



Title of Paper:	Cost of Living: One City Many Communities
Author (including organisation):	Penny Germon
Date of Board meeting:	Thursday 13th July
Purpose:	Information and discussion

1. Executive Summary

Once again, Bristol came together to support one another through uncertain and challenging times in response to the rising cost of living over the winter months. Communities mobilised to set up welcoming spaces supported by city partners from a wide range of voluntary and public sector organisations and funders. This response builds on strong foundations which we need to continue to nurture and invest in for long term resilience.

2. Purpose of the Paper

This report is about the one city, many communities' cost-of-living response over the winter, what we achieved and next steps

3. Background, evidence base, and what needs to happen

The cost of living response in Bristol was set up to support communities and residents through the challenging winter months of the cost of living crisis. Together as a city, we built on our existing assets to provide residents and communities an opportunity to be involved, take part, and contribute to the resilience of our city.

A case study of the One City Approach was also shared on the Local Government Association website [Bristol City Council: Bristol's One City Response | Local Government Association.](#)

Once again, Bristol came together to support one another through uncertain and challenging times. We were able to work fast because of existing foundations and our One City approach.

We saw communities mobilise to form a network of 105 Welcoming Spaces, new ways of working between different sectors, coordination, shared information through different platforms and funding opportunities that aimed to be easily accessible.

- 86% of Bristol people were 10 mins walk from a welcoming space apart from in Stoke Bishop (where there were no welcoming spaces registered on the website)
- A map of welcoming spaces was publicly available via the City Council's Cost of Living web page
- 93% of Welcoming Spaces said the biggest impact was social connection
- 101 Social Action small grants (up to £5,000) funding community projects, in priority neighbourhoods and to groups working with equalities communities.
- Mental wellbeing link workers connected with welcoming spaces and other community organisations
- Changes Bristol worked with local groups to develop peer support for emotional wellbeing
- Advice services trained advice volunteers to run drop-in sessions in welcoming spaces and trained front line workers across a wide range of organisations, including UBHT, in advice basics and how to have conversations about money and budgets.

There was also additional expertise to support residents dealing with more complex problems

- The wide range of Advice services were mapped providing a good baseline from which to build a strategic conversation and way of working.
- CanDo Bristol provided the platform for groups to advertise and recruit 246 volunteers to support Cost of Living initiatives
- A one city coordination group met weekly from November to January and then fortnightly until the end of May 2023.
- A film about welcoming space can be viewed [here](#)

On the 19th April 2023 the Mayor hosted an event at City Hall to say; 'Thank you,' to everyone who contributed to the cost of living response, to reflect on what we achieved together and plan next steps. 120 people from communities and organisations right across Bristol unanimously agreed:

Together we are building something unique and powerful which we want to strengthen and accelerate. We are calling this We Are Bristol: 'One City Many Communities' approach

We will take what we have developed and keep our focus on equity, social justice and well-being to:

- *Find sustainable ways forward, supporting people most impacted by low income, poverty, and inequity*
- *Continue to build community power and community wealth for the long term*

We are in very difficult times. We will collaborate, share resources and align funding in ways that nurture and grow community power and the 'one city, many communities' approach.

4. Community/stakeholder engagement

The One City Cost of Living approach was delivered by a diverse network of over 50 organisations and hundreds of people freely giving their time. It involved a very diverse network of people and organisations from equalities groups and neighbourhoods across Bristol experiencing the greatest inequity. We were committed to organising ourselves in ways which were accessible and relevant to different parts of the city so that together we could understand the impact on citizens across diverse communities, find creative solutions and act together.

5. Recommendations

1. The Health and Wellbeing Board agree to support the One City, Many Communities approach agreed on the 19th April
2. Agree what action can be taken to accelerate and strengthen this approach.

6. City Benefits

We have seen the impact of what happens when we work together in crisis. This is about how embedding the way of working so that it is sustainable over the long term

7. Appendices

Our plan is set out in the Bristol's One City approach to cost of living: [Bristol One City Approach in response to the cost of living crisis - Bristol One City](#).

Cost of Living Response infographic

