

## BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

North Area Council Meeting:  
24<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Agenda Item: 5

Report of North Area Council  
Manager

### **Workshop Feedback Preventing Excess Winter Deaths and Reducing Loneliness and Isolation**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The North Area Councils Health and Wellbeing Priority Working Group met on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April to reflect on the existing Social Isolation and Cold Homes project.
- 1.2 The workshop considered if this was still a relevant priority area for the North Area's commissioning focus.
- 1.3 This report is intended to update North Area Council Members aware of the current position of the review and make them aware of the current direction of travel for commissioning in the North Area.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. **Members to note that procurement progress to date.**
- 2.2. **Members are required to decide if they wish the project / service funded for this priority take the form of a contracted service or a grant fund.**

#### **3. Background**

- 3.0 In 2017 representatives from BMBC Housing and Energy Team provided a briefing on the planned Energy Efficiency Works and other affordable warmth initiatives. The team also provided an update on recent excess winter death and fuel poverty statistics.
- 3.1 It became clear that the Darton East Ward has a higher than average excess winter death index for the borough. The North Area Council had already expressed an interest in funding a health and wellbeing project. Subsequently, a project was developed to address both Cold Homes and Social Isolation which have been evidenced to be strongly linked.
- 3.2 DIAL won the contract and delivered the Warm Connections project from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018, with a maximum contract length of 3 years. Hence the review process.
- 3.3 The North Area Council's Commitment to this project enabled BMBC Housing and Energy Team to bid to the Warm Homes Fund. They were successful and the core Warm Homes and Hospital Discharge Team were funded for two years from November 2019. This funding exceeded £250,000. This was a huge success for BMBC but it did lead to a degree of duplication between the two services.

3.4 DIAL's Warm Connections project has produced some pleasing results and still has 6months of reporting to submit to cover the April to August 2021 period.

	2018/19 (Q3 &Q4)	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Savings derived as a result of energy switching (in £)	£2,360	£21,868	£6,373	<b>£30,601</b>
Number of home energy assessments completed	23	85	128	<b>236</b>
Number of volunteers trained to deliver home energy advice and energy switching sessions	10	1	1	<b>12</b>
Individual needs assessments completed	15	78	58	<b>151</b>
Reduction in feelings of loneliness and isolation within the client group	1	42	106	<b>149</b>
Improvement in Mental Wellbeing of residents	1	84	135	<b>220</b>
Number of new social networking groups	0	5	1	<b>6</b>

3.5 At the present it has not been possible to assess if the Warm Connections project has had an impact on the number of excess winter deaths in the North Area. More current data is anticipated in the coming weeks.

3.6 Covid-19 has had a significant impact on both BMBC's Warm Homes Team and the Warm Connections Team. BMBC's Warm Homes Team were re-deployed and supported the Emergency Contract. DIAL flexed their contract to support people who were isolated, running online social groups, delivering care packages and completing home energy assessments over the phone.

#### **4. Current Position & Associated risk**

4.1. DIAL Barnsley's Warm Connections Service is funded until August 2021.

4.2. BMBC's Warm Homes Team is funded until November 2021. It is not known if this funding will be extended.

4.3. DIAL Barnsley have secured Energy Redress Funding to deliver a new bespoke advice service for residents across Barnsley with a disability or long-term health condition, to help them tackle fuel poverty, cold homes and improve their health and wellbeing. Through the provision of a free and impartial energy advice services, the project will improve cold homes through energy efficiency improvements and behaviour change, whilst addressing fuel poverty through income maximisation and fuel debt advice. As a result Barnsley Residents will benefit from an additional £265,441.45 of service provision.

## **5. Added Value**

- 5.1. DIAL Barnsley delivered the Warm Connections Service from September 2018. Part of the contract included the delivery of Home Energy Assessments, an energy switching service and advice regarding the modification of behaviours in relation to efficient use of household resources. This provided the organisation with valuable experience and evidence to help secure the Energy Redress funding.

## **6. Developing a service for North Area**

- 6.1. On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 representatives of the North Area Council met for a workshop to receive information from service specialists from Business Intelligence, Housing and Energy and Public Health. Councillors in attendance included: Cllrs Leech (Area Chair); Hunt, Lofts, Newing and Platts. Supporting Officers included: Jen McPhail, Donna West, Emma Robinson, Lucy Butcher, Katy Ashworth and James Farrimond.
- 6.2. Information received included demographics, health and causes of mortality, deprivation, fuel poverty and excess winter deaths. The group also considered the factors contributing to fuel poverty, cold homes and the groups most at risk of fuel poverty, excess winter deaths and social isolation.
- 6.3. The group also considered the provision that already exists to help address the issues listed above and officers talked through examples of best practise.
- 6.4. Councillors consider the examples of case work they are currently undertaking and reflected on the impact of Covid-19 over the past 12 months and how the community have been affected. It was felt that now there is a Roadmap to Recovery and the vaccination programme is well underway that the Area Council could have a greater impact on social isolation than it could on fuel poverty and Excess Winter Deaths at this time.
- 6.5. During the workshop there was an emphasis on physical and emotional wellbeing and a need to help people re-establish their own personal sense of purpose within communities.
- 6.6. As the discussions concluded the group agreed on the following points in section 7 that would help to define the specification.

## **7. Workshop (23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021) Outcomes:**

### Beneficiaries

The councillors in attendance wanted funding to support demographic groups that had been disproportionately adversely affected by Covid-19. Based on their work in the community, the attendees identified three groups that they thought would benefit most from the funds available:

- Men struggling with low mood (suicide prevention)
- Younger people who have been furloughed
- Older people who have been isolating

### Aims and Objectives

- Reduce loneliness and isolation
- Increase the confidence of individuals
- Improve the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals
- Re-connect communities

### Suggested Outcomes

- Reduction in feelings of loneliness and isolation within the community
- Support individuals to take pride in the skills that they possess and actively participate in new learning opportunities
- Increased confidence, sense of purpose and pride of individuals
- Enable individuals to feel more connected with their communities
- Highlight the health and wellbeing of individuals as a 'whole community issue'.
- Enable socially isolated and vulnerable people to have greater involvement in designing services and actively participating in improving their lives and the wider Barnsley community
- Inclusion and support of Volunteers in the service / project delivery, providing opportunities to use their skills, knowledge and expertise to help others to live their best life
- Individuals are supported to improve their health and wellbeing
- Community capacity building is imbedded in the project

### Project Outputs (not exhaustive)

- No. Individual Needs Assessments
- No. of isolated people supported to access local amenities and community provision
- No. of isolated people learning new skills
- No. of new community groups established
- No. Volunteers Recruited
- No. of volunteers trained in a community capacity building role
- Number of people supported to make healthy lifestyle choices
- Number of referrals to Area Council Funded provision
- Number of referrals to services providing advice and guidance

### Additional Considerations

- Workshop attendees specified that any additional provision should be community based.
- Improved mental wellbeing
- Improved physical wellbeing
- The Area Manager advised that an outcome monitoring tool would be beneficial to measure the soft outcomes being identified.

## Resourcing / Area Council Input

- Duration – 2 years minimum (2 years + 1 year)
- Financial contribution, up to £85,000 p.a.
- Price / Quality Split (for full tender evaluation purposes) – 20/80

### **8. Added Value**

- 8.1. The Area Council must ensure that any provision funded adds value to core services and avoids duplication at all costs. In this instance the North Area needs to ensure that provision compliments services including Social Prescribing.
- 8.2. Post meeting note: Katy Ashworth the North Area's Project Officer has been requested to map existing services based on the workshop.

### **9. Procurement Options**

- 9.1. It is important to note that procurement advice would be needed.
- 9.2. Workshop attendees have identified three very different beneficiary groups.
- 9.3. It is suggested that to either one beneficiary group is selected to enable a specification to be written.
- 9.4. Alternatively, the Area Council may wish to consider a grant opportunity which is likely to be more appealing to the voluntary and community sector who would be well placed to apply for grant opportunities of this nature.

### **10. Next Steps**

- 10.1. The Area Manager, Emma Robinson and the Area Chair have agreed to arrange a meeting with Ben Brannan who is involved in the Mental Health Partnership meeting and Stuart Rogers who is leading on Sport, Physical Activity and Mental Health.
- 10.2. The Area Manager requires a decision from Members regarding the format for the procurement of this work. Specifically, if a contract or grant is the preferred option.

**Officer Contact:**  
**Rosie Adams**

**Tel. No:**  
**01226 773583**

**Date:**  
**26<sup>th</sup> April 2021**