

CCIN Action Learning: Cooperation through Covid-19



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Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE

Foreword by Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE

Leader of Stevenage Borough Council

Chair of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN)

The unprecedented impact of Covid-19 has been felt in every region of the world

Here in the UK, communities across the 4 nations have experienced the devastation and disruption a pandemic can cause to our daily lives.

It is at times of emergency that communities often come together to show their greatest strengths. The same too can be said of Local Government. Local councils have the unique ability to understand the particular needs of the communities that they serve, they can navigate effectively between tiers of government and other agencies to provide essential resources for their communities and they have the ability to work in partnership with their local citizens to drive responses to help those in need. For our co-operative councils, close working with communities and ensuring our services are shaped and developed with residents has proved even more valuable during these difficult months.

In sharing this Action Learning Set we hope to have captured some of the incredible work a range of member councils have done to respond to Covid-19 drawing on the values of cooperation. From innovative work to use a digital portal to swiftly match volunteers to those in need in Cheshire West and Chester, to councillors working across political divides to set up community response efforts in the London Borough of Hillingdon, response efforts across the network have worked collaboratively with volunteers and local voluntary organisations.

Council responses were not just focussed on those who were shielding or medically isolated they also sought to get swift and urgent support to local businesses, support those who were homeless during the peak of the pandemic and support children and families as their lives were disrupted with the sudden closure of Schools. As councils embark on recovery they do so with creativity and imagination as cities like Oxford further accelerate their liveable streets agenda and a range of members councils embrace virtual meetings and new forms of engagement with their communities.

Looking to the future member councils are also focussing on building greater resilience, from a renewed focus in Preston to strengthen the co-operative sector through to efforts to drive a new green and circular economy in Kirklees. This action-learning set also shares the perspectives from members from different countries within the UK and considers reflections for the sector's preparedness for future local lockdowns and the uncertain months and years ahead.

This is only the beginning as the network builds on this learning and develops further resources to enable our members to move forward in a new world. If the "new normal" is to mean anything it should be about continuing to drive innovation, co-production with our communities and new models of service to meet local needs. These are all CCIN values that we hold dear.

Action on Covid-19: A Scottish Perspective

By Paul Morris, *Glasgow City Council*

Like the rest of the world, every aspect of daily life in Scotland has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The response to the virus has been seen at all levels of government: local, Scottish and UK, as well as internationally. Health is a matter entirely devolved to Scotland and the national leadership in this has come from the Scottish Government. However, the impact of Covid-19 extends beyond the devolved competencies of Holyrood.

The four nations approach to the crisis has been a core element of Scotland's response but there has been divergence where our needs have differed, linked to attempts to influence UK policy when the reserved policy levers are required. Despite this, the Scottish Government notes that the "approach is guided by the Chief Medical Officer, and we continue to monitor the situation closely and to work with the WHO and the international community. We are working with the Welsh Government, the Northern Ireland Executive

The Scottish Parliament Building, Holyrood



and the UK Government to respond to the ongoing outbreak”.

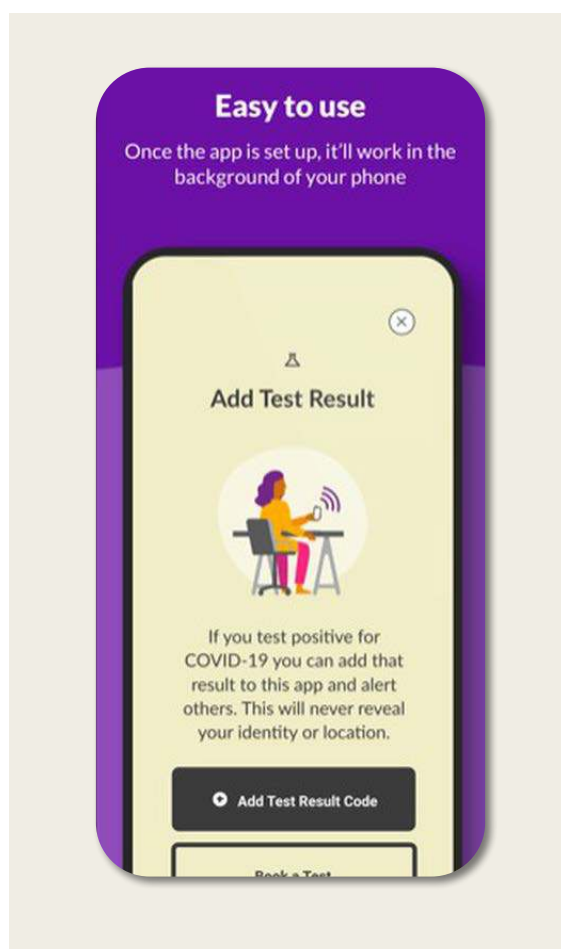
The framework for tackling the pandemic was announced by the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, on 23 April 2020. The framework set out four key phases to emerge fully from lockdown and is supported by a number of specialist advisory groups.

The Scottish Government is statutorily required to update Parliament every three weeks on the current position within the country and to announce whether restrictions will be eased or tightened. Throughout the situation, Scotland has kept a clear eye on the developing pandemic trends.

On 4 May 2020, the Scottish Government published its *Coronavirus (Covid-19): Test, Trace, Isolate, Support Strategy*, which supports the framework and provides clear guidance to the public and to public agencies and businesses on what is required to reduce infection rates and protect the NHS.

Scotland's 32 Local Authorities have been instrumental in providing support advice and financial assistance during the crisis. The 13 Health Boards continue to provide health care, advice and intelligence throughout the pandemic, each managing the situation in their locality, with plans and strategies that work toward a coordinated national plan of action.

The Scottish Government is working with the UK Government to improve the test and



The Protect Scotland app

trace system in Scotland. In early September 2020, NHS Scotland launched the Protect Scotland app to monitor connections between citizens. To date, more than 1.1 million people have downloaded the app, which is completely anonymised.

As the second wave approaches, Scotland appears to be well placed and prepared to work across the four nations and beyond to minimise the impact of Covid-19.

Action on Covid-19: A Welsh Perspective

By Fiona Gibson, *Cardiff Council*

The Welsh Government is responsible for the public health response to the coronavirus pandemic in Wales. The nature of the devolution settlement in the UK has allowed for a nuanced approach to managing the pandemic.

On 15 May, the Welsh Government published *Unlocking our Society and Economy: Continuing the Conversation*, the national framework for moving Wales out of lockdown, which set out a traffic light approach to gradually relaxing restrictions. The framework states:

“Because the challenges we face are common to all parts of the United Kingdom, we, as a Government, have always strongly supported a four-nation approach to the lifting of the lockdown. But this has to respect the responsibilities of each Government to determine the speed at which it is safe to move and the balance to be struck between different forms of ‘easement’ – how to prioritise between allowing people to meet up with close family, to go shopping or to the hairdresser, to get back to work or visit the seaside. With limited ‘headroom’ to ease the current restrictions, choices need to be made and we want to make those choices in consultation with our stakeholders and the people of Wales.”

The Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales sets out how existing systems are designed to prevent the spread of the virus, as well as how

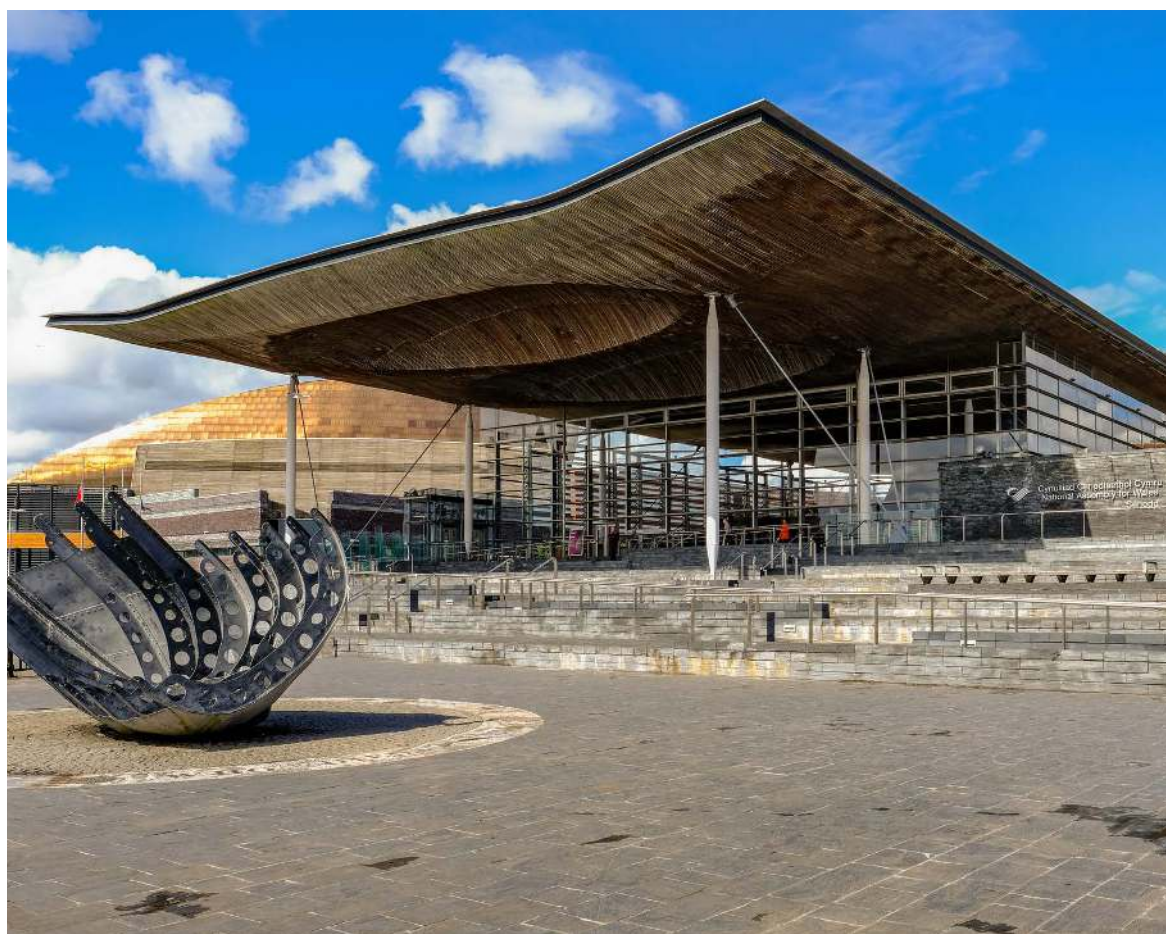
new systems will respond swiftly to new cases at a local level. Containing outbreaks at source through effective health surveillance, testing, tracing and self-isolation is, most likely, the only way to avoid a return to the strict and intrusive all-Wales restrictions we have faced together. The plan makes clear that in Wales, the approach to controlling coronavirus is based on the principles of caution, proportionality and subsidiarity.

- **Caution**, because prevention is better than cure – preventing the spread of coronavirus should be our overriding priority. When considering whether to remove or introduce restrictions, we should take a precautionary approach; where there is uncertainty, we should err on the side of caution.
- But our actions must also be **proportionate**. The Welsh Government’s interventions should not be more restrictive than is needed to contain the virus. We must take care not to take action that harms the people of Wales in other ways. We will endeavour to do the minimum to disrupt people’s lives whilst keeping Wales safe.
- And, finally, the principle of **subsidiarity** means that decisions are taken at the most effective level – using local knowledge and expertise to inform local decision making by local elected Leaders and local action.”

The Coronavirus Control Plan is supported by a *Communicable Disease Outbreak Control Plan for Wales* and *Local Covid-19 Prevention and Response Plans*.

Each of the seven Health Boards is working closely with Local Authorities and other partners to put in place and deliver local Covid-19 prevention and response plans for their areas. These local plans describe

how Health Boards, Local Authorities and other partners – such as the Test Trace Protect regional teams, businesses and other organisations in the area – will work together. The plans set out the measures taken locally to prevent the spread of the virus, drawing on evidence of areas of high transmission risk. They describe how any rise in local cases and clusters will be identified and what the local response will be.



The National Assembly Building, Cardiff



Chapter 1: Response

Covid-19 took everyone – individuals, businesses, Councils, Governments – by surprise. No one in January 2020 would have predicted the extent to which the pandemic affected every element of life, from supply chains and working environments to emergency policies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

As the situation unfolded, immediate responses were collaborative in nature – and the community knowledge and grassroots contacts encouraged by the Co-operative Council model mean CCIN members are well placed to provide a sensitive response to crises such as Covid-19. People and communities worked together to address common problems through hyper-local mutual aid. Vulnerable people were rightly the focus of swift assistance. There was a shift to acknowledge key workers: people providing education, childcare, key public services, transport, communication and their production, processing and distribution of food. And those working in the frontline of health and social care.

Because of their differing demographics, response activity by Councils ranged greatly. For members of CCIN, responses were particularly co-operative, through the consultation with stakeholders and cross-sector collaborations. This collaborative spirit has helped Co-operative Councils harness a range of innovations to meet this unprecedented crisis. Online platforms such as WhatsApp, Skype and Zoom have been invaluable and different organisations have proven highly flexible in adapting to a fast-changing scenario.

Different sectors of society have been brought together in new ways – Glasgow City Council facilitated efforts by local school and nursery pupils to send video messages to residential care homes for older people to help them feel less isolated, for example. And Telford and Wrekin Council brought together different key services and resources – including crisis networks and interfaith groups – to form a community support group to help households in need.

Looking forward, these innovations have proven fruitful and effective and have brought co-operative ideas for community responses further into neighbourhoods and local organisations, offering scope for creative responses to future events and ongoing needs. There are lessons from the new partnership group Cardiff Council has developed on homelessness. And a scheme in South Tyneside, which saw local artists use 3D printers from a community arts centre to make PPE visors for frontline care workers, shows how connections and innovations can be found in unexpected places. This sort of thinking outside of the box shows just what the co-operative difference can look like when put into practice.

South Tyneside Council

Establishing a Covid-19 Support Hub

Council staff collaborated with the community and voluntary sectors to offer immediate help to those at greatest risk

Context

Covid-19 has had a profound effect on all aspects of life in South Tyneside – including employment, income, education, physical and mental health, social isolation and mobility. The Council was acutely aware that, while taking the lead in coordinating support for the most vulnerable and those required to shield for a prolonged period of time, there were others outside the “shielding” category with a range of needs, such as access to food and medicine, financial or welfare support, befriending services, mental health support and other services that third sector partners were well placed to provide.

The Council established a support hub with a single point of access that could directly provide support to the most vulnerable. It would also provide a pathway to a range of services provided by partners to support physical, emotional and financial wellbeing. A recruitment drive for volunteers was supported by the Council’s community social media platform (#lovesouthtyneside) in collaboration with its community and voluntary coordinating body, Inspire South Tyneside.

Development

The Council established a working group consisting of Officers from a range of services and representatives from key statutory and voluntary organisations. The aim of the group was to establish how to support the “shielding” group within South Tyneside, as well as support the voluntary and community

sector using shared tools and knowledge.

It was key to have a single point of access, promoted across the community, so that people could access the right help from the right organisation in a timely way.

The Council worked with a core group of third sector partners to share resources (such as vehicles and kitchens) and identify pockets of need which were below the radar (such as people with specific learning disabilities who could not cook for themselves). This core group consisted of a range of organisations including: Age Concern South Tyneside; Groundwork; South Tyneside Sight Service; Women’s Health in South Tyneside (WHIST); Bliss-ability; Your Voice Counts (representing the views of people with learning disabilities); Alzheimer’s Society; Mutual Aid; and First Contact Clinical.

The group established a framework that ensured people who got in touch through the single point of contact quickly received the support they required through a carefully scripted algorithm implemented by call handlers.

Implementation

Hebburn Central, South Tyneside Council’s hub for Leisure, Library and Community Activities, was identified as the key location from which to coordinate services. It was largely staffed by the Council’s leisure staff, who were redeployed into jobs such as call handling, food distribution and welfare support. A leaflet providing details of how to

contact the support hub was distributed to every household, which also included tips on keeping safe and healthy, and contacts for organisations that could provide various forms of support.

The group of core voluntary agencies provided feedback and there were regular virtual meetings to assess how the service was being provided and whether any changes were needed. The Hub was run cooperatively, with all agencies contributing. Due to the urgency of the situation, there were few checks on people's circumstances and initially some food deliveries were made to people who did not meet support criteria. As time went on, they became much better at assessing needs and providing the appropriate response.

Review

The Hub received over 21,500 requests for support. Initially, most were for food deliveries (over 5,000 requests) but, as time went on, welfare support became the most requested (over 15,200). In addition, there were over 300 direct referrals to voluntary agencies (this did include the signposting of services which would have increased the numbers accessing support from the voluntary sector).

The Hub was hailed a success from both the Council and community and voluntary sector perspectives; both found the model effective in ensuring that residents got the appropriate help quickly and simply. A lot of lessons were learned in terms of what organisations could

offer and how best to triage large numbers of people to the right support.

The Council has continued to meet with the Voluntary Sector Core Group to look at how they work together and implement a Neighbourhood Development Alliance to support residents to improve their wellbeing, resilience and independence post Covid-19. They are establishing a joint set of key priorities between the Council and wider partners to ensure that funders know what is needed in South Tyneside and how groups will work together to meet those needs.



The Support Hub was operated through Hebburn Central, South Tyneside Council's hub for leisure, library and community activities

At a glance

Council:	South Tyneside Council
Activity:	Establishing a Covid-19 Support Hub
Beneficiaries:	Vulnerable groups in South Tyneside
Contact:	Lesley Carlisle
E:	Lesley.Carlisle@southtyneside.gov.uk
T:	01914 246 175

Bassetlaw District Council

Protecting the Vulnerable

Using a community-based hub to tackle health inequalities caused by Covid-19, especially targeting extremely vulnerable persons

Context

In March 2020, Bassetlaw District Council and its partners established a support hub in the Community Voluntary Services offices prior to a Local Resilience Forum Hub being set up. The Bassetlaw hub benefited from the Community and Voluntary experience in local delivery, which gave direct access to data on vulnerable individuals. As a result, the hub immediately made contact to assess needs, coordinate service provision and, most importantly, provide reassurance – especially to those living alone across a large geographical area with many isolated communities.

The primary focus was to meet the needs of 'extremely vulnerable persons' (EVP). Bassetlaw had over 7,000 people in this category; over 6% of the population – the highest level in the East Midlands and above surrounding areas. The initial priority was food provision, the hub taking over from the Foodbank which suspended its operations. Following this a prescription delivery service was established for pharmacies who could not meet this need.

Development

After setting up the hub, the Council faced a much larger demand as welfare checks identified a range of complex emotional support needs beyond the EVP target group. This included those suffering the economic impacts of Covid-19, those entering the welfare system for the first time and those

facing delays in universal credit. There was a huge surge in demand for food: four times more than the normal Foodbank demand.

The partnership was able to access data from e-Healthscope including age, frailty and those living by themselves or who had dementia. Liaising with its County Council colleagues, it excluded those in receipt of support from social care and targeted those in age bands of 70 and above. As a consequence, a further 1,700 individuals were identified, all of whom were contacted by the Bassetlaw Hub.

Implementation

The Council's established social prescribing partnership provided an immediate, flexible and holistic response to the myriad of local support requests that sprang from Covid-19. The partnership's objective is to reduce health inequalities and use community empowerment to bring about long-term improvements. The value of a shared approach between the District Council, Community and Voluntary Service and the Clinical Commissioning Group was clearly shown. The Council will pilot this learning into new models to tackle health inequalities, including responding to a second wave of Covid-19 and other health inequalities, helping to relieve pressure on the NHS.

Its objective is to provide a more holistic approach to improving health and wellbeing in Bassetlaw by promoting a population-based service. This will work with local communities using a community development action model

to help residents act together to improve their conditions. The approach will include targeted population work dealing with specific issues linked to rurality and ethnicity.

Review

The Council's experience has demonstrated the benefits of a social prescribing link with workers embedded in health and social care settings. The partnership is at a critical point in its development; after working together for several years, the local insight gathered since March 2020 has caused it to pause and look to 'reset' how it works together. The council has discovered that in some areas of Bassetlaw, spontaneous voluntary action, with communities looking after each other, is sustaining itself in a way no partnership or programme has ever achieved.

The Council has championed a 'can do' attitude while responding to Covid-19.

Traditional barriers of multi-agency boundaries, data sharing etc. were quickly set aside, particularly at local level. The challenge it now sees at a strategic level is to prevent agencies reverting to their default positions.

The needs of the district differ greatly, which has been the partnership's collective challenge to date. Too often, it has witnessed how national programmes and city-centric approaches fail to deliver the impact intended. Lasting change is driven by communities themselves and it has begun to see the green shoots of this appearing. The Council will build on the strength of the partnership to improve impact across Bassetlaw. Its collective vision is to work differently and better together so that people get the right support at the right time. It will measure its success by the improvement in the health and wellbeing of its community and the reduction in health inequalities.



Bassetlaw Local Resilience Forum Hub

At a glance

Council:	Bassetlaw District Council
Activity:	Protecting the Vulnerable
Beneficiaries:	Vulnerable individuals and those suffering health inequalities
Contact:	Stephen Brown
E:	stephen.brown@bassetlaw.gov.uk
T:	01909 533 767



Cheshire West and Chester Council

Enabling and Empowering Communities

Working to help communities to support each other: matching volunteers with need; providing quick-to-access funding, open and accessible local information on the pandemic; and offering a place to share and celebrate the good work taking place

Context

Cheshire West and Chester Council focused on enabling and empowering communities to respond to the pandemic, helping them meet the huge demand for support which was more than any single organisation could tackle. This built on the Council's plan and its focus on 'Playing your Part' – encouraging and enabling more citizens to take an active role in their communities. It also built on the foundation put in place through the strong voluntary and community sector, the Council's 'localities working' approach and its recent investment in an online engagement portal.

Development

As West Cheshire prepared for lockdown, a request for volunteers drew in over 2,000 local people. The Council, with Health and Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) partners such as Cheshire West Voluntary Action, began matching volunteers with requests for help whilst promoting the idea of mutual self-help within communities – neighbours supporting neighbours. The Coronavirus Community Response Fund was established, with the Westminster Foundation approaching the Council to match the Council's contribution of £250,000 and create a £500,000 fund. This helped fund community services and initiatives, enabling them to meet emergency needs.

To support action planning, the Council management team commissioned public health, performance and economic analysts

to develop a weekly data report on the local spread of the virus, as well as its impact on Council services and the local community. Alongside this, the Inspire Cheshire West website was created as a positive online space given over to local people to share their ideas for coping with lockdown, celebrate their communities and post a thank-you to those who had helped them. These were also posted on social media where a call was made for people to share their stories and ideas.

Implementation

The Council worked with Qwest Services, which runs the Council's call centre, to telephone the vulnerable. It also established a virtual hub to receive and manage requests for support, liaising with local community and voluntary sector organisations about their offer and capacity to help. With some potentially vulnerable people not answering calls, a referral process was quickly developed, with Cheshire Fire Service making personal visits to ensure that all those in need of support received it.

A food distribution centre was established, led by Council officers in a local leisure centre run by the Council but closed due to the pandemic. The food distribution centre received and distributed emergency food boxes supplied by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The centre was run by redeployed Council staff, with deliveries made by Cheshire Fire Service. Once emergency food parcels stopped,

subsequent parcels were put together with food purchased by the Council with generous donations from businesses such as Aldi, Nestle, Kuehne + Nagel Limited and Roberts Bakery.

The Westminster Foundation and the Council, in liaison with Cheshire West Voluntary Action and funders across the borough, swiftly processed applications to the Community Response Fund. Grants were paid out within three days of application.

The classifications for projects supported were:

- Multi-focused support
- Food support
- Older people's support
- Children and young people support
- Domestic abuse support
- Learning disabilities support
- Mental health support
- Health and wellbeing
- Befriending support
- Transport support.

Review

The contact centre made over 9,000 outbound calls to vulnerable and shielding residents, whilst responding to over 4,000 enquiries, of which over 2,000 were from vulnerable and shielding residents. Over

1,000 food parcels were delivered to shielding residents and the virtual hub has ensured support for over 4,000 people living alone and in isolation. In its first two weeks, the Inspire Cheshire West website received more than 1,500 unique visitors and over 100 separate stories and ideas were posted.

The key to success was the co-operative approach taken across the Council, public and community and voluntary sectors, which partnered with individuals and organisations who volunteered to support those in need. The fast and effective partnership approach to overcoming issues has shown what is possible given an overwhelming common priority. The strength of the community response has also highlighted the potential for empowering local citizens to play a more prominent role. As a result the Council is developing a network of Community Champions who will play their part in keeping communities safe, sharing important information, advising residents and feeding back about progress.



The Inspire Cheshire West website was created as a positive online space where people could share ideas, photos and thank you messages

At a glance

Council:	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Activity:	Supporting communities through mutual aid groups, funding, online engagement and information dissemination
Beneficiaries:	Individuals and communities across West Cheshire
Contact:	Morgan Jones
E:	morgan.jones@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
T:	07887 572 334



Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Reducing Isolation

Working collaboratively to support residents in care homes and supported accommodation to keep in touch with their loved ones during the pandemic

Context

Throughout the pandemic, care homes in Knowsley have worked incredibly hard to control the spread of the virus, putting in extraordinary measures to protect residents, who remain at the highest risk. Of course, this has had a huge impact on staff and management – with issues over rising costs and shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE). But for those living in the homes, lockdown has meant absolutely no face-to-face contact with their loved ones – as visitors to homes were no longer allowed. Both carers and relatives have been rightly concerned about the impact of this enforced separation on the physical and emotional wellbeing of care home residents and that it might lead to increased levels of social isolation and loneliness.

Development

As the lockdown came into effect, people all over the country discovered new ways to use technology to keep in touch. However, in many cases, those living in care homes were much less likely to be able to take advantage of this, not having access to laptops, smartphones or tablets – and many did not feel confident using the technology.

Knowsley Council issued an appeal early on in the lockdown, to ask residents and businesses to donate devices to local care homes. As a result Barclays Bank and Sky partnered with the council, offering a generous donation of both devices and virtual training to

care home residents and staff. For Barclays, this project was a perfect fit with their Digital Eagles pledge, which has seen them work with at least 500 care homes across the UK this year, including in Knowsley. Sky donated iPads and mobile phones which were used by Knowsley's Supported Living providers and residents who needed more help to keep in touch with their loved ones.

Implementation

As well as implementing all the new procedures that have been put in place to protect residents from the physical health risks of Covid-19 in care homes, the Council made it a priority to innovate when it came to caring for their emotional wellbeing too. Using the collaboration between the Council and businesses including Barclays and Sky, many care homes are now using WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom and other online platforms for virtual visiting and even remote consultations with GPs and other health professionals. Some have also used the Adult Social Care Infection Prevention Control funding (issued to all care homes and domiciliary providers) to set up outdoor seating areas, marquees or summer houses in onsite gardens to enable socially distanced outdoor visits with family members following the visiting guidelines.

The Knowsley Better Together principles are focused on promoting community leadership, co-production with the community, partnership working, social value, early intervention and prevention, independence and exploring the best way of delivering

services. They very much mirror the values and principles promoted by the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network – and this case has shown powerfully just how much of a difference this approach can make to people's lives.

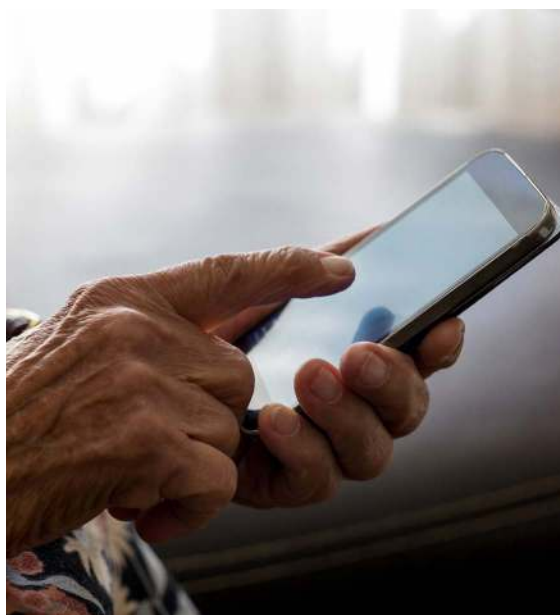
Review

With visitors still not permitted inside care homes, the introduction of technology and innovation has been a lifeline for residents and their loved ones. Feedback states that the donated devices and training have made a significant difference to the wellbeing of residents, who feel much less isolated and disconnected from their wider family. As the homes continue to shield their residents, the ability for residents to access virtual GP appointments is also cited by many as a major advantage, which has improved quality of life for residents and helped with service delivery.

The co-operative values and principles which underpinned this response continue to be reflected by the people and organisations involved. The relationships built between care providers, the Council and businesses will be maintained, as there is a lasting desire and enthusiasm to continue working together positively. This collaboration has demonstrated how resilient the care sector is, having overcome many complex challenges and obstacles. The Council's


ability to respond rapidly and flexibly to support providers and ensure key service provision could be maintained, has also been a key lesson from this experience.

Residents continue to enjoy the use of technology to keep in touch with their loved ones – and socially distanced outdoor visits are supported where possible. Due to their success, some of the initiatives will remain in place even when the pandemic has subsided – such as online meetings, and teleconferences with providers. Moving forward, the Council will review and explore new ways of service delivery, pulling together the learning from different sectors to see if these can be adapted and replicated with other providers.



An appeal saw devices and virtual training donated to care home residents and staff

At a glance

Council:	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	 Knowsley Council
Activity:	Reducing isolation for older people / young people in care homes during the Covid-19 pandemic	
Beneficiaries:	Care home residents and staff, supported accommodation residents	
Contact:	Angela Derby	
E:	angela.derby@knowsley.gov.uk	
T:	07813 599 369	

Burntwood Town Council

Burntwood Be A Friend

Burntwood Be A Friend was set up to help any individuals in need of support, from emergency food parcels to prescription collections, and to offer advice on concerns and problems via signposting

Context

To meet local demand, the Burntwood Be A Friend (BBAF) scheme was created immediately before lockdown. Working in collaboration with two local businesses and the local Foodbank, the Town Council acted as an umbrella organisation to bring voluntary partners together. The Council wanted to ensure that all residents could easily access support as it was aware there were pockets of significant deprivation in the town, that many families were already under financial stress and that the area had a relatively high number of older adults living alone.

When lockdown was announced the Council immediately set up a telephone helpline, email address and Facebook page and coordinated over 80 volunteers, including eight Town Councillors, to promote services. These included shopping, delivery of emergency food parcels, collecting prescriptions and responding to a whole range of other queries. As a result it reached over 13,000 users in Burntwood out of a town of 28,000, by the end of March. While numbers of active volunteers reduced as people have returned to work, as of September, BBAF had over 130 volunteers.

Development

To finance the scheme the Council provided an emergency grant of £1,000 and applied for grant assistance of £2,500 from the County Council's Covid-19 Support Fund. This enabled activities to start immediately and provided money for publicity posters and

a leaflet delivered to every one of the 11,000 houses in the town.

To promote BBAF the Council worked closely with wards who already had a strong track record of community action and ready pools of supporters. In addition, the Town Council was able to pull in additional help and support via its own networks. The cooperation and collaboration between all stakeholders was been exemplary and BBAF has now become the "go-to" organisation for anyone needing help and advice.

By working closely with the Trussell Trust, Citizens' Advice Bureau, local schools, Live at Home (Methodist Homes for the Aged), and other charitable projects locally, the BBAF project is able to meet needs that are not met by any other provider – a true, strong, collaborative and co-operative partnership.

Implementation

The helpline, email address and Facebook presence were set up from the outset, all facilitated by volunteers. Databases of volunteers who were DBS-checked and had received Safeguarding training was facilitated by Spark who have significant expertise in this arena. Support also came from county-wide third sector organisations, Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services.

The Council Leader, also a County Councillor, took part in district-wide collaboration teleconferences for volunteer organisations, enabling BBAF to be linked in to district-

and county-wide emerging issues and opportunities from access to emergency food to grants available.

BBAF continues to provide free food and toiletry parcels (100+ per week), cooked meals (200+ per week), prescriptions and shopping (300+ since March) and telephone befriending (100+ per week). It has worked with the local Foodbank, FareShare and local supermarkets and has set up four community 'help yourself' surplus food tables, new baby bonding packs and resources (30 so far). It is also now sourcing furniture and household items for the homeless/vulnerable.

The social capital in the town has increased dramatically with a focus on social justice for those most disadvantaged yet equal access to all residents, whatever their needs. The visibility of the levels of disadvantage within the town, ostensibly a fairly comfortable one, has increased with all stakeholders now having greater awareness of this.

Review

BBAF has been hugely successful and the Council now wants to build on this, promoting greater self-reliance in order to prevent social isolation and increase independence. As the economic, social and health effects of the pandemic become more clearly understood, BBAF continues to support those with previously hidden needs such as homelessness or housing vulnerabilities. This includes many residents who have previously felt excluded or marginalised from the community.

The activities are changing and developing as BBAF moves into the Recovery phase. While continuing to provide emergency support, plans for the future include:

- creating a new community infrastructure organisation to sustain and grow the BBAF support offer, and expand and make permanent services such as the baby bank, family activity packs and baby packs for newborns
- developing support options for vulnerable adults eg Front Door Friends (a personal contact, socially distanced befriending service) and Thinking Of You packs for single isolated adults.



One of BBAF's 'help yourself' surplus food tables

At a glance

Council:	Burntwood Town Council, Staffordshire
Activity:	Burntwood Be A Friend
Beneficiaries:	Any/all local residents
Contact:	Cllr Sue Woodward
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T:	07779 473 961

Glasgow City Council

Victoria Gardens Care Home

To combat social isolation and loneliness, the care homes accessed tablets and used smartphone technology to provide video calls with families and continue activities virtually

Context

Glasgow City Council operates five residential care homes for older people which offer high quality care and support. In line with Scottish Government guidance, the care home sector was locked down from mid-March 2020 to protect residents and staff, with only essential services provided. This meant that older people in care homes lost essential links to their families and friends, leading to a particular risk of social isolation and loneliness.

To address this, the care homes accessed tablets and used smartphone technology to provide video calls with families. Activity coordinators also continued to engage with local communities remotely to provide opportunities to participate wherever possible in a virtual way.

Development

This initiative was developed very quickly in response to Covid-19. Equipment was purchased, such as tablets, to connect residents through existing WiFi connections. Contacts with local schools had already been established and they were quick to respond to the challenge to support residents.

Implementation

The Victoria Gardens Care Home worked in cooperation with local schools, nurseries and activity providers to keep older people connected. For example it:

- Engages local nursery and school pupils

to send video messages to residents

- Encourages local school children to write letters to residents
- Features letters written from community members wrote on a tree within the reception area for people to see
- Uses tablets for weekly contact with family and friends to reduce stress and loneliness for residents and keep social contact with outside world
- Live-streams performances from local community singing groups into the care home
- Uses YouTube to access church services
- Streams reminiscence materials from local community dementia groups
- Works with Lingo Flamingo to provide language lessons weekly on a virtual basis
- Provides virtual access to the Football Memories project via Scottish Football Association and Alzheimer's Scotland
- Uses the Near Me system for virtual GP appointments and access to Care Inspectorate.

Review

The initiative – working with people and technology to keep residents connected – has been very successful in keeping residents in touch with their families and friends over the six months from March. Local community and third sector groups have found new

and innovative ways to provide contact and engagement with residents and this has been largely successful. It is hoped that this approach will continue and be expanded upon with local schools.

The Council is also looking at ways to remotely support young people who are doing their

Foundation Apprenticeship in social care via virtual contacts with the care homes to enhance their learning experience. Access to additional technology to support both staff and residents is considered to be worth the investment in the longer term.



Victoria Gardens Care Home, Glasgow

At a glance

Council:	Glasgow City Council
Activity:	Reducing isolation for older people in care homes by connecting them with their families
Beneficiaries:	Older people, particularly those with families
Contact:	Janice Young
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Telford & Wrekin Council

Protecting the Medically Shielded

Telford & Wrekin Council utilised data and collaborative relationships to target additional resources at those most vulnerable to the pandemic

Context

Early on in the pandemic, Telford & Wrekin Council realised that vulnerable households would need support – in particular, the means to purchase food, access medicines and make social contact to address loneliness, anxiety and other wellbeing issues arising from Covid-19.

As a Co-operative Council, it recognised that it had a duty of care to all vulnerable residents, whatever their background. There was a clear political commitment to use resources to provide support – for example a workforce that could be redeployed to new roles. It had willing partners and an established network of volunteers that it could work with and draw support from. The Council is a recognised voice in the community with the effective means to communicate and reach vulnerable residents.

Development

Activities were developed through a 'Gold' Community Support Group that brought together key services and resources to design and implement support mechanisms in response to the challenges it identified – for example, difficulties accessing food supplies and prescription medicines. The council identified the challenges that households were facing through various points of contact, such as the Community Support team, elected members, and partners including the Telford Crisis Support Network and Interfaith Council. Using this feedback, it continually reviewed

and developed its response. The Council's approach was to ensure that any vulnerable resident, whatever their background, could access the support that they needed. This was achieved by working together with community groups, community volunteers and local businesses.

Implementation

Council activities included:

- Delivery of packed lunch/food vouchers to children who qualified for Free School Meals. 52,000 packed lunches were delivered directly to the homes of families in need. It also started a breakfast scheme in June 2020. Initially in 12 target wards, it has now been rolled out Borough-wide for children eligible for Free School Meals
- Establishing a Community Support Helpline and response team available 12 hours a day, seven days a week. Over 6,000 calls were made to the Community Support Helpline and approximately 4,000 of these were referred to the Council's Community Support Team for practical help
- Over 5,000 "safe and well" calls were made to all households on the national shield list. Where people couldn't be reached by telephone, a visit was made. As part of this a 'Keep in Touch' call was offered – as of September, more than 5,000 KIT calls have been made

- Identifying over 11,000 at-risk households, which were called by redeployed Council officers and community volunteers. It also called over 10,000 households who were either Adult Social Care clients or had children with Education Health & Care Plans
- Establishing a food service – linking residents with supermarket delivery slots and local Foodbanks
- Providing over 300 laptops to eligible children in more than 50 primary schools as part of the Laptops for Learners scheme. In addition, more than 200 devices were delivered to care homes, the women and children's unit and extra care facilities.
- All social care clients called by the Council.

Co-operative values and principles were embedded in this activity by working with partner organisations and community volunteers to provide expertise and capacity. The Council provided grants of £105,000 to food banks, charities tackling homelessness and organisations providing mental health and domestic abuse support.

Review

The Council's objective was to provide support and assurance to vulnerable households during the national lockdown. Through the scale of the activities implemented and the work put in place to track the outcome of each contact, the Council was confident that it delivered on its objective.

This reflected co-operative values and principles as, together with its partners, it demonstrated that it cared for others and took social responsibility to ensure that vulnerable households, whatever their background, could access the support they received. Telford & Wrekin will continue to support voluntary and community groups as they grow and develop their capacity as part of its focus on building stronger resilient communities.

Stakeholders were involved in the process, using the following methods:

- All households were written to twice by the Council Leader
- Social media videos providing information about the Council's response, viewed 785,000 times
- Email updates to 78,000 subscribers
- Daily "newsroom" updates

At a glance

Council:	Telford & Wrekin Council
Activity:	Protecting the Medically Shielded
Beneficiaries:	Supplementary approaches to national shielding programme.
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Cardiff Council

Homelessness

Cardiff Council took over two large hotels and re-purposed two new shipping container schemes to provide safe and self-contained accommodation for rough sleepers, homeless clients and people living in unsuitable emergency accommodation

Context

The Council had to rapidly address homelessness in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, protecting rough sleepers, allowing people who were in emergency accommodation to effectively self-isolate and ensuring the safety of frontline staff. As the virus began to spread throughout the community, it became crucial to secure a significant number of additional self-contained accommodation units - to ensure that nobody remained on the street, and that individuals were capable of self-isolating if they started showing symptoms.

The Council has an in-house hostel team that already managed three hostels in the city and was able to expand very quickly to provide support in the form of additional accommodation in the hotels and shipping containers. Cardiff had also developed a strong multidisciplinary homeless team with social services, health and third sector membership. However, the radically different challenges presented by Covid-19 demanded a fundamental re-evaluation of the partnership's approach to service provision.

Development

During the pandemic, a new partnership group was established, including a very wide range of organisations, that played a crucial role in developing the services within the facilities. This included Cardiff Council in-house hostel team and partners including Public Health

Wales, South Wales Police, Probation, Area Planning Board, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and third sector service providers. Co-operative values and principles were put into action by the Council, working with housing associations, hotel owners, third sector charities and accommodation and support providers to rapidly devise an innovative solution to a complex problem.

Implementation

Over 140 clients were provided with appropriate accommodation where they could shield or self-isolate, and over 180 additional units of supported accommodation were established. This consisted of 20 isolation units in re-purposed shipping containers from existing developments, two large hotels and re-purposed accommodation. The accommodation was created by the Council's hostel team; however the services provided within the facilities were delivered by a wide range of organisations all contributing to the safety and support for high-need individuals.

Staff were redeployed from other areas of the council to ensure that the facilities could be fully staffed. 24-hour support and security staff were provided at all sites. Three meals a day and snacks were provided by the Council's Meals on Wheels Service in partnership with the Council's Youth Foods, a joint initiative between the Council and the GMB union. The third sector provided advice on substance misuse and harm reduction services. Stakeholders involved

in the process set up a Covid-19 Homeless Task Group consisting of Cardiff Council staff, service providers and statutory partners. This continues to meet fortnightly via teleconference.

Review

Rough sleeping was reduced in the city, from approximately 30 people in March 2020 to five individuals. Since the end of lockdown, this figure has increased to 12. During lockdown, the use of emergency accommodation decreased and the use of shared sleeping spaces reduced from more than 100 units to seven. Support services such as nurse-led clinics and therapeutic counselling were provided at the hotels and existing hostels with positive results and increased engagement from clients. A new long-lasting Class A drug substitute, Buvidal, was made available with the support of the Welsh Government and the results have been exceptionally positive.

Co-operative values and principles were reflected through a collaborative effort working with accommodation providers such as The Wallich, Huggard, YMCA and Salvation Army and its statutory partners. The successes seen by homelessness services during the pandemic culminated in the launch of the 'Real Change Campaign' towards the end of June 2020, which asks people not to give their spare change to those begging on the street, but instead to signpost vulnerable people to the services that can deliver real

change in their lives. The campaign aims to embed the achievements made during lockdown into a long-term approach, to lock in the benefits realised and lessons learned from the crisis. This campaign was supported by all partners.

The Council is currently developing permanent schemes to replace the hotels; the first – based in former student accommodation – was opened in September. The learning from the pandemic in terms of offering the full range of health and therapeutic services on site will be taken forward and all partners are committed to making the schemes a success.



Shipping containers used for emergency accommodation

At a glance

Council:	Cardiff Council
Activity:	Providing emergency accommodation and multi-agency support to rough sleepers and homeless clients.
Beneficiaries:	Rough sleepers and homeless clients
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South Tyneside Council

Innovative Provision of PPE

Creating visors to boost supplies to frontline care workers using 3D printers and laser cutters based at The Word in South Shields, using materials donated from businesses and organisations

Context

As in many areas of the country, Covid-19 has had a profound impact on the residents of South Tyneside, affecting many aspects of life including employment, income, education, physical and mental health, social isolation and mobility. The Council was acutely aware early on in the national lockdown that there was a general shortage of the supply of PPE. While the national effort was based around PPE for NHS Hospitals, many local care homes were struggling to secure supplies of appropriate PPE to keep staff and residents safe.

It knew of examples across the country and beyond of 'maker spaces' using 3D printers to manufacture face visors. As part of The Word cultural hub it has a Fab Lab which is open for use by the general public; this space contains four 3D printers. At this stage the building was closed, and the 3D printers not in use, so it made sense to find a way to use them to support communities.

Development

The Council consulted care homes to identify their needs for PPE and found there was a shortage across the sector of full face protective masks. It was aware of organisations around the country that had used 3D print technology to manufacture face visors. The Word has a resident artist who worked in the Fab Lab before the Covid-19 pandemic; she volunteered to produce the masks if the Council could give her access to the printers there.

The 3D printers lay down many thin layers of material in succession to produce an object. The Council asked NHS supplies for the design and specification to produce face visors appropriate for use in care settings. The frame used PLA – a compostable bioplastic which is friendly to the environment. The missing element was the supply of elastic for the fasteners which led to a partnership with local businesses who could supply such material.

The project could be implemented very quickly because of the cooperation and partnership with the Council departments (Culture and Leisure, Health and Social Care, Public Health, Procurement, Asset Management) and with external agencies (local businesses, care homes).

Implementation

The 3D printers were taken to the artist's house where she set up a production line in her garage. Initially a simple design involved printing a support, attaching acetate to it and securing the mask with elastic.

The major obstacle was finding the raw materials to produce the masks. The PPA (material for 3D printers) was easy to obtain but there were issues with acetate and elastic as they were in high demand. However, they found a supplier on a local industrial estate who were happy to donate.

With all materials shipped to the artist's home directly, she set up production of up to 200 masks per day.

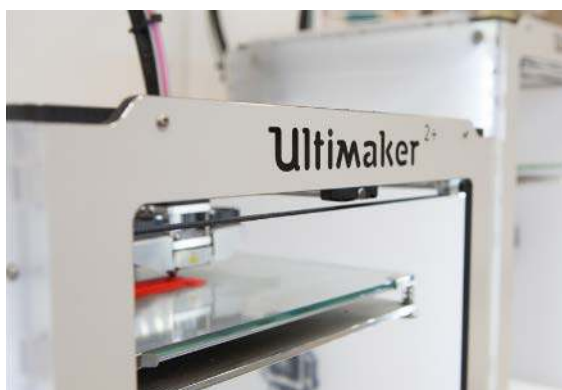
The completed batches of masks were picked up by the Council's Asset Management Team to a central resource. From here they were distributed to care homes. Individual care homes could order supplies via a specific PPE inbox, and the order was made up and delivered in the handyman van collected from the Town Hall.

Review

The project reflected the great sense of community spirit and partnership that is characteristic of South Tyneside as a borough. Individuals who work in different departments of the Council, care homes and businesses all came together to provide the different elements of the service.

South Tyneside has always worked well with partners and has a reputation for innovation. This project confirmed that this approach to problems can provide a novel solution which could only have been implemented through the willingness of individuals and organisations to work co-operatively, allowing people the freedom to work outside of their normal roles and be creative in how they do things. The project provided an innovative and co-operative solution to a problem in a time of crisis.

It wishes to build on this model to look at future challenges it can meet through cooperation and innovation in the longer term.



3D printers are a new tool against Covid-19

▶ [Video link: s.coop/2jug7](https://s.coop/2jug7)

At a glance

Council:	South Tyneside Council
Activity:	Innovative provision of PPE
Beneficiaries:	Care workers in South Tyneside
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South Tyneside Council

Plymouth City Council

Supporting Vulnerable and Diverse Communities

Plymouth City Council has worked with communities during the Covid-19 pandemic to provide community-led solutions

Context

Plymouth has a higher proportion of people above the average age so the Council was keen to ensure the appropriate measures were in place to minimise the risk to them. As a diverse city and a refugee resettlement area, there was also concern about the potential impacts that Covid-19 could have on refugees and the wider BAME community.

As social engagement, service delivery and education delivery moved largely online, internet access became essential during the height of the pandemic. It was becoming increasingly apparent that the pandemic was leaving some of the city's most vulnerable residents isolated, distressed, and worried.

Development

In response to the challenges posed by Coronavirus, the Plymouth Good Neighbours Scheme (PGNS) was set up to support the mobilisation of Plymouth's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector, empowering residents, businesses and wider stakeholders to play a key role in safeguarding those most at risk. PGNS was set up to harness and organise the goodwill demonstrated during the pandemic and was developed by identifying old and new partners across the city and linking them with volunteers. The Council played a key role by collecting the names and skillsets of volunteers and directing them to the appropriate organisations. PGNS was promoted through a social media campaign

and online forums. The Council produced case studies and profiles on some of the volunteers on Facebook and Twitter.

PCC was able to call on the skills and experience of the 'Mayflower 400' team that included project managers, a volunteer co-ordinator and a bank of volunteers, as well as other employees to set up PGNS. It has interfaced with a wide range of groups – from Caring for Plymouth, which provides support for people who are extremely vulnerable, to the Devon and Cornwall Chinese Association (DCCA). They donated 34,000 face masks to the Council to be distributed to those in need. The Council also bulk-bought PPE in collaboration with care homes to reduce costs through the Caring for Plymouth scheme.

Implementation

The Council didn't want to duplicate and set up new volunteer schemes but, instead, support existing community organisations. It carried out a needs assessment to gather information on what type of response was required. The assessment highlighted that organisations required additional volunteers to help support their response to the pandemic. As a result, an online volunteer response form was created to gather information from those interested in volunteering, with over 700 people e-registering. Community partners were involved from the start; key voluntary and community sector partners attended a twice-weekly planning and response meeting which focused on coordinating the volunteer response.

The Council quickly realised that this challenge provided an opportunity to create a long-term pipeline of volunteers. To facilitate this pipeline, the PGNS Volunteer Manager circulated a survey to those who had expressed an interest in volunteering to see if they would like to continue in the long term. Those who agreed are now informed when a suitable role becomes available and are signposted to the Our Plymouth website – the Council's volunteering portal.

Review:

The projects were a success, helped by the co-operative values of collaboration and partnership working which were embedded into the projects from the outset. A total of 19 businesses have offered support to PGNS and 78 organisations have requested support.

The Plymouth Hope WiFi project has also been a success with approximately 80 dongles installed. Biker 19 Group, a hearty band of motorcyclists, came together from different clubs to help with the community response. Having recently joined the Good Neighbours Scheme, they helped with the collection and delivery of medication to vulnerable people shielded by the Council's Caring for Plymouth hub.

The Council is keen to ensure that the learning and goodwill harnessed during the pandemic can leave a lasting legacy; it has worked hard to ensure that its Covid-19 response is sustainable. The ambition is to harness the goodwill and infrastructure developed

through PGNS to continue to support the most vulnerable residents. The Council plans to do this by working with its partners in the health system to support those people who have recently been discharged from the hospital and are receiving home care. It will engage volunteers to help service users collect their prescriptions and do their shopping. The project's partnerships are producing a good practice monitoring and evaluation toolkit for working with the refugee and asylum community which will be shared with other organisations.



At a glance

Council:	Plymouth City Council
Activity:	Supporting vulnerable and diverse communities
Beneficiaries:	Vulnerable and diverse communities
Contact:	Neil Minion, <i>Volunteer Manager</i> , Mayflower 400
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North Warwickshire Borough Council – Labour and Co-operative Group

‘Click and Collect’ Covid-19 Village shop

Provision of subsidised food boxes to residents at height of lockdown using an innovative click-and- collect model of purchase and supply

Context

For people living in the former mining communities of North Warwickshire, the social and economic impact of Covid-19 has been more significant than the impact of the disease itself. When lockdown was imposed, Dordon village, which is centred on the former Coal Board estate, became silent and deserted. A new street-based system of named volunteers was organised for people who didn't have support through social media, flyers and Zoom calls. This included setting up a village food shop because of the long supermarket queues and the challenges of shopping online. This built on work in the adjoining village of Polesworth which had set up a new subsidised and popular honesty shop for their residents. A video was made and shown on BBC Midlands.



Video link: s.coop/2jpdtd

Development

During April, discussions began about a drop-in “honesty” shop at the village hall. Key concerns were social distancing, managing queues, training volunteers, avoiding food waste,

and obtaining and managing cash donations. Conversations took place between local Councillors, members of well-established voluntary organisation Dordon Activities Group, new street-based volunteers and local residents.

The Council needed a way to maintain people's sense of pride and self respect – to make sure they didn't feel they were standing in a bread line, to tell people exactly what they would be purchasing with their money, and for their purchase to be a ‘bargain’”. The idea of a weekly, 50% subsidised ‘Click and Collect’ food shop providing a £10 Bargain Box – worth an average £23.75 – emerged. Its innovative design was adapted to the needs, culture and expectations of this community – illustrating the principles of cooperation, mutual aid, self-help and democratic engagement. A Borough Council grant of £3,000 part-funded the scheme.

Implementation

As soon as the Parish Council had agreed use of the village hall and car park, Dordon Activities Group took lead responsibility for its implementation. They persuaded a local company [BRAKES] to donate 900 sturdy food boxes, made arrangements with Morrison's supermarket to provide food items at 15% discount and drew up a list of basic staple items such as bread, milk, eggs, and fresh fruit to go in each box. They published posters on the community Facebook page, and logged orders by phone, email or Facebook – booking collection time-slots and

checking that every payment was made. Each week, these volunteers manned the village hall to receive and store food deliveries; stock and address each food box; and run the Click and Collect delivery system.

A third of the orders were placed and collected by residents for others they were helping. Each week, photos and messages were posted on social media to encourage engagement. Elderly residents and those living alone in flats were targeted using a leaflet drop, putting up posters in local shops and placing flyers in the food boxes for people to hand to neighbours and friends. The approach illustrates the principles and values of solidarity and cooperation between different sectors.

Review

The Covid-19 Click and Collect village shop ran without any serious operational problems and the scheme was extremely well received by local people.

Over eight weeks, more than 400 different households took advantage of the scheme; over 700 food boxes were ordered and over 18,000 food items distributed. Financially, the scheme broke even. From its street-by-street analysis of demand and from demographic information available about income poverty and deprivation, the Council knew that most of

the demand for these food boxes came from low-income households, the elderly and from families in need living in social housing on the former Coal Board estate.

When the scheme ended there was no protest; people accepted it was time limited. There were three key lessons. First, not every initiative has to be sustainable. Second, small council grants can be great catalysts for fostering volunteering and community leadership. Third, politicians must be prepared to take risks in order to encourage innovation. These risks are reduced if they listen to local people and choose, trust and back community leaders who can make it work.



One of the 'Click and Collect' £10 bargain boxes

At a glance

Council:	North Warwickshire Borough Council – Labour and Co-operative Group
Activity:	Local councillors and the Parish Council worked with volunteers to establish a 'Click and Collect' Covid-19 village shop.
Beneficiaries:	Families and vulnerable older people in a former mining community, Dordon
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 **Labour**
North Warwickshire

Birmingham City Council

Providing Early Help for Children and Families

To identify vulnerable families that were struggling and provide a range of local support for them during the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic

Context

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken an enormous toll on all communities in Birmingham, but the greatest impact has been on the most vulnerable. Before the pandemic, Birmingham Children's Partnership (Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Children's Trust, West Midlands Police, Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group, Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust and Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust) had agreed a change programme for children and family services. As a result of the pandemic, these plans were accelerated to coordinate support from across the partnership remotely to support children, young people and their families.

Development

The Birmingham Children's partnership aimed to:

- Identify vulnerable families that were struggling and provide a range/menu of local support
- Coordinate support in localities with the voluntary, faith and community sectors, and GPs, schools and nurseries
- Provide online advice, guidance and counselling
- Reduce demand on acute services – ensuring families had somewhere else to go
- Model an early help offer for vulnerable

families that could be built on once the Covid-19 emergency period was over.

Implementation

The Council developed a new locality structure for early help. The structure was built from the community with coordination by Birmingham Voluntary Service Council, 10 children's charities leading each of the localities (districts), and 10 public sector leads. Activities included:

- Coordinating and supporting schools and nurseries contacting vulnerable families
- Holding regular partnership meetings to coordinate support and avoid duplication of effort
- Advising local partners of the early help and support they could access
- Helping the voluntary sector to connect to families
- Mapping and publishing available resources during the Covid-19 period
- Supporting the roll-out of food vouchers for all children on Free School Meals, Foodbanks, allocation of resilience funding and other support
- Agreeing and allocating community grants to local community, voluntary and faith groups.

The Council allocated grants for community, voluntary and faith groups who were supporting families during the Covid-19 period. £800,000 was available to support children and families, with an additional £500,000

available for vulnerable adults and further funding for older people.

The process for allocation of community grants drew on the model and forms from the Neighbourhood Networks and Adult Social Care. The Council specifically wanted to encourage grassroots community groups to be at the forefront of the Covid-19 response.

£1m of resilience funding was allocated to direct help for children, young people and families who required hardship support. Local professionals completed a simple form to apply for funding for supplies, food, fuel, medicines, white goods or internet access for a family. If applying before 3pm on weekdays, money was transferred to families within an hour. There was no wrong front door so it was acceptable for this grant to cross over with others, as long as recipients were receiving the payment only once.

Approval and allocation of funds was undertaken centrally by a business support team, which cross-referred to other hardship funds to reduce the chance of fraud and duplication. There was close working with the Birmingham Children's Trust Resource Hub and the MK Community Foundation that is currently allocating support to young people.

Online mental health support was also launched from Kooth. The service is available for 250,000 young people aged 11 to 25 and provides chat, moderated peer support, self-help guides and counselling. The service

is funded by Birmingham City Council and commissioned by Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group.

Review

The Council developed a citywide database of families, which was built on a universal dataset by Birmingham Children's Trust. It was critical for correlating with local spreadsheets of children the Council were worried about, and identifying families who were falling through the gaps between early help services. A new government notification for sharing data between health and local authority partners supported the database, as well as existing SEND Collaborative Working data sharing agreement, Birmingham Children's Collaborative Working Information



At a glance

Council:	Birmingham City Council
Activity:	Providing early help for children and families during the Covid-19 pandemic
Beneficiaries:	Vulnerable children, young people and families in Birmingham
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Chapter 2: Recovery

Covid-19 has had a massive impact on local economies and social infrastructure and threatens lasting consequences for wellbeing in our communities. It's vital that steps are taken as soon as possible to bounce back from the pandemic – and hopefully in the process we can create something better than we had before.

Councils have been working with local businesses – especially in sectors hard hit by the lockdown and social distancing measures, such as hospitality – to help them weather the crisis. In places like Cardiff and Oxford this has seen close collaboration to make better use of open spaces, for instance with pedestrianisation of some streets to give cafés and restaurants space to safely seat customers outdoors.

There has also been innovative work with SMEs and social enterprises which will leave communities with more inclusive and sustainable economies – including a forward-looking circular economy initiative in Kirklees.

Other member councils have focused on offering new skills opportunities to adults who have lost their jobs which should leave us with a more resilient workforce in the coming years. And some have devised projects to address crises in food poverty and wellbeing which will be a source of support after the Covid-19 crisis is over.

Cardiff Council

City Centre Recovery – Castle Quarter

Cardiff Council has delivered an innovative new public space and outdoor seating area, the 'Castle Quarter,' to support local hospitality businesses in the city centre and allow residents to socialise safely during the recovery period

Context

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on Cardiff's economy. The UK and Welsh Government lockdowns required the vast majority of businesses, particularly in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, to shut down temporarily.

The Council had already been preparing city centre interventions to improve air quality, so with Covid-19, it saw an opportunity to integrate its ambitions for better air quality and more active travel with the need to support local businesses in the recovery period. With extensive experience of hosting large-scale events and the temporary measures required in the city centre to support them, the Council was able to draw on existing knowledge and expertise to deliver infrastructure and associated measures in a very short timescale.

Development

To respond to the pressing situation for local city centre businesses and jobs, Cardiff Council collaborated with city partners to design and deliver the Castle Quarter, an innovative new public space in front of Cardiff Castle, in the heart of the city. The Castle Quarter consists of a 240-seat, outdoor covered eating area, allowing restaurants and cafés to trade while social distancing regulations remain too restrictive for a sufficient level of activity on their own premises. The Council closed Castle Street to traffic, allowing the new space to be built directly on the street, which has ensured the

city centre remains an exciting, social and safe environment for residents and visitors, as well as a welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists, with new pop-up cycleways installed along the street.

Stakeholder engagement played an essential role in the successful delivery of the project. The Council enlisted the support of Arup to design the Castle Quarter space and worked with FOR Cardiff – the city's business improvement district – to engage businesses and assess their needs, ensuring that the scheme would be implemented in a way that would maximise the benefit to the local economy. Existing expertise within the Council was utilised to develop and deliver the supporting infrastructure, such as the pop-up cycleway.

Placemaking and people-friendly public spaces were embedded from the initial planning stages with Arup, as there was a mutual recognition that the city had been given an opportunity to alter the path of the centre's development in favour of people and the environment.

Implementation

Castle Street was closed to traffic to allow the new outdoor seating area to be built on the street and Castle moat for use by local restaurants and cafés. Cardiff-based start-up Yoello was also hired to develop a new app, accessible by scanning a QR code placed on the tables, which allows customers to

order deliveries from a number of restaurants and cafés across the city and to pay through a secure platform, ensuring that socially distancing is observed as much as possible.

The Council and FOR Cardiff conducted a number of engagement sessions and workshops, as part of a commitment to support the operation of the city centre. Co-operative values and principles were embedded in this activity by working with local companies such as Yoello and employee-owned organisations such as Arup, the Council was able to maximise the social value of the contract, ensuring better local social and economic outcomes.

Review

After a highly successful first weekend, when the Castle Quarter generated over £80,000 for the local economy, many more city centre businesses are now in talks with the Council to join the initiative. The Castle Quarter project's success has been the result of strong collaboration between the Council, the private sector and the third sector, exemplifying the co-operative way of working.

One of the major lessons the Council has learned from this activity, as well as the Covid-19 crisis more broadly, has been the positive impact a cleaner and less-congested environment has on the city. Furthermore, the link between delivering major benefits in air quality and also in terms of the economy, health and wellbeing has become even

clearer. After a highly successful project integrating these components, the Council is looking for ways to maintain the significant progress made in its effort to build a greener, fairer and more people-focused city in the post-Covid era.



The Castle Quarter, Cardiff

At a glance

Council:	Cardiff Council
Activity:	City Centre Recovery – Castle Quarter
Beneficiaries:	City centre hospitality businesses and general population
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Stevenage Borough Council

Inclusive Economy Charter

As part of recovery efforts, Stevenage Borough Council established a charter for the town to drive pledges from public, private and voluntary sector partners to rebuild the local economy, putting residents and local enterprises at the heart of recovery planning

Context

The Council had passed a motion at the end of 2019 to drive forward a programme of community wealth building. The unprecedented impact of Covid-19 on the local economy highlighted the vulnerability of large multinational companies as well as small and medium-sized enterprises. A quarter of the town's working age population were furloughed during the peak of the pandemic, with a significant number losing jobs and income. The Council's community response team "Stevenage Helps" saw an unprecedented rise in hardship cases. The council decided to accelerate its plans around community wealth building to drive recovery.

Development

The Council first looked at its own processes and the levers it could use. It continued to promote business support grants and target those small and sole traders who had not come forward for support. It then looked at other tools to unlock economic opportunities for local businesses and has since embarked on a full review of its procurement strategy to consider local supply chains. This would enable the council to build relationships with more local businesses as suppliers. The Council then looked at its work with partners and considered how the town's planned regeneration might harness further opportunities for employment, particularly for young people entering a restricted labour market.

£300,000 had recently been secured from the Construction Industry Training Board and a partnership with North Herts College and JobCentre Plus would enable the targeting of these apprenticeships to young people at most risk. The Council then looked for ways to further support the growth of the social enterprise and co-operative economy as part of recovery efforts, in order to build more sustainable economic models with greater social benefit. This led to the implementation of a Creative Meanwhile Use Policy for empty units, formed in dialogue with the Arts and Heritage Forum. A newly formed CIC, Junction 7 Creatives, took over an empty unit to create new town centre animation and creative workspace.

Implementation

The idea of an Inclusive Economy Charter grew from the council's ambition to build back better. The Charter was drawn from discussions with voluntary sector partners to create something of interest to large businesses and small community organisations alike. Co-production has underpinned this approach. The Council further embedded this work in the town's recovery plan led by the multi-agency Stevenage Together Recovery Taskforce. The taskforce will monitor recovery efforts over the coming 12 months.

The initial development of the charter encountered some challenges as many organisations were focused on immediate

Review

on co-operative values around innovation, co-production and shared dividends for those involved. It is clear that all stakeholders within the local economy have a part to play.

There was some initial hesitation as to whether this work should start while stakeholders were still in response mode to the pandemic. It was decided that, with no swift commitment, the opportunity would be missed to inform recovery efforts and establish a “new normal”, which in turn would create greater economic resilience across the town. This has also been an opportunity for the Council to influence work at a county level through the Hertfordshire Growth Board. Community Wealth Building has now been agreed as a priority focus area for the North, East and Central Herts Growth Corridor. The Council has committed to producing its first Community Balance sheet at the end of the financial year, to sit alongside its annual accounts. This will quantify the social value achieved through the Council’s activities.



At a glance

Council: Stevenage Borough Council

Activity: Inclusive Economy Charter

Beneficiaries: Small and medium sized local businesses, social enterprises and co-operatives, residents.

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Kirklees Council

Developing a Circular Economy in Kirklees

Kirklees Council is working with Leeds University to identify and engage local manufacturers with particular potential for circular economy innovations, leading to a more resilient and sustainable local economy, creation of new jobs and better environmental outcomes

Context

Kirklees has suffered the health and economic impacts of the pandemic in a similar manner to neighbouring districts. However, in the early stages of the crisis it was projected to see a particularly marked decline largely due to the concentration of manufacturing firms which account for 25% of the local economy. Much has been said during the pandemic of the need to build back better both in terms of environmental sustainability and economic inclusivity. These issues chime with two key work streams in Kirklees prior to Covid-19, which have been incorporated as cross-cutting themes within the Economic Recovery Plan in combination with the application of the Council's People, Partners, Places approach.

Moving away from a traditional linear (take-make-use-waste) economy towards a circular economy (CE) provides opportunities for Kirklees to make significant strides in carbon reduction while presenting opportunities for local businesses to increase their resilience and create competitive advantage – and at the same time opening up new job opportunities. Working with this group of businesses builds on existing business growth activity within the council.

Development

During the pandemic the Council was contacted by Dr Anne Velenturf, a leading expert on circular economy based at Leeds University, who was interested in developing

partnerships with Local Authorities. Following an initial discussion an internal webinar was arranged with Dr Velenturf to consider the opportunity and a possible approach. At a similar time, the Yorkshire Universities PERN group (Place-based Economic Recovery Network) held a series of webinars which considered four themes across all of which circular economy could play a contributing part:

- The future role of towns and cities
- Clean and green recovery tackling climate change
- Start-up & entrepreneurial led recovery
- Resilient supply chains.

It was also identified that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority was in the process of relaunching resource efficiency support for businesses (ReBiz) including 30 days consultancy support to identify CE opportunities. This support provides opportunity for businesses identified as having a potential for CE innovation; they can be directed to initial support and prepared for further grant support to implement recommendations identified through consultancy.

On the back of this work, Kirklees Council and Leeds University have agreed to jointly fund initial research into CE potential in the Kirklees economy and use this work to attract funding for further research. This complements CE research being undertaken by Huddersfield University related to food systems.

Implementation

This project, still in its inception stage, is based on a new partnership between Kirklees Council and Leeds University. The design of the project has been developed through the initial webinar with stakeholders internal to the council. An initial phase of desk-based research will map the manufacturing base and related flows of inputs and outputs of the project. This will be used to identify businesses with strategic potential to drive development of a circular economy in Kirklees. It should also be noted that partnership is a key aspect of most CE innovations, with one organisation providing a solution to reducing waste in an aspect of another's processes; or another business utilising the waste from another's production process.

Review

It is too early to evaluate the success of this project, but improvements are expected

in the following areas:

- Increase in creation of circular economy jobs
- Increase in competitiveness of Kirklees manufacturing firms
- Increase in investment attracted to Kirklees-based firms innovating in the circular economy space
- Reduction in domestic and trade waste volumes
- Reduced carbon emissions through efficiencies in raw materials processing and logistics
- Increased public awareness of the circular economy concept and the imperative to reduce waste.

Additionally, CE innovations are likely to drive new or stronger collaborations between firms, with the Council and potentially with local communities.



Mirfield, Kirklees

At a glance

Council:	Kirklees Council
Activity:	Developing a Circular Economy in Kirklees
Beneficiaries:	Local manufacturing firms
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Plymouth City Council

Resurgam: Local Economic Plan for Recovery

Resurgam is the city's response to the lockdown and its economic impact, developed in collaboration with local business

Context

Plymouth is ranked as the 64th most deprived local authority out of 317 Local Authority districts (*2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation*). For people in some of the most deprived wards, Covid-19 places them in an increasingly uncertain and precarious financial context which will only worsen already prevalent inequality within the city.

The city's Resurgam programme was announced in May in response to the lockdown and its economic impact. Developed in collaboration with local business, its local economic recovery plan aims to deliver a more equal, sustainable and prosperous city through protecting jobs and helping residents.

Development

Resurgam brought together the Council's economic resources as well as a range of sector partners, including the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Heart of the South West LEP, Plymouth Social Enterprise Network, universities, partnerships and a range of national bodies.

The Council adopted a pragmatic sector-based approach to recovery to fully leverage the infrastructure, partnerships and good relationships already in place with the business community and anchor organisations. Plymouth City Council worked closely with a range of sector partnerships to co-produce a series of sector action plans that tailor support specifically to the needs of each sector.

An early action was to establish a Sector Recovery Hub with a range of partners where best practice could be shared as part of a coordinated response.

The four stages of development were:

- Acute Immediate Response
- Analysis and Reflection
- Recovery Phase
- Return to Long Term Prosperity and Resilience

It developed the programme in line with its current Corporate Plan values which fully align with the co-operative values and principles – democratic, responsible, fair and co-operative. Because it has operated this way for a number of years, the Council already had strong collaborative partnerships in place, enabling successful co-development and rapid delivery.

Implementation

In order to implement the Resurgam programme, six key delivery pillars were identified:

- Spend 4 Plymouth: A focus on local procurement for local jobs and ensuring contracts maximise social value; with clear benefits for people, the city and the environment. The Council set a target of committing to a 10% increase over the next two years and are working with other local procurers to do the same
- Build 4 Plymouth: An ambitious capital

programme and economic stimulus to support construction jobs and create 2,500 new jobs over the next two years

- Skills 4 Plymouth: Extensive new support for young people and retraining the workforce for future jobs.
- City Centre Renaissance programme: Support for the city centre and a regeneration plan
- Sector action plans: Bespoke package of support for 13 key sectors
- Resurgam Beacons: A focus on the future by seeking to create new jobs in the marine and cultural sectors along with a new green deal for jobs.

Review

In the initial acute response phase, it was an economic first responder to over 4,000 businesses by providing immediate help, signposting to government support and directly administering the Covid-19 small business grants scheme. Its strong acute response was effective in encouraging new collaborations between partners. The aim now is to learn from this and ensure that long-term co-operative solutions can evolve. As the Council already has a team in place with a stated aim of developing co-operatives, it is ideally placed to develop these new collaborations and help them to flourish.

Feedback on Skills4Plymouth has been overwhelmingly positive and it has already supported nearly 900 people. It recently

launched the 'Skills Launchpad', supporting adults and young people with careers and skills advice. Working with partners across the city, the scheme has brought all the support available into a single one stop shop. This has been a true partnership effort with all partners bringing everything together for the first time to support schools, employers and local people.

It is in the process of developing a Resurgam Charter focused on the equality and sustainability aspects of the programme. Action plans are currently being developed and rolled out and it will be looking to embed the co-operative values and principles within these. Once established, progress will be monitored regularly against key delivery milestones.

The Recovery and Return phases will ensure the city does not just survive but thrive as it comes out of the Covid crisis, looking to the future, placing green and fair growth at the heart of Resurgam's legacy.



Plymouth

At a glance

Council:	Plymouth City Council
Activity:	Resurgam – local economic plan for recovery
Beneficiaries:	Local businesses and residents
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Glasgow City Council

Providing Support to Glasgow's Social Enterprise Sector

Funding and strategy to help the sector recover from the effects of the pandemic

Context

Glasgow City Council published *A Social Enterprise Strategy for Glasgow* in the summer of 2018 – including an annual grant fund, the Co-operative and Social Enterprise Fund (CSEF), to assist with the growth, diversification and support of the sector. In response to Covid-19, the local Glasgow Social Enterprise Network (GSEN) undertook a survey which found that:

- 53% of members were forced to close due to the crisis, with some expressing concern that they might not reopen after the crisis has passed
- 89% of members experienced a reduction in trading
- 27% of social enterprises report adapting well to redesigning activities and services, with 14% struggling to do the same
- 36% of GSEN members experienced increased costs due to the crisis
- 57% of members furloughed staff

The GSEN created a short-life fund to support the sector during lockdown which was heavily oversubscribed. These results – allied with extensive anecdotal evidence – convinced the Social Enterprise Board that a review of the first strategic Action Plan (2019-2022) was required.

Development

As the emerging issues for the co-operative and social enterprise sector in Glasgow became apparent, Council Officers had to

balance wider emergency business support with strategic assistance to the sector. As well as refreshing the first strategic Action Plan, work prior to the Covid-19 pandemic had been underway to redesign the CSEF, to make it more agile and reflective of the needs of the sector. This was carried out in conjunction with the sector and other funding providers – such as The Robertson Trust – to ensure that the fund complemented and built upon other sources of support to the sector. The redesigned CSEF was rolled into the wider update to the strategic Action Plan which was launched in September 2020. The CSEF and strategic Action Plan can draw from up to £175,000 of funding support in 2020/2021 to deliver strategic actions or provide grants to eligible social enterprises or co-operatives.

Implementation

During lockdown, work on the future CSEF and delivery of strategic actions was suspended. CSEF grants from 2019/2020 were made more flexible, in light of the changed realities facing the sector. As the lockdown and crisis eased in the summer of 2020, attention returned to the reform of CSEF and the potential for a new ReAction Plan for the sector in Glasgow. This has been developed by a working group composed of Officers and the chair and vice chair of the Social Enterprise Board.

Challenges around social isolation and the need to work remotely have been overcome using a number of online video meeting tools. These have allowed for the Social Enterprise Board to meet and for those engaged in the

drafting of the ReAction Plan and CSEF to be directly engaged. It is expected that a period of online consultation will be utilised ahead of any relaunch of the CSEF in the autumn of 2020.

Review

Work is under way to get a refreshed ReAction Plan and CSEF approved and operational in the autumn of 2020. They will build on the positive support already provided by GSEN and the Council through direct interventions to advise social enterprises and co-operatives in Glasgow, as well as through the Covid Business Support grants which paid out more than £100m to businesses in Glasgow, with numerous social enterprises and

co-operatives eligible for that support.

With hindsight, it would have been advantageous to move more rapidly to address the CSEF and Action Plan reforms. However, no one could have foreseen the length and breadth of the lockdown, nor the impact it would have on society and the wider economy.

As the Council refines and clarifies proposals for the CSEF and ReAction Plan throughout September 2020, the focus will be on delivery – and on ensuring that the CSEF and strategic actions are as effective as possible in supporting the co-operative and social enterprise sector to survive and thrive in the new economic reality.



Glasgow

At a glance

Council:	Glasgow City Council
Activity:	Providing support to Glasgow's social enterprise sector
Beneficiaries:	Glasgow's social enterprise and co-operative sectors
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Rochdale Borough Council

Tackling Food Poverty

Emergency community response and ongoing sustainable solution around food

Context

Rochdale is a borough with high levels of deprivation so those who suffered most during the pandemic were already at a disadvantage. The primary impacts of Covid-19 in the Rochdale borough were on food, poverty, social connection and digital exclusion. The Council identified cohorts of people who would be at increased risk from the impact of lockdown. The Council already had partnerships and multidisciplinary teams in place at a neighbourhood level. These teams had existing connections to the local community, voluntary and faith sectors which meant the Council's response was formulated, established and up and running very swiftly.

Development

Multi-agency groups formed quickly to address community or neighbourhood issues associated with the virus and lockdown. These hubs were linked to community groups, services, projects and volunteers operating in the area who understand the community. This was vital in both supporting and enriching communities.

Expertise was brought in across the system, and everyone played their part. It was an incredibly wide-reaching collaborative process which brought together IT, the contact centre, community safety colleagues, data and intelligence, licensing, library services and so on. Other services provided staff for the Covid-19 response – and where services were stretched, extra support was provided, either formally or informally.

The process operated in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation. Many local organisations involved are not formal co-operatives but incorporate the values and principles. Equity was at the heart of the planning, recognising inequalities and identifying people who would be disproportionately affected. Self-responsibility was key, with people who could, supporting people who needed extra support. Services and online drop-ins focused on supporting and enabling people to look after themselves and each other.

Implementation

Five emergency hubs were established to meet the broad-ranging needs of people within the community, which extended far beyond the scope of food provision. Each hub was linked to a specific Township Area and were assisted by a network of community groups and volunteers. They worked together to organise shopping, prescription delivery, wellbeing and general support.

As the operation progressed there was increasing stakeholder involvement. The Equalities Assembly was a partnership piece of work between Action Together, Rochdale Council and the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector. The focus was around reducing disparities and inequalities around Covid-19. The Assembly has fed into the development of the community response and led to the establishment of a number of forums and specific focus groups to continue conversations started at the assembly. In addition, a number of collaborative spaces have been established with grassroots

gatherings, community and faith groups and a food solutions network.

Review

The project has been hugely successful: the immediate needs of the most vulnerable were met and more than 8,000 people have been directly supported through an extremely difficult period. New partner relationships have been forged and existing partner relationships strengthened. Underscored and informed by co-operative principles and values, this diverse group of organisations came together organically to help support the community and the delivery of the response was seamless. It has established a legacy of informal support for people in

the community who are vulnerable.

The project demonstrated that a sustainable food solution was needed to shift the emphasis from support to self-responsibility. The establishment of the food solutions network and Economic Support Network has arisen directly from the community response. It has led to the development of a co-operative food warehouse, enhancing the offer of affordable food and care packages. It is built on the Covid-19 learning that food is the gateway to a conversation around other support needs. The focus now is on the food solutions network, a legacy of the community response hubs which will continue to meet the needs of the vulnerable in a way that promotes self-help and self-responsibility.



At a glance

Council:	Rochdale Borough Council
Activity:	Crisis provision and ongoing food solutions
Beneficiaries:	Communities suffering extreme hardship
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Stevenage Borough Council

Healthy Stevenage Partnership

The Healthy Stevenage Partnership designed a range of initiatives with communities to drive community wellbeing, for children, families and those isolated as part of recovery efforts

Context

Covid-19 heightened existing awareness of health inequalities in Stevenage. These concerns included people suffering domestic abuse, those in poverty, those with multiple and complex needs and those experiencing social isolation. Stevenage Borough Council and its partners recognised their collaborative role and contributions that would make a difference and reduce demand for services during this time. The Council had already taken a lead in facilitating a Healthy Stevenage Partnership, as a collaborative space for communities, with the Health Service, Borough Council and County Council coming together to tackle challenges. Covid-19 provided an impetus for a targeted focus.

Development

Early in the pandemic the Council started to talk to partners through the Healthy Stevenage Partnership in relation to emerging health and wellbeing needs among the population. The Healthy Stevenage Partnership trialled its first Zoom session bringing organisations, community representatives and voluntary groups together to create a plan of action to support the needs of vulnerable residents. A total of 22 partners attended – one of the highest recorded attendance rates for the partnership.

Between March and May 2020 the Council shared weekly Covid-19 updates containing funding opportunities, headline news and resources and increased its social media presence. It also carried out a Covid-19

impact assessment on partners and the communities they serve. This highlighted the need for more support and guidance with joint funding bids and an increased focus on health and wellbeing interventions. This particularly targeted families as a number of hardship and safeguarding concerns were beginning to emerge. Through a series of partner consultations based on community contact the council started to consider the best way to work to support health and wellbeing. Healthy Stevenage Partnership was able to share findings from a wide range of partner engagement exercises to help inform this work.

Implementation

With increasing concerns regarding physical inactivity and mental wellbeing, particularly among vulnerable residents, the partnership swiftly launched the So Active Project. This delivered physical activities online and outdoors to help support the physical and mental health of residents targeting key workers, older people, children and young people, and adults. Between July and September 2020 over 30 sessions were delivered with over 300 residents participating.

To ensure families were targeted, 60 Pop-up Play sessions focused on mental wellbeing and isolation were delivered in 12 parks and open spaces over a five-week period. Over 1,000 activity packs were distributed to all participating families and over 900 picnics to families and households experiencing food poverty, funded through donations and councillor budgets.

Healthy Stevenage and Hertfordshire Sports Partnership hosted a joint webinar to bring groups and organisations together to target activities in the neighbourhood with greatest health inequalities. With support from the Community Development Officer, four community organisations devised a summer holiday programme for 2020 incorporating sport and physical activity following social distancing conventions. Through the partnership Stevenage Football Foundation, Stevenage Helps, Stevenage Community Careline, HomeStart, The Family Centre, The Living Room and Mind connected befrienders to those in need of food, prescriptions and someone to talk to. Collectively they made over 8,000 calls and completed almost 3,400 home visits to vulnerable residents.

Review

The early challenges of the work related to capturing the impact of Covid-19 on wider wellbeing measures and then tracking the appropriate responses. Creating a pandemic response dashboard for partners to update fortnightly would have improved quantitative data to assess reach. The immediate response efforts focused on those medically shielded and self-isolating. Discussion at the Healthy Stevenage Partnership quickly broadened this assessment to other groups, to address wider health concerns and plan activities to support the recovery as pandemic restrictions eased. The Healthy Stevenage Partnership has gained momentum as a collaborative space to support communities to feel safe and well with a growing focus on building resilience and working with volunteers.



Stevenage Cycling Festival

At a glance

Council:	Stevenage Borough Council
Activity:	Healthy Stevenage Partnership
Beneficiaries:	Residents
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Oxford City Council

Green Recovery

Oxford City Council's recovery revitalised the city centre to benefit communities, create liveable streets, start green recovery and improve air quality

Context

As a result of Covid-19, Oxford City Council has implemented a wide range of measures to create liveable streets, start the green recovery and improve air quality. These include creating one-way pavements to free up pavement space; installing 130 bike parking spaces at Park and Rides; creating and running an inclusive transport and movement focus group; free parking at Park and Rides; and pedestrianising streets including St Michael's Street and George Street. In addition, the council has installed temporary bus gates and supported the pedestrianisation of North Parade.

The Council made £100,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) available for the Restart phase, in addition to the £134,000 which the Government allocated to Oxford as part of its Reopening High Streets Safely Fund.

Development

As the Government announced an easing of lockdown, the Council focused on supporting a successful restart for Oxford's retail and hospitality economy. The approach has been guided by the 10-point checklist developed by the national High Streets Task Force. Reasons underpinning work are:

- Economic recovery: measures to enable social distancing in the public realm were essential if people were to have the confidence to return to the city centre and district shopping areas

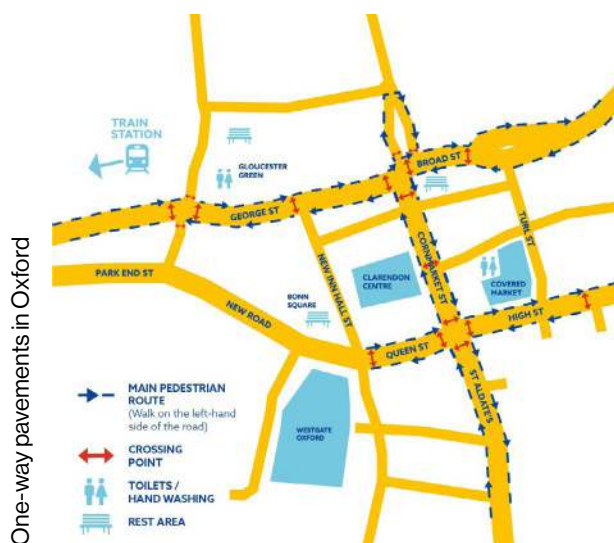
- Liveable streets: the creation and regular running of the inclusive transport and movement focus group means that Oxford remains an accessible city for residents, shoppers, visitors and workers
- Air quality: Oxford city centre saw a historic 59% drop in air pollution as a direct result of the coronavirus lockdown. It is hoped that a number of the changes might sustain the benefits of improved air quality while kick-starting economic recovery
- Supporting local businesses: the hospitality sector has been hit particularly hard by the pandemic and the narrow pavements and roads in Oxford make "pavement cafés" impossible in numerous locations. The Council's creation of safe "tables and chairs zones" on the highway has been essential to the reopening of some hospitality-dominant areas of the city.

Implementation

The reaction from local businesses has on the whole been very favourable. There was strong support for the "tables and chairs" measures to support hospitality businesses in George Street and St Michael's Street through pedestrianisation, and the extension of St Michael's Street. There has also been good support from some of the major employers and businesses regarding the more strategic shift towards active travel and public transport and away from the private car. This was confirmed in a survey of Oxford businesses, conducted in May 2020, which showed

strong support in principle for green recovery measures including:

- More secure cycle parking in key locations
- New segregated cycle ways on key routes by removing bus lanes or narrowing traffic lanes
- Extra space for outdoor tables and chairs for food and beverage businesses



Review

The urgent situation, the new funding coming available, and a strong spirit of collaboration within the Council and across all the major stakeholders in Oxford, combined so that

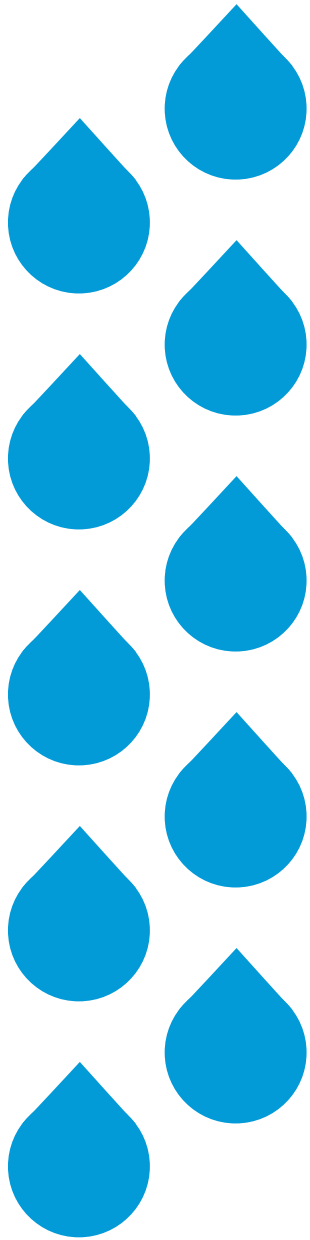
things which might usually take months or years have been possible in days or weeks. At an officer and political level, the City and County Councils have been meeting regarding active travel and economic recovery with a frequency and positivity that is unheralded in recent years.

Relations with businesses have understandably been more delicate. Businesses have been supportive partners of Council measures which have an obvious and immediate benefit to them, such as the pedestrianisation of streets with a high proportion of hospitality premises. But it has been much harder to win around city centre businesses to the concept of a green recovery where the proposed measure is linked to a more strategic objective which may not immediately benefit the businesses affected. This is most obvious in relation to the proposed city centre bus gates, where there has been very vocal dissent from prominent business owners and operators. There is a sense among some businesses in which a measure which is broadly “anti-car” must be “anti-business”, even though there is strong evidence in a city such as Oxford, with a high proportion of cyclists and bus users and a highly constrained road and car parking network, that the car cannot be key to the city’s recovery.

At a glance

Council:	Oxford City Council
Activity:	Green Recovery
Beneficiaries:	Residents throughout the city
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Chapter 3: Resilience

The Covid-19 pandemic brings an important lesson: disaster can strike – and to protect people and communities our services and systems need to be robust and flexible. Resilience is a key benefit of the co-operative model and throughout this crisis our Councils have shown this as they rose to the challenge.

Initiatives already in place have left our Councils well placed to meet the extraordinary demands of Covid-19. Health services have encountered huge daily challenges especially in the early stage of the pandemic. But Bristol City Council was able to utilise its established close partnerships with healthcare bodies to meet demand for PPE, testing and transport – and weather massive fluctuations in price, quality and demand.

Meanwhile, research on poverty which had been undertaken by Brent Council gave it a head start when it came to providing assistance to vulnerable members of the community during the pandemic; and steps by Preston City Council to create a more pluralistic and worker-centred local economy by developing new co-ops should leave its job market better placed to recover from the economic fallout from lockdown.

There are more changes and challenges to come over the coming years and decades for our communities – with a recession looming, the effects of Brexit and in the longer term climate change and the transition to a greener economy. By collaborating with citizens, anchor institutions, third sector partners and local businesses, Councils can build on the lessons of Covid-19 and ensure our communities are ready to thrive in these changing times.

Staffordshire County Council Labour and Co-operative Group

Leek Community Cupboard / Survive Together Leek

The introduction of food bags and the creation of a new community hub to meet the needs of low-income families

Context

Covid-19 affected many vulnerable and shielding residents on the Haregate Estate, one of the most deprived areas of Leek. The Community Cupboard which grew out of an earlier initiative by Staffordshire County Council to provide cheap bags of fresh fruit and vegetables expanded massively from the Haregate Community Centre. But there was also the wider community need for support for those who were shielding. Out of that need, Survive Together Leek emerged as an entirely volunteer-run project.

Development

Staffordshire County Council launched the Leek Community Cupboard (LCC) under a Council project leader, working with school pupils from the Haregate Community Centre in Leek. The LCC offered all residents a large bag of fresh fruit and vegetables for £3. The operation wasn't financially viable after the project funding ended, so the Haregate Community Centre manager took over, running the scheme from the venue two days a week, mostly using volunteers, with great success. LCC expanded massively during the pandemic and took over the distribution of Staffordshire County Council's parcels for people who are shielding. As the cost of food rose, additional funding had to be found to subsidise the bags of food, with the price held at £3. Local Councillors donated some of their community fund monies to ensure the food bags remained affordable for all.

Survive Together Leek (STL) – set up to identify all those people who needed some help – also emerged through the work of the Haregate Community Centre. A leaflet with contact details was delivered to every house in Leek and beyond. If the resident needed help, they were matched with a local volunteer to provide support during lockdown. The local Labour party stepped in and printed a non-political leaflet advertising their befriending, shopping and delivery services. The leafleting made it possible to learn the needs of the local community and use volunteers to meet those needs – from delivering prescriptions and making phone calls to alleviate isolation, to doing food shopping. The scheme was so successful that those running it have now taken over a local church building which they are turning into a community hub and a standalone charity.

Implementation

LCC was so successful that it has now been expanded to cover 60 surrounding villages, but is still largely run by volunteers out of the Haregate Community Centre using the Fareshare project and local suppliers. A big bag of fresh fruit and vegetables is still available for £3 every Tuesday and Friday – for local collection or delivered by volunteers. The bag service is not just for food – it can also include items including household goods and toiletries. The project has been subsidised by local District and County Councillors from their community funds.

STL has expanded its role to include providing children's activities, clothes and advice for local families in need. They have a pool of volunteers and advertise their services widely using social media.

The local Trinity Methodist Church in Leek has for several years given its backing to the ASHA project to support refugees in nearby Stoke-on-Trent. This year at Harvest Festival, the church has encouraged its large congregation to donate non-perishable food items to support their refugees and asylum seekers. They have also reached out to the whole community to encourage them to donate goods as well, to help ASHA in their work with refugees.

Review

Both LCC and STL are now well established as community projects which enjoy cross party-political support. Staffordshire wants to actively support both projects as they are run by volunteers who are based in the local community – a clear demonstration of the values of cooperation in action. While the number of volunteers has declined as people have gone back to work, the projects can call on a large pool of people to help out. As a result they have now become a permanent and valued part of the voluntary sector in the county.



At a glance

Council:	Staffordshire County Council Labour & Co-operative Group
Activity:	Leek Community Cupboard / Survive Together Leek
Beneficiaries:	Staffordshire residents
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Bristol City Council

(on behalf of and in partnership with NHS Bristol North Somerset South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group)

New Partnerships and Collaborations

Partnered and coordinated response to provide PPE, transport and testing

Context

In the initial period of the Covid-19 response there were daily challenges in responding to the wider health and care system needs around PPE. These ranged from significant shortages of PPE in supply and stock, massive fluctuations on price, quality and demand, national changes to guidance on usage and issues around fraud.

The three BNSSG local authorities (Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) work closely with NHS partners on integrated, system-wide approaches to health and care issues. As part of an integrated and health and care system response to the pandemic, a Logistics Cell was set up in March 2020 by the partner organisations to coordinate action on PPE issues, transport and testing issues across the BNSSG area.

Development

Initially the work of the Logistics Cell was focused on PPE troubleshooting, and enabling mutual aid in response to shortages. Daily meetings of procurement leads from across the system were set up, and in order to facilitate joint working and coordination of mutual aid, structures and system processes were evolved rapidly, with individual organisations' agreement secured via incident control centre meetings. This included:

- A single currency for recording PPE requirements and stock levels across health and care providers

- The interpretation of national guidance on PPE use for (non-acute) health and care providers to develop estimated daily 'burn rates' for PPE items by provider type and at system level.
- The adoption of StockWatch, a PPE management software tool provided by Advise Inc which enabled daily reporting of stock levels across the system. Local authorities, the CCG (on behalf of primary care) and health providers all committed to providing daily updates
- Coordinated PPE orders placed for PPE via a procurement consortium which previously had supported the system's acute trusts only (via Bristol and Western Purchasing Consortium).

Implementation

The Logistics Cell was formed as part of the wider BNSSG Incident Command Structure. The Cell was structured with key personnel with respective specialisms from across the BNSSG partners. Key posts include: Chair; Management Support Coordinators (x3); Room Manager and Room Coordinator. Reporting structures to Bronze Command were also applied – around reports of activities, management of risk and issue; these followed Project Management principles. The aligned personnel were either seconded into roles or aligned to support roles by agreement with their respective organisations. The Cell had a specific email account established and

worked with identified peer stakeholders from across the BNSSG partners and the Local Resilience Forum for Avon and Somerset.

Review

With continued uncertainty about future requirements for PPE storage, stock management and distribution across the wider health and care system, the decision was taken in August to put in place arrangements that build on the learning of recent months for a single BNSSG approach to PPE purchasing, stock management and distribution that can be activated quickly as and when it is required.

As outlined above, the Bristol and West Procurement Consortium has been supporting partners across the wider health and care system in the sourcing and supply of PPE – including with the validation of potential non-approved NHS suppliers, price negotiation and securing certification on quality standards. This has been an optional approach for partner organisations, based on informal arrangements.

With the intention of building further future resilience, the Council is also in the process of negotiating a contract variation with its current community equipment provider to cover PPE storage, stock management and distribution for the health and care system

(excluding NHS providers in receipt of national PPE deliveries via the Clipper system). This builds on the arrangements already in place for North Somerset Council and it is a service that the company is also providing to a number of local authority areas across England. Costs would closely follow the pricing model for community equipment which is based on the number of deliveries and the amount of notice given for these deliveries. It is set to include the additional service of emergency PPE deliveries to providers at any time during the year (including out of hours and on bank holidays).



At a glance

Council:	Bristol City Council (on behalf of and in partnership with NHS Bristol North Somerset South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group)
Activity:	Coordinated response to need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), transport and testing.
Beneficiaries:	Partners across the NHS Bristol North Somerset South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
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Hillingdon Borough Council Labour Group

Cross-Party Collaboration

The community leadership role of Councillors working across political boundaries with the ruling group

Context

Hillingdon is one of one of 32 London Borough Councils, and has been held by the Conservatives since 2006. Hillingdon Labour, in opposition, is an associate member of CCIN. The area is very multicultural, particularly in the south of the Borough, and there is a large elderly and vulnerable population. There is also a high incidence of asthma and other respiratory illnesses due to poor air quality; Hillingdon covers Heathrow Airport and a number of motorway links out of West London.

As the Covid-19 situation developed, the Council entered emergency mode and the Leader of the Council (Sir Raymond Puddifoot MBE, Conservative) and the Leader of the opposition Labour Group (Peter Curling) began speaking regularly.

The conversations took place so that parties were kept up to date with activities, could share points of view on the situation and could exchange knowledge that would directly impact the Council's priorities. For example, local geographical knowledge held by different Councillors was used to prioritise road repairs while routes were quieter due to lockdown.

Development

As the situation developed, conversations between the Leader and opposition Leader continued, at one point becoming daily, focusing on general updates and what the Council was doing around the Covid-19

situation. Hillingdon Council as a whole was concerned that, among the many people trying to help out, less well-meaning people could use the situation as an opportunity to scam vulnerable residents, and it was agreed that collaboration was needed to provide a controlled, coordinated response.

Hillingdon For All (H4ALL) is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) comprising five third sector charities: Age UK Hillingdon Harrow & Brent; DASH; Hillingdon Carers; Harlington Hospice; and Hillingdon Mind. The Council worked with H4ALL to set up a Community Hub. Volunteers (either individuals or organisations) were directed to the Community Hub, where H4ALL worked collaboratively with the Council to deliver food parcels and check on elderly and vulnerable residents, for example.

Councillors got directly involved by helping volunteers, shopping for residents, delivering food parcels and using every different avenue they could. Several Councillors are trustees of the Fassnidge Memorial Trust Charity, which was established in 1994 to benefit people in Hillingdon. The Trust used the halls they would usually hire out for events to store the food and supplies being received by H4ALL.

Implementation

The Council's deputy CEO oversaw much of the activity, while other officers volunteered and staff (for example from the libraries, which had been closed) were redeployed to the Community Hub.



Hillingdon

People from across the Council all wanted to help. The pandemic brought to the fore and put into action the co-operative values and principles as a natural response – even if people aren't aware that's what they are. Everyone wanted to help each other through the pandemic, and activities undertaken (such as the Community Hub) were ones that the opposition Labour Group could support.

The areas of cross-cooperation were practical in nature (such as immediate safety measures) and there was broad agreement on general Covid-19 activity. However there were still differences of opinion on local issues, such as the question of whether or not to keep Ruislip Lido open when the easing of lockdown coincided with good weather, meaning large visitor numbers and difficulty enforcing social distancing.

Review

The feedback from residents in the Borough was that the Council's joined-up working was appreciated. In emergency situations such as this, people can and do work together and it is possible to put politics aside and co-operate to achieve things.

The experience has built up better understanding and a mutual respect between Conservative and Labour Councillors, but the Labour Group is conscious that the continuation of this depends on all those involved keeping an open mind. There is acknowledgement that some attitudes will revert to how they were before the pandemic.

What worked best was keeping conversations and collaborations non-political; co-operating for a 'greater good' by being logical and sensible; and putting forward arguments that are difficult to disagree with and are fundamentally points of common sense.

At a glance

Council:	Hillingdon Borough Council Labour Group
Activity:	Cross-Party Collaboration
Beneficiaries:	Hillingdon Borough residents
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North Hertfordshire District Council

Community Support Fund: Continuing to Build Community Capacity

A Community Support Fund to ensure community groups were able to continue essential services to residents throughout the pandemic

Context

North Herts is a relatively rural district with a large older population, and the pandemic produced a significant challenge around getting food to those who were shielding or unable to leave the house, as well as issues around loneliness. The District is also home to a number of deprived areas, and the pandemic had a clear impact on the ability of many of the disadvantaged to afford basic needs.

The Council felt equipped to address these issues by the strong relationships its Community Engagement colleagues had already built with many community groups, as well the pot of funding already designated for major incidents. It had also been strengthening its ability to engage and conduct grant panels digitally, which presented new opportunities to undertake this activity.

Development

The Council developed the idea of a Community Support Fund for groups put under increased pressure by the pandemic, and who were providing support in one of three key areas: food and essentials; mental health support; domestic abuse support. Two funding options were available: a one-off grant open to application from any community group; and funding agreements – on approach from North Herts District Council (NHDC) – to known providers who offer wide provision across the district, including rural areas.

The Policy and Community Engagement

Team began developing a policy paper to lay out these criteria. This involved discussions between Councillors, senior leadership, Officers and community groups, to ensure that the paper was well-informed, and the policy could be launched successfully. The ultimate aim was to ensure the survival of community groups who provide essential services for residents, because there could be wider harm to communities if these groups do not survive the pandemic. The project therefore exemplified values and principles of social responsibility, solidarity, and concern for community and its sustainable development, all of which are integral co-operative values.

Implementation

The Community Support Fund went live in May once it had gone through an approval process at NHDC. Throughout the process, stakeholders were involved in various ways, including: Council staff and Councillors assessing grant applications; community groups being contacted for required information, or to advise whether a one-off grant or longer term funding agreement would be more suitable.

The activity represents values of community leadership, whereby the Council helped the community contribute to local outcomes. It also represents the principle of social partnership – strengthening cooperation between communities and Councils through finding new models for meeting priority needs and reducing inequality.

Review

The Fund has granted financial help to a number of community groups which have provided services for the elderly and the young, families and individuals, and for towns and villages alike. It has enabled the continued delivery of vital support around food and essentials provision; services to help combat mental health issues and isolation; and helping those who find themselves in domestic abuse situations.

The Council has scheduled a new Community Engagement and Co-operative Development Panel via video conferencing in the coming civic year. The panel will openly engage with the community to act as sounding board on a range of community, commercial and enterprise ideas and projects to benefit the entire North Hertfordshire community. These

meetings will further the commitment to these co-operative values and principles.

The project demonstrated how policy development and decision-making could be streamlined and expedited within the Council to assist those in need during a crisis. This desire to get aid to community groups quickly prompted a simplification of the grants application process – striking a balance between making applications easy to fill out, while eliciting enough information to ensure a thorough evaluation process. The Council noted that some chasing was required for further information; in hindsight it would need to be clearer about what information is need and when, while retaining a simple application process.

The Community Support Fund continues to take applications on a rolling basis.



At a glance

Council:	North Hertfordshire District Council
Activity:	Community Support Fund
Beneficiaries:	Community Support Groups
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Hull City Council

Returning to School after Lockdown

Resources to support children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing on returning to school during the Covid-19 pandemic

Context

A primary impact of Covid-19 in Hull has been reduced access to education for children and young people. HeadStart Hull is a city-wide programme led by Hull City Council working with all schools across the city to provide universal and early intervention support on emotional health. The programme offers a range of interventions for children and young people as well as training and support for school-based staff and community services including the VCS, youth services and social care.

Development

One of the HeadStart Hull provider services, Barnardo's, runs the Wrap school-based group work. During lockdown it was not possible to run the usual group work sessions so they worked with schools and pupils to co-produce two resources focused on emotional health.

A transition booklet was produced for all primary schools to help prepare year 6 pupils for the move to secondary school; and key stage 2 and 3 pupils were given a life-after-lockdown booklet to support them with their return to school in September. The resources help young people identify and talk with a trusted adult about any worries or fears they may have. The resources were co-produced with young people and schools to ensure it met their needs and was age-appropriate. The Council also worked with Local Authority Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

(SEND) leads and schools to ensure the resource was suitable for SEND pupils.

Being a Co-operative Council means working collaboratively with other local organisations to meet the needs of children, young people and families within the city. Although all the schools in Hull are Academies and therefore no longer managed by the Local Authority, it has retained a good working relationship with them. This enabled them to share concerns and work with the Council to find solutions to improve wellbeing and offer mutual benefit.

Implementation

The Council distributed electronic versions to all schools in Hull – along with 13,000 hard copies to schools and other services working with vulnerable young people. These include children's homes, youth services and mental health services. These hard copies ensured that young people without access to the internet or suitable equipment did not miss out on support.

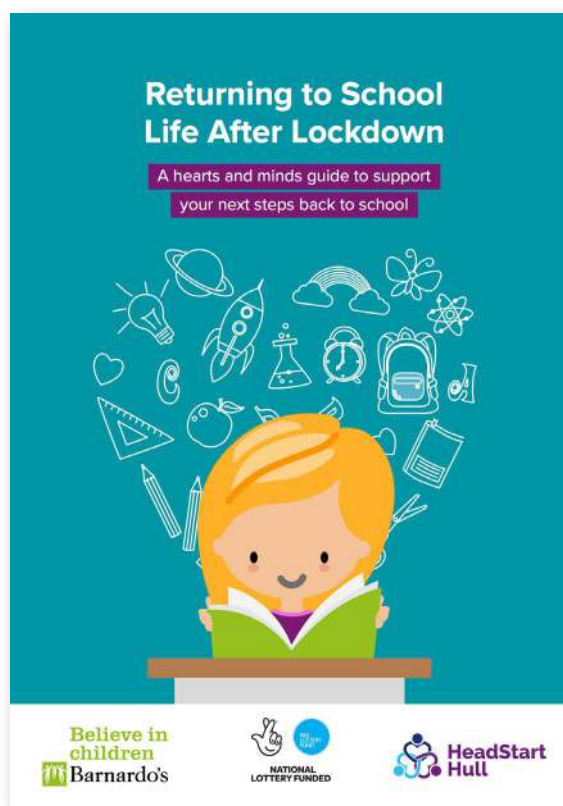
Hull City Council provided additional funding for the hard copies; Barnardo's contributed the design work and gave its staff time to work with schools and pupils to co-produce the resources. The Council is always keen to explore new ways of meeting a priority need in the community as it emerges – and has found that co-production is a key aspect of this. It also undertook regular surveys with children, young people and parents to gain a good understanding of how lockdown was impacting on emotional health and what

support was needed. This helped to identify the need for the resources and meant the Council could respond quickly.

Review

Feedback from schools has been very positive and they plan to incorporate the transition booklets into next year's city-wide transition plan for schools. Public Health England and the National Children's Bureau have shared the resources with other areas as an example of good practice and learning. Feedback from organisations who work with vulnerable young people has also been very positive with workers using it as a tool to undertake one-to-one work with young people. This work has strengthened the partnership with schools and communities, aided by a shared sense of responsibility for wellbeing and mutual benefit.

The learning is that co-operative working can achieve something that no organisation could easily do alone. The project was able to produce standard resources which met need at a low cost by utilising skills and capacity across the partnership. The alternative would have been each of Hull's 97 schools duplicating efforts and producing multiple versions of a common resource. Moving forward, the resources will be used (with minor adaptations to remove reference to Covid-19) in future years as part of the newly agreed City-wide Transition plan for schools.



At a glance

Council:	Hull City Council
Activity:	Co-produced resources to support key stage 2 and 3 pupils return to school after lockdown
Beneficiaries:	Young people and schools
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Oldham Council

Test, Track and Trace

The introduction and roll out of local test, track and trace arrangements

Context

Covid-19 has seen an exacerbation of existing inequalities in the town linked to unemployment, poverty and health. Local increased restrictions were placed on the Borough on 28 July in response to rising infection rates which peaked at 110 per 100,000 population. Emerging evidence suggested that approximately one third of Covid cases were arising from transmission within and between households. Urgent action was needed to bring the rates of infection down and in doing so, avoid full lockdown.

Services were already stretched in relation to dealing with Covid-19, but policies, procedures and decision-making processes were in place which formed a sound basis for implementing more targeted testing, tracking and tracing. To do this the Council used data and intelligence to identify and map Covid-19 hotspots which was updated on a daily basis. Staff have, where possible, been redeployed and volunteers recruited to help with the doorstep engagement of residents. There has been close working between the Local Authority Senior Management Team, the Director of Public Health and VFCSE sector to maximise and align resources.

Development

The aim was to target hotspots of increasing rates of infection, mapped by public health and LA colleagues. The Strategic Co-ordination and Recovery Group, Tactical Co-ordinating Group and five sub-groups were established

to manage and have oversight of the test, track and trace approach. Key stakeholders were actively engaged in developing and implementing the approach through their engagement in these groups – so that their existing resources, skills and expertise were effectively harnessed and aligned.

For example, colleagues from Public Health, the NHS and CCG were engaged in the Testing sub-group. Community and voluntary sector representatives on the Community engagement sub-group, representatives from the Council and CCG were involved in the epidemiology and intelligence sub-group. Representatives from the Council and Greater Manchester Police were engaged in the Compliance and Enforcement sub-group.

Implementation

Five sub-groups were established to take forward key areas of work:

- Testing
- Tracing
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Epidemiology and Data
- Communications and Engagement

Testing capacity has been increased significantly by the:

- establishment of local testing sites close to communities where rates are highest
- introduction of three mobile testing units to tackle outbreaks

- commissioning of a local testing service to test staff, support care homes and respond to smaller outbreaks
- introduction of a doorstep engagement and testing offer
- locally supported contact tracing for all cases not followed up by NHS Test and Trace within 48 hours
- GPs contacting positive cases in their practice population to provide advice and support
- introduction of 'micro grants' to provide financial support to people who need to isolate but are not entitled to sick pay.

Community Engagement was undertaken by the formation of Oldham's Equality Advisory Group and regular engagement with Oldham's Mosque Council and Interfaith Forum, Roma community, the voluntary sector, local youth services and businesses.

Review

The Covid-19 Prevention & Control Board is meeting twice weekly to oversee Oldham's response. At the introduction of increased restrictions the Covid-19 infection rate was approaching over 100 cases per 100,000 population; this fell dramatically over the three weeks to 58 cases per 100,000. Evidence shows that the transmission of infections between and within households fell to 22%.

Its approach relied upon co-ordinated

action and alignment of resources from across Team Oldham and redeployment of Council staff; for example in the co-ordination of volunteers from across the Council, NHS, housing providers; members of the public; Elected Members; and partners in the VFCSE sector.

From this activity, the Council has learned:

- interventions need to be evidence-based
- clear communication is essential
- harnessing local knowledge and skills is vital; making use of existing community contacts and community and inter-faith networks is essential in building trust and participation within local communities
- residents generally respond well to a more interactive, informed and personal approach

The Council will continue to respond to Covid and the issues it raises – based on local data and intelligence through the operation of these established groups. It is also working to ensure that its Covid-19 response is captured and used to inform broader work to tackle poverty and inequality in the borough, through the development of a cross partnership Poverty Steering Group. This will be essential in both understanding and responding to the disproportionate impacts of the virus on disadvantaged communities and people already experiencing poverty in the Borough.

At a glance

Council:	Oldham Council
Activity:	Test, Track and Trace
Beneficiaries:	Oldham residents
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Telford & Wrekin Council

Developing Community Resilience

An existing set of partnerships – including Town and Parish Councils and the third sector – meant there was a strong network to mobilise support for vulnerable residents

Context

Across Telford & Wrekin there were vulnerable and self-isolating households who needed extra support through the lockdown period – especially those without family, neighbours or other social networks and who needed help obtaining food and medicines. They also needed social contact to address loneliness, anxiety and or other wellbeing issues. As a Co-operative Council, it recognised a duty of care to all vulnerable residents and made a clear commitment to use resources to provide support – for example by redeploying its workforce to new roles. The Council had willing partners, an established network of volunteers, and already had an established voice in the community to reach vulnerable residents.

Development

Over many years the Council had been working hard to build stronger, more resilient communities – working with individuals, communities, VCSE organisations and Town and Parish Councils. It also developed an effective approach to volunteering across the Council and within communities. This means partnership working was already well embedded, and this network could be mobilised quickly to offer support to the area's most vulnerable residents.

The initiative involved working with a wide range of organisations, including Town and Parish Councils, Telford Crisis Support Network, Telford Interfaith Council, and local

community centres. The Council is fortunate to have passionate and committed individuals in the third sector who, like the Council, are proud of their communities. They are dedicated to making their neighbourhoods the best they can be and have the desire to support other people so they can thrive. The Council trusts them to be experts in what they are doing – and by working together the activity ensured that any vulnerable resident, whatever their background, could access the support they needed.

Implementation

For shielding residents and other vulnerable households, the Council launched a dedicated Community Support Line that was open seven days a week. There was swift work to set up provisions across the borough, working with Town and Parish Councils, local community groups and volunteers, as well as local supermarkets and pharmacies. Help was given obtaining supplies, collecting pensions, gas/electricity top-ups, and walking dogs alongside 'safe and well calls'.

Given the existing relationships in place, the Council was able to pick up the phone and ask organisations how they could support their community – and what they would need from the Council and other partners to help them do it. Many, of course, were already at work on the crisis. The Council was able to refer people to support in their own communities, which meant residents developed meaningful connections. By working together and involving Town and Parish Councils, local

community groups and volunteers they were able to collectively ensure that any vulnerable resident, whatever their background, could access the support they needed during a very difficult time.

During the lockdown, the Council came under additional funding pressures due to increased demand, so it provided additional funding for key partners. With many volunteers themselves forced to shield or self-isolate, the Council had to run a recruitment campaign at the start of lockdown; workplace furloughs and other restrictions meant there were a lot of people with free time for volunteering. Existing processes set up by the Council meant this new support was quickly up and running and could be sent where it was needed the most.

Review

In March, the Council wrote to 78,000 households with details of the dedicated Community Support Helpline. Direct support was provided to one in five households during lockdown. The Council recruited more than 1,100 community volunteers and worked with 80 voluntary and community groups. Through this response, relationships were deepened and improved among local community groups. A lot of new services have been developed by these groups to meet the crisis – while four new community groups have established who are keen to continue working together and helping local communities. Following its recent Residents Survey, 74% of respondents

said that the support the Council provided during this pandemic was helpful and 75% of respondents think the leadership of the Council has done a good job.

Strong communities are vitally important; the pandemic has shown how vital the community sector and individuals are – and how much they can achieve. The Council already had firm foundations, and has worked hard together to successfully support its communities. As the situation develops it has been reflecting on the lessons learnt from Covid and how it needs to adapt to new ways of working and continue building resilience.

Telford & Wrekin Council will continue investing in and supporting its communities and providing good links to the business sector, to help increase capacity. Its support and investment has been an essential part of the response to Covid-19 and it is determined to continue.



At a glance

Council:	Telford & Wrekin Council
Activity:	Developing community resilience
Beneficiaries:	Vulnerable and self-isolating residents
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Brent Council

Tackling Poverty Moving Forwards

A Poverty Commission was created to find out why so many of Brent's residents are poor and what can be done about it

Context

In recent years poverty has significantly increased as an outer London problem, a situation made much worse by Covid-19. The Council decided it needed a thorough understanding of poverty in the borough. The Commission sought to answer why so many Brent residents are poor, what it means to live in poverty and what works to address the issue – and how to prevent it from arising.

Although there was a wealth of knowledge within the Council, it wanted to draw on wider expertise and experience of what works elsewhere. And the Council wanted to hear things people might not like to tell it.

To meet these challenges, it commissioned the independent Brent Poverty Commission in January 2020. Chaired by the former Chief Executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Lord Richard Best, the Commission included experts and frontline practitioners across London and nationally.

Development

The Commission was deliberately non-partisan, with representation from the Council's minority party. The Council provided support and set terms of reference, but the Commission decided its own programme. Its work started before the pandemic, but the crisis gave the project greater urgency: Brent was hit particularly hard by Covid-19.

It wanted to make sure the Commission's recommendations were informed by the

lived experience of what it means to be poor in Brent, and how it feels when things can be done to help people overcome poverty. To do this the Commission has drawn on case studies in the published report.

The Chair and Commissioners focused their work on four areas: housing, economy and jobs, tackling financial exclusion, and local welfare. The work confirmed that these issues are frequently inter-related, that those in poverty often face challenges across all of them, and that solutions had to tackle each in as joined-up and tailored ways as possible.

Implementation

The Commission's report, published in August, lays out the ways that rocketing housing costs, precarious employment and a welfare system which all too often puts process before people have combined to drive people into poverty, and make it so hard to escape. Most importantly, it looks at what works and what doesn't, and what could be done better, giving clear, practical and evidence-based recommendations to the Council, the Mayor of London and national Government about how they can make a real difference.

Review

The last six months have shown in the starkest way possible that sharp divides in society endure and that poverty imposes huge costs in terms of health and wellbeing, community and cohesion, dignity and opportunity. The full report is on the Council website at: www.brent.gov.uk

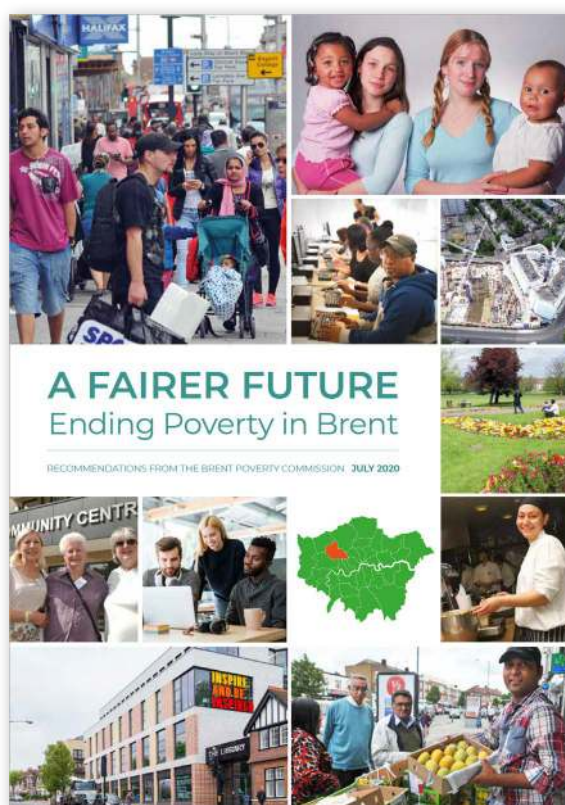
Lord Best said: “Our report makes a series of recommendations for the Council to pull out all the stops to increase the number of homes affordable to those on lower incomes, including borrowing to build new council homes and maximising gains from planning. We predict opportunities post-Covid to do deals with developers finding sales more difficult, and also to buy back ex-right to buy and other properties from landlords exiting the market in the months ahead. But urgent measures must also be taken to increase incomes.

“The Commission commends efforts by the Council to boost employment, encourage apprenticeships, and equip more young people for the jobs of tomorrow. Using its procurement powers and securing social value from the contracts it places, the Council can support the local economy and can see the London Living Wage paid to more workers who currently get less.

“Brent has seen circa 50,000 people furloughed and not all will return to full-time jobs. Of course welfare support must come mostly from central government but we set out recommendations for enhancing local welfare assistance, both in this emergency and beyond. And we stress the value of the advice

services so everyone gets the help to which they are entitled.

“In conclusion, I hope the Commission’s report shows that there are real opportunities for all local authorities, despite financial constraints, to make a massive contribution to ending poverty in this country.”



At a glance

Council:	Brent Council
Activity:	Creation of a Poverty Commission
Beneficiaries:	Most vulnerable members of community
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Special thanks to the following people who helped to shape this learning:

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Find out more about the UK local authorities who are driving global municipal co-operative policy development with a common belief in the Co-operative Values and Principles

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