley
- Learning Barnsley
- Growing Barnsley
- Sustainable Barnsley

They also discussed how Priorities and commissions should also align with the Communities Business Unit purpose – To enable Barnsley residents to be healthy, safe and socially active and live within thriving, vibrant and diverse communities.

And the principles of Stronger Communities:

1. Work together as partners within communities to share leadership for building stronger, more skilled and more resilient communities
2. Work together, alongside residents and communities, recognising and building on their strengths and contributions to design deliver and review our services.
3. Actively seek out and develop new and local relationships and networks, working together to strengthen and develop the voluntary and community sector.

And the Stronger Community priorities

- To address inequalities within communities and utilise local intelligence and robust data to make decisions based on need through the Area Councils and Ward Alliances.
- To micro-commission early intervention and prevention services in communities based on evidence of need.
- To empower our communities to come together to provide solutions to local issues and support the delivery of services in local communities.
- To support and encourage volunteering across the borough and support the development of those volunteers.
- To support funding opportunities for the voluntary and community sector in Barnsley and work with the sector to develop.
- To make sure we promote all our opportunities in a timely way through our existing mechanisms (social media, notice boards etc.).
- To continue to develop our communities through capacity building and providing training opportunities at all levels.
- To support the development of diverse communities in Barnsley and bring partners together to support this agenda through the Cohesive and Resilient Communities group.

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Members acknowledge that finance currently allocated is £500,000 per year, which could be subject to change.

Members discussed the current contracts and grants and acknowledge their successes and positive outcomes. **Many of these successes Members would like to see to support their continuation.**

Members discussed:

What is working well

- Effective services that are tailored to the needs of local residents
- Service users making connections and relationships that extend beyond projects
- Well-attended services delivered in local communities
- Services surpassing their targets and making significant contributions to Central Area KPIs

Challenges faced by providers

- Recruitment of volunteers
- Financial and transport constraints impacting attendance
- Increased demand for services
- Service users experiencing more complex needs
- Accommodating all prospective service users i.e. accessible times for all
- Increased demand and complexity of need requires longer, more intensive support

Challenges faced by service users

- Mental and emotional health needs including anxiety, loneliness, social isolation.
- Provision and opportunities for children and young people.
- Ongoing impact of cost of living including food and fuel poverty.
- Support with accessing services including claiming benefits.
- Challenges around accessing specialist services such as mental health

Members are keen to ensure all commissions, where possible, work to positively contribute to issues such as the cost of living, mental health, social cohesion, and addressing social isolation. Members discussed that they would like where possible to keep the wording we use as positive as possible.

Members reached a consensus on the overarching priority: **"Healthy and Vibrant Communities."** This positive and inclusive focus will encompass key issues such as the cost of living, mental health, social cohesion, and addressing social isolation. Our goal is to foster thriving, supportive communities across all of the priorities.

Workshop 2 - Healthy Communities

Members received presentations from Public Health and a data report.

Consensus was that more needs to be done to address health inequalities and poverty

Members felt that as part of procurement processes for all contracts/ grants we must ask how providers will engage with local communities and overcome barriers to participation to ensure that we support those most in need.

Members were of the opinion that they would like to commission projects to support those who have or are likely to have health vulnerabilities – physical and mental. They would like to see projects which support those who are socially isolated or vulnerable as well as young people and families. They would like to continue to support welfare advice as part of this priority.

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Workshop 3 – Learning Communities

Members received a data report and a series of presentations from colleagues in adult education, raising participation and early intervention and prevention.

Members appreciated the increase in complex needs and the demand for longer term interventions to support young people and adults. They discussed that there is not one main barrier to learning participation, but health, finance and family are increasing as a barrier to participation.

Issues include:

- Mental Health – waiting lists are long
- Home educated individuals (in some cases) and social isolation
- Social media and bullying
- Support in primary to secondary school transition
- Vaping and energy drinks – support and advice to adults and their parents.
- Support and education on parenting – early intervention
- Supporting adults to undertake steps to commence learning/volunteering/employment.

Members suggested that supporting young people and families should be priority – focusing on prevention strategies as well as those most vulnerable. Members were of the opinion that they would like to continue to commission detached youth work and support for transition from primary to secondary. This should include addressing the above issues for the key target age group and key target locations. Home educated young people could look to be included.

Workshop 4 - Safe and Enjoyable Communities.

Members received presentations and data regarding environmental and demand data.

Members felt that this priority should include clean and green agendas, sustainability, safe and warm homes, heritage and a sense of belonging as CAC priorities.

Members suggested that it is important to keep the Housing and Cohesion Officer role. An option would be to also 'skill up' the flytipping officer to be able to support this role. They thought that it would be useful for them to have some funds to support the most vulnerable at first point of contact. This could include urgent need for food or kettle, warm blankets etc.... as well as domestic bins.

Members would like to continue with a clean and green contract which works with volunteers but to include heritage and building attractive and enjoyable communities.

Workshop 5 – Learning and Healthy Communities

Members received a presentation and had the opportunity to ask questions focusing on issues regarding young people. Members suggested that specifications for young people and family related projects would take into account Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Youth Sufficiency Assessment.

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Workshop 6 – Healthy and vibrant Communities

Members received a report which pulled together the outcomes from the previous workshops. They also received a presentation from public health and sustainability to introduce the Impact Assessment Tool.

This tool can be used to assess projects that have a positive impact across health, social, economic, and environmental factors aligned with Barnsley 2030 goals to achieve our overarching priority of : **"Healthy and Vibrant Communities."** The proposal is for the tool to be completed by providers and used by managers and officers to assess the impacts of various aspects of their projects on residents and ensure every project contributes to Healthy and Vibrant Communities.

Recommendations

The outcomes from the Members workshops have led us to the following priorities for the CAC area:

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