

BARNESLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLACE TO CABINET ON 30 JUNE 2021

SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP (TFG) FOLLOW ON REPORT ON COVID-19 RESPONSE, RECOVERY & RENEWAL

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To report to Cabinet the progress of the findings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) from the investigation undertaken on its behalf by the Covid-19 Response, Recovery & Renewal Task and Finish Group (TFG).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers the updates on the recommendations set out in (Cab.10.3.2021/8) within part 5 of this report.

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 As part of its work programme the OSC originally agreed to undertake a TFG investigation into a number of future plans of the Council. It was hoped that as the group's investigation commenced in September 2020, the Council would be focusing on its recovery and renewal from Covid-19, as outlined in Barnsley's Recovery & Renewal Strategy - Moving on from Covid-19 (Cab.10.6.2020/11). However, as the group met, the number of Covid-19 cases locally, regionally and nationally began to rise which was followed by subsequent tiered restrictions as well as a national lockdown. This resulted in a number of services either remaining or going back into 'responding' to the challenges raised by the pandemic.
- 3.2 As a result, the TFG maintained a focus on providing overview and scrutiny of the ongoing response, recovery and renewal from Covid-19. This included assisting in shaping service responses by acting as a consultative group, as well as making timely suggestions and recommendations during and after its meetings.
- 3.3 The members of the TFG who undertook this investigation included the following: Councillors Peter Fielding (TFG Lead Member), Jeff Ennis, Andrew Gillis, Joe Hayward, Dorothy Higginbottom, Sarah Tattersall and John Wilson.
- 3.4 Initially, the TFG met to consider the scope of the investigation. This included discussing the Council's Recovery & Renewal Strategy and agreeing to undertake sessions to understand the strategic viewpoint of this work, as well as to focus in on the key themes including: Health & Wellbeing; Business Economy; Community Resilience; Education & Skills; and Infrastructure and Environment. The group were also keen to understand and investigate the communications strategies linked to each of these areas as a critical factor in the success of all this work.

- 3.5 The TFG undertook a number of virtual 'check and challenge' sessions with officers regarding the work being carried out and future plans. This involved asking questions of them regarding their work, their involvement, and partnership working with other agencies, including the impact of this on Barnsley residents. The TFG were also able to consider and learn from local business representatives.
- 3.6 The suggestions and recommendations set out in the TFG report (Cab.10.3.2021/8) were overseen and managed via the Silver Tactical Coordination Group set up as part of the major incident C3 civil contingency arrangements.

4. What the Silver TCG did with the suggestions and recommendations

- 4.1 The SCG took responsibility to review and implement the recommendations set out in (Cab.10.3.2021/8). This item was regularly scheduled for the Silver TCG meeting to monitor and track progress to completion. Extrapolated from the TFG report were some 21 recommendations. At the time of drafting this report 19 are complete; 1 is pending completion; and 1 remains open.

5. TFG recommendation and TCG response

- 5.1 In this section the recommendations have been summarised and an update on the actions taken to complete the recommendation has been set out.
- 5.2 ***Recommendation 1: A session is held for Members and officers from across different Area Councils and Ward Alliances to share lessons learned and good practice in their local areas from their experiences during the pandemic, and this should be utilised to inform other recovery work and how we support communities (Pending)***
- 5.3 In response to this recommendation, Silver TCG are working with Members Services to develop a session with elected members. As has been the nature of the pandemic, the timing of such a session is crucial to determine the key lessons learnt that can be applied to future situations. Furthermore, being able to share with attendees the findings of the internal SYLRF review of the C3 civil contingency arrangements that have been in place for the past 15+ months would also inform such a session.
- 5.4 ***Recommendation 2: In recognition of the importance of local public sector organisations utilising local supply chains and supporting the local economy, Health and Wellbeing Board members could be tasked with reviewing this in each of their organisations and placing this in their corporate performance management frameworks. (Closed)***

NHS providers predominantly purchase the majority of supplies via NHS Supply Chain, that said there are examples eg Barnsley Hospital whereby services such as catering are sourced locally. With the development of the NHS White Paper : Integration and Innovation there are opportunities for Sheffield City Region to work with the South Yorkshire & Bassetlaw Integrated System to develop a Social Value Charter. Barnsley 2030 also presents an opportunity to work more closely with NHS partners to influence where we can.

- 5.5 We continue to support and engage with the local independent sector. With social value being central to our procurement strategy. In addition, our contract procedures require a minimum of 3 quotations; 2 need to be from local suppliers which include the independent sector for goods and services valued between £10k and £70k. From a social value perspective, BMBC has recently launched two software solutions, aimed at engaging more with the supply market and specifically local SME's and the independent sector. Furthermore, Social Value is included as part of our procurement specification for any contract above £70k in value.
- 5.6 *Recommendation 3: A briefing sheet to be provided to all Elected Members on Enterprising Barnsley and the support services available as well as other key schemes to support the local economy such as 'Shop Appy' so Members can easily share this within their communities. (Closed)***
- 5.7 In response to this recommendation we developed a Covid-19 Business pack which provided; guidance on operating safely; information on available financial support; and opportunities to boost business. Enterprising Barnsley team captured the relevant information and published this on our website. <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/18422/barnsleybusinesspackmarketstowncentrese rvicesmay2021.pdf>
- 5.8 *Any future local discretionary funding should be prioritised for small businesses; sole traders; those who are self-employed, such as market traders; people working from home; and ones that don't pay business rates due to their location. (Closed Point 6.2 STFGRRR Report)***
- 5.9 Local discretionary support has been targeted where possible to support individuals not covered by national grant support. This includes market traders and businesses with none-rateable premises.
- 5.10 *More concrete business support should be prioritised such as financial support via Enterprising Barnsley. (Closed Point 6.2 STFGRRR Report)***
- 5.11 The Barnsley Renewal Action Plan has been formally adopted by the cabinet in March 2021. It includes a prioritised programme of activity which helps to stabilise the local businesses and create capacity to expand. Additional support has also been secured through Sheffield City Region contributing to capital investment into local businesses to unlock growth, digital innovation and business productivity. Further direct grant support has been provided to hospitality businesses to support costs incurred with outside trading.
- 5.12 *Increase pace of decision making and putting plans into action within the public sector compared with the private sector. (Open Point 6.2 STFGRRR Report)***
- 5.13 This is a recognised suggestion and recommendation across Barnsley and South Yorkshire. Decision-making during this covid pandemic has been swift. It has been underpinned by our civil contingency arrangements and enabled by changes in relevant legislation.

- 5.14 The SYLRF Response & Recovery Strategy set out that we needed to retain improved ways of working as a consequence of the CV-19 pandemic. Internal BMBC and SYLRF reviews have identified this as one of the changes in behaviour that we wish to retain. The SYLRF has agreed to its new governance arrangements to oversee recovery implementation in line with the present risk and threat to complement existing business-as-usual governance arrangements for the SYMCA and ICS systems.
- 5.15 Point to note: The Government, statutory and public-sector bodies are publishing multiple grant opportunities for recovery with very short delivery timescales; we are maximising our applications to invest across the borough.
- 5.16 ***Ensure funds are given out proportionately with smaller districts were given parity of esteem with the Sheffield City Region Deal. (Closed Point 6.2 STFGRRR Report)***
- 5.17 A collaborative approach has been adopted across South Yorkshire to ensure that parity in support is achieved across all local authority areas.
- 5.18 ***Local Authorities to come together through the Local Government Association (LGA) to lobby central government regarding local support, as well as ensuring that for example market traders are able to continue trading in the same way supermarkets have. (Closed Point 6.2 STFGRRR Report)***
- 5.19 Barnsley Council has provided proactive and targeted support to all businesses, including market traders, ensuring that the majority of businesses have continued to trade as retail as reopened. The Council, in particular, has a close partnership with national bodies including the National Market Traders Federation (NMTF) and, the National Association of British Markets (NABMA) ensuring that we continue to support this agenda both at a national and regional level.
- 5.20 In terms of lobbying, as part of the SYLRF governance, we have been working with government departments throughout the CV-19 pandemic. In addition, we have participated in the regional activity at Yorkshire & Humber level. During the pandemic last year, we worked with the LGA to undertake a virtual peer review of our response to the CV-19 pandemic. Furthermore, we are one of 14 local authorities engaged with MHCLG holding discussions about capacity and capability constraints associated with the borough's recovery.
- 5.21 ***Barnsley Council run an advertising campaign for the people of Barnsley to support local independent businesses. (Closed Point 6.2 STFGRRR Report)***
- 5.22 We are currently delivering the "Barnsley Back in business" campaign borough-wide. Targeting town centre, principal towns and includes the reopening of our attractions. We are utilising different channels to appeal to all demographics within the borough.
- 5.23 ***Improve the variety of collection points as part of 'Shop Appy', especially in those outside the town centre. This includes encouraging local premises to take part and to understand the benefits such as the increased footfall this can bring to their own local business. (Closed Point 6.2 STFGRRR Report)***

- 5.24 The existing Shop Appy contract has been extended to cover retailers across the borough. This compliments other sectors specific support including Barnsley Card. Click and collect lockers are also planned for deployment within the Town Centre as a proof of concept.
- 5.25 Consider establishing a "Barnsley is a coffee shop" where customers are provided with free refreshments all day as pay per hour to be there. Enabling customers to be there all day to work and to support micro-businesses to get underway. (Closed Point 6.2 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.26 There are aspects of this that we are reviewing. London has a significantly larger business base and is suffering a similarly-sized reduction in footfall. Offers of this nature in London will have a less detrimental effect on the existing business base. In percentage terms, Barnsley's footfall hasn't suffered to the same extent. Unfortunately, free coffee in Barnsley is likely to result in the displacement of existing businesses. Therefore, BMBC is considering complimentary hot-desking and touch-down space within the town centre to help increase footfall and encourage business units within the retail quarter to expand; which is the strategic aim of the free coffee concept in the London example.
- 5.27 Consider a more locally based low cost online trading platform for local businesses – perhaps forming the basis of a local online directory of businesses. Which could complement the 'Shop Appy' scheme and avoid the fees charged by the big national platforms. (Closed Point 6.2 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.28 Ecommerce and support for businesses to develop an online trading presence is being delivered within the supported Barnsley Renewal Action Plan supporting programme.
- 5.29 Council to finance a Marketing Board which can bring local businesses together to support each other. (Closed Point 6.2 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.30 Forums do currently exist, including the Town Centre business forum with similar groups established within Principal Towns. The wider events programme and support networking arrangements delivered by Enterprising Barnsley also help to establish peer networks for the wider business networks to support each other.
- 5.31 Communication Strategy to provide communities with an indication of how the vaccine will be rolled out and over what timescales. (Closed Point 6.3 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.32 The vaccination strategy has been directly developed and controlled by the NHS. Vaccination by age groups and specifically identified health priorities has been consistent across England. We actively publish vaccination achievement levels in our communications and Recovery Roadmap for the borough. We are discussing with government departments about piloting alternative vaccination strategies considering Barnsley's deprivation and chronic health levels.
- 5.33 The latest vaccination statistics we are promoting to the public as of Sunday 23 May are 146,878 people received a first dose, including 20,796 under 40s, and 80,017 have received a second dose. We promoted this data on Friday 28 May.

- 5.34 Communication Strategy to use key figures to promote having the vaccine, including compiling short videos. (Closed Point 6.3 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.35 We have produced short videos to combat vaccine hesitancy, with topics including speed of anti-body development, safety and pregnancy, using intelligence from community engagement work. These have been promoted on our social media channels.
- 5.36 Communication Strategy to ensure that messaging to residents was not false in saying that there was no risk to taking the vaccine but to highlight that it is managed and very low risk, in the same way we all take lots of medications/vaccines. (Closed Point 6.3 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.37 This has been addressed through our communication releases
- 5.38 Communication Strategy to ensure messaging remains current and is updated accordingly; highlighting the need to put dates on when information was last updated. (Closed Point 6.3 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.39 Our communications and Marketing Strategy for our CV-19 response is regularly reviewed. Activity is insight led and dates are being included on information.
- 5.40 Communication Strategy to provide some wider communications regarding the safety of the use of vizors and whether these need to be accompanied with a face mask. (Closed Point 6.3 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.41 Publicised through a variety of channels - e.g.: <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-close-contact-businesses/>
- 5.42 Parish Councils to be made aware of the good work the Council is doing in communities as well as where to report intelligence to. (Closed Point 6.3 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.43 We are encouraging Parish Councils to sign up to Open Mail for Council updates. There are also strong links through the Stronger Communities Area Team arrangements where information is regularly shared.
- 5.44 Information to go to all Councillors with advice on what to do if approached by a community group wanting to form, so they can seek guidance and support. (Closed Point 6.3 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.45 This action is complete - all Elected Members have received the information on the support on offer for groups from Barnsley Community and Voluntary Services and South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau.
- 5.46 Forward planning to be undertaken regarding recruiting young people as volunteers. (Closed Point 6.3 STFGRRR Report)**
- 5.47 This action has been progressed with Place Directorate and Stronger Communities to ensure all opportunities for young people accessing volunteering are maximised.

To date, there have been x48 KICKSTART opportunities created by services across the Council. The array of roles on offer ensure there are opportunities for the vast majority of unemployed 16-24 year olds (eligibility criterion of the scheme). Roles range from Countryside Ranger to Town Centre Support Officer to Business Service Support.

Besides the 6-month, 25 hours per week paid work placement that KICKSTART provides, the Cabinet approved a Youth Employment Programme paper submitted by Employment and Skills, 24th March 2021. The Programme ultimately elongates the KICKSTART programme by a further 6-months as well as increasing funding for training, enabling young people to remain on work placement for up to 12 months. There are key benefits to this Programme including the opportunity for young people to gain further work experience, develop their skills even further, but also provide a bridge to support young people during the latter 6 months to off-board into positive destinations, rather than come to a cliff-edge at the end of the 6-month KICKSTART Programme.

Currently, x16 young people have commenced KICKSTART positions with the Council and a further x2 due to start in the next week or so. Further waves of young people are expected to join the Council in the opportunities created through August and September.

Besides the work placement, every young person will receive a comprehensive training package to develop and enhance their employability skills. This includes the opportunity to obtain qualifications in maths, English, digital and Employability skills. They will also complete a bespoke employability skills log and obtain an employability passport to support a transition into a positive destination (i.e. permanent employment) once they finish their programme. Every young person joining the Council will have their progress and personal development overseen by the Council's newly appointed Lead Pastoral Mentor.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 That the remaining recommendations from the TFG report continue to be progressed

7. Implications for local people / service users

- 7.1 The Covid 19 pandemic has had far-reaching consequences for service users and local people over this last 15mths. The current C3 arrangements along with the Response & recovery Strategy underpins the continued work to address the impact of covid 19

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 Individual financial implications have not been identified as part of this response paper, albeit they are covered by the regular cabinet updates on the impact of covid and our medium term financial strategy to deal with this.

9. Employee implications

- 9.1 Employee implications are not specifically dealt with by this response report, albeit are being picked up in the workforce recovery plans.

10. Communications implications

10.1 Communication implications are regularly monitored and considered as part of the standard agenda items for the present Gold & Silver arrangements.

11. Consultations

11.1 No direct consultations are considered as part of this update report. Each are will give consideration to this where required in future reports.

12. The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework

12.1 No immediate impact has been considered by this report on the Corporate Plan or the Performance Management Framework. Impact and recovery monitoring has been incorporated into the authorities' Gold & Silver arrangements.

13. Promoting equality & diversity and social inclusion

13.1 Not directly considered as a response update report.

14. Tackling the impact of poverty

14.1 Not directly considered as a response update report.

15. Risk management issues

15.1 Not directly considered as a response update report.

16. Glossary

AMIB	All Elected Member Information Briefing
BMBC	Barnsley Metropolitan borough Council
BRCC	Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce
BCVS	Barnsley Community & Voluntary Services
CEV	Clinically Extremely Vulnerable
ICS	Integrated Care System
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
OSC	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
SCR	Sheffield City Region
SYLRF	South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum
SYFAB	South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau
SYMCA	South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority
TFG	Task and Finish Group

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