

Brighton and Hove Cost of Living Summit

Ideas for Action - Summary

On 24th January, Council leaders, public partners, charities and city businesses met to discuss working together to support the city through the cost of living crisis.

The aim of the summit, held at Hove Town Hall, was to bring partners together to gain a shared understanding of the challenges and explore ideas to collectively respond.

During the event we heard from Gavin Stewart of the Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership and Brighton Business Improvement District on the impact on local businesses, and an update on the impact on food and energy from Vic Borrill of the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership and Kayla Ente of Brighton & Hove Energy Services Co-operative.

There are high levels of motivation to work collectively across the city.

Participant turn-out, energy and engagement at the Summit was high, with partners keen to collaborate. This document summarises the discussion and identifies opportunities for partners to work in different ways to grapple with this complex challenge.

Your individual actions. Each participant should have taken away a few ideas from the following questions: 'What can I/my organisation do differently?' and 'What new relationships can I build?' The key message from the event is that the cost of living crisis is a shared responsibility, and everyone has a role to play.

Ideas generated at the summit

Below are some themes that emerged from the summit that explore how we could work together more effectively.

1. **Support development of a sharing economy across the city**
2. **Enable, support and provide capacity for frontline services**
3. **Drive local investment**
4. **Direct support to those in need.**

1. **Support the development of a sharing economy** in which capacities, resources and services are shared across the city.

We would like to connect and build on existing structures, spaces, and initiatives that are already happening, such as sharing skills and spaces to build partnerships and complement each other's work.

Ideas generated at the summit included:

- Undertake a community and organisational asset audit
 - Harness third sector partners to access their expertise, skills and relationships, including building access and trust with diverse communities
 - Increase corporate volunteering, encourage corporate commitments, and support wider communities to share their skills, resources and time
 - Share training, such as AMEX leadership training for the non-profit sector, and training focusing on developing partnership working skills
 - Share resources and spaces – such as space for hot desks, work spaces, council and corporate work spaces
 - Share relationships and networks – such as sharing contact details from the Summit to support further collaboration
 - Emphasise the importance of early intervention: effective signposting, a 'no wrong door' and multi-agency approach
 - Focus on existing structures to minimise duplication
 - Acknowledgement of limited funds, emphasis on using what we have more effectively.
2. **Enabling, supporting, and providing extra capacity for frontline services**, which have now become crisis services. Participants discussed the need to focus our efforts on those most in need. Third sector partners working directly with families who have been hit the hardest have valuable first-hand knowledge and experience to offer, but need our collective support as services are overwhelmed.

Ideas generated at the summit included:

- Importance of sharing skills and training, including trauma informed approaches
 - Explore potential mechanisms for linking third sector partners with wider support and resources across the city
 - Build connectivity between partners based on each other's strengths and offers of support
 - Explore extending the Family hubs model to non-statutory organisations.
3. **Driving more local investment.**

We all need to emphasise 'local first' in our procurement frameworks to keep investment in the city. There are also opportunities to connect private sector support more effectively with local need.

Ideas generated at the summit included:

- A 'Cost of Living Prospectus' (working title), linking private sector partners with local need and opportunity, to support a stronger and more prosperous city, including:
 - Support for local procurement – for example, anchor institutions to break contracts down into small units so small local businesses can bid for work
 - Ensuring SMEs, who comprise 91% of local businesses, are able to participate and contribute
 - Alignment with third sector funding to provide holistic support
 - Resource local fund-raising roles to target high net-worth individuals
 - Help to make Brighton & Hove a better place to do business
 The prospectus should be live, with shared ownership from partners, and focus on both short and longer term opportunities
- Lobby nationally for wider access to the 'Blue Light' discount card for social care and third sector workers
- Strengthen the strategic focus on developer contributions, including S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy, with an emphasis on supporting the circular economy
- Work with partners to lobby Government for changes to national systems e.g. a review of Universal Credit, and devolution to local partners to enable targeted support
- Ensure we always take a system wide view – for example fuel and food poverty should be considered together as part of a wider city system, rather than as discrete problems to be tackled individually
- Develop a Social Investment Fund utilising, for example, planning contributions to support the city's social mobility objectives.

4. **Direct and immediate support to those in need.** Food assistance, a cash first approach and targeted discounts can be the most efficient and effective means to help people now.

Ideas generated at the summit:

- Develop local voucher schemes, discount cards, pool funds to support the development of local food supply chains, food cells/food bags and/or food pantries, and to help with transport costs for those in need (for example, purchasing bus passes).
- Students can be vulnerable to the cost of living crisis – many are presenting with housing, food, mental health, and debt challenges - can we adopt a social prescribing model for students, for example?



- What more can we do to help care leavers, and other vulnerable groups where we collectively have access and data?

Possible Future Actions

Participants at the summit discussed how a mindset of experimentation and adaptation can influence complex social systems. Different approaches include:

- **Choose an idea to get started on and build a coalition to work with.** This doesn't have to be a sizeable multi-stakeholder initiative. If you are interested in getting behind an idea, a small grouping of diverse partners can create an impact.
- **Carry on talking collectively, either through another summit or smaller partner to partner conversations.** We need further conversation and collaboration to get impactful initiatives off the ground.

Thank you

The Council is committed to working innovatively with partners on practical steps to build a fairer city that works for all. We would like to thank you for the time you have committed to working with us. We acknowledge the financial limitations, expanded workloads and increased stress our partners are facing. If you have further ideas you would like to contribute please contact Becky.Pratley@brighton-hove.gov.uk.