

Cost of living – Best practice review

Report purpose

An analysis of best practices across councils in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland in response to the cost-of-living (COL) crisis. In preparation of this report multiple desktop qualitative research methods were employed: local governance websites, news articles, online archives, independent think tanks reports, voluntary sector reports, virtual fieldwork of social media platforms. The report reviews articles published recently around council best practice of tackling the COL crisis, and those published prior to the COVID-19 pandemic that also address issues that councils are facing in the COL crisis.

Some of the issues councils are tackling include food, fuel and child poverty, unemployment, resident financial insecurity, and council economic pressures. Some councils have declared a cost-of-living emergency, such as Somerset and Eastbourne in East Sussex, and in North Yorkshire there has been an unprecedented increase in demand over the last 3 months with the charity Hambleton Foodshare providing 397 emergency food parcels in May to working families¹. Overall, the demand for help between April and June with food and energy bills rose by nearly 100% compared to the same period in 2021 across all councils. Councils themselves are struggling with their own bills – Wigan Council, for example, has seen its own energy costs increase by 115% making it expensive to keep buildings open that homeless, elderly people and many families rely on. Residents are also needing help accessing key services to help them stay independent and healthy.

Lessons learnt

- It is not only those who have traditionally been amongst the poorest in society needing help.
- COL is cutting across classes.
- Councils are facing the crisis themselves before handling the challenges faced by their communities.
- Residents are going to be relying on financial support in the coming months.
- Proactive systems of needs assessment need to be set up.
- COL is affecting public and private run businesses alike.
- Cooperation and collaboration are going to be key.
- Strengthened community ties important in dealing with COL and COVID. The two have an effect of alienating people.

This report is organised as follows: first, it gives a brief history leading up to the COL crisis, second, it provides recommendations from the best practice analysis from councils across the four nations of the UK before third, detailing the case studies and examples that were researched. Finally, it identifies next steps the Qualitative Insights Team can take on who to speak to, the research methods that could be used to explore COL issues, and the project timeline.

1. Context: Brief history leading up to the COL crisis

The starting point is acknowledging the ‘history’ leading up to the COL crisis. Factors to pay attention to include:

- People losing jobs at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Austerity in local governance.
- Inflation slowly increasing the past few years.
- A ‘perfect storm’ of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

These events combined have had significant impacts on the economy and have increased fuel and food poverty across the country. In England, there are large variations on poverty rates: London has the highest at 27% where tenure mix, and high cost of housing are a significant driver of poverty. Poverty in the North East (25%), West Midlands (25%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (24%) are comparatively high which are driven by higher rates of worklessness and higher proportions of adults in lower-paid 'routine' occupations². Due to reductions in household incomes and surging energy prices, the NEA estimates that at the start of April 2022 6.5 million households in the UK are experiencing fuel poverty – an increase of more than 50% in 6 months³. This is in comparison to the Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics in England 2022 report (from 2020 data) that identified 3.6 million households in England were classed as fuel poor and the average fuel poor household would require a reduction of £223 to their fuel costs to be moved out of fuel poverty⁴. It is also worth noting that unrests related to wages have also been exacerbated by the COL crisis. For example, in Coventry, Glasgow and Brighton strike action has been called by refuse collectors and there is the threat of industrial action amongst civil servants after the government announced a 3% cap on wages.

The issues raised in Julie Webster's COL presentation runs across most if not all council case studies identified:

“The cost-of-living crisis represents a serious threat to local progress. Good nutrition, shelter, and the ability to lead a dignified life are essential foundations of good health and wellbeing. Pre-existing financial vulnerability is prevalent in many of our communities. Evidence already suggests that there is increasing poverty and demand for public services, challenging the ability to deliver financial resilience and to achieve better resident outcomes. The ‘crisis’ is unlikely to be a temporary situation therefore short-term solutions will not be sufficient, nor will they address the underlying challenges for many households that require long term solutions to tackle economic vulnerability, improve life chances and build resilience.”

2. Recommendations from best practice analysis

Building partnerships with community and voluntary sector

- Councils recognising the importance of and establishing partnerships between council services (e.g., council tax and libraries), charities and the community and voluntary sector to coordinate responses to the soaring COL.
- Strengthen community ties in dealing with the COL crisis and COVID.
- Incentivise cultural and community and voluntary sector organisations to provide them with the space to operate, deliver support, services, and community groups to residents through revitalisation and regeneration projects – such as Belfast's 'Vacant to Vibrant' capital grant scheme, and Collyhurst's repurposed shipping containers that have been transformed into business incubation spaces.
- Make use of already established institutions.

Addressing fuel poverty challenges

- In Burnley, they are making a change to policy to ensure properties are energy efficient by fining landlords who fail to meet the minimum energy performance rating to help residents save on energy bills. This is a good example of best practice as it can also expand to better inform tenants how they can make the most out of their homes to make them more sustainable and energy efficient.
- Use a bottom-up approach to understand resident experiences of fuel poverty and rising energy prices.

- Explore ways that the council, community partners and their assets can support residents by ensuring that there is transparency of information from energy/water suppliers to help them pay their fuel bills.

Alleviating financial pressures on council buildings and services

- Some councils, such as Birmingham, are using their more financial muscle in negotiations with suppliers (such as energy companies) to achieve economies of scale unavailable to households – this may mean that they could face lower rates of inflation than consumers.
- Adapt to new challenges through financial flexibility.

Developing a food strategy and improving food security

- Sourcing nutritious, healthy, sustainable foods and locally sourced produce as a way of tackling the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, Brexit, and the war in Ukraine and to reduce negative impacts on climate change.
- Develop a resilient and sustainable food system to reduce carbon emissions, food waste, and protect biodiversity. It also needs to be affordable and inclusive by creating choice.
- One example of best practice is Bradford City council's food strategy consultation that is currently asking residents to shape the food system and how fresh, sustainable, and healthy food can be accessed across the Bradford district. This identifies the long-term challenge of a changing climate for food growing and a requirement to build a sustainable food system.
- Therefore, develop a resilient and sustainable food system to reduce carbon emissions, food waste, and protect biodiversity. It also needs to be affordable and inclusive by creating choice.
- In addition, as a method to tackle food security, councils are developing and funding sustainable initiatives on local food growing. Oldham is a good example of this which is creating and using existing community gardens, parks, and green spaces to provide food, such as fruit and vegetables, for school meals and communities in poverty.
- Engage ethnic minority households in emergency food provision. Ethnic minority households are often identified as going without essentials. Food banks and social supermarkets should also source culturally appropriate foods, particularly for ethnic minorities who are disproportionately impacted by income inequality. Not having foods that diverse communities need may pose a barrier to their involvement in these services.
- Supplying free school meals and sports activities for children in the school holidays – enabling children to engage in physical activity and learn new skills.
- Councils working together with local growers and food suppliers to explore possibilities for incorporating local produce into school meals by engagement with children and local supply chains.

Alleviating child poverty

- Understand financial barriers at school and identifying the actions that can be taken to reduce them.
- One of the key recommendations from Dundee council was to “identify and remove key cost barriers so that all children and young people from low-income households can fully engage in their education.”
- This can include talking directly with children and young people to tackling stigma and shame around poverty and provide training to family school link workers on poverty and benefits advice.

- Funding could also be sourced and used to tackle inequality and absence issues and improve school facilities for greater community use – as implemented by the Welsh government.

Addressing shame and stigma in accessing food support and essential products

- Councils recognised the shame and stigma that is often associated with seeking food support from food banks. There are attempts to mitigate this by shifting towards social supermarket models. Volunteers and workers in these spaces build rapport with residents to signpost and provide financial management and debt advice.
- Understanding the ways to reduce shame and stigma around seeking out food and fuel support can provide increased access to these services.
- Lessons could be learnt from the Scottish government and Barnsley council respectively who have made it a right for people to access period products when they require them and providing mobile connectivity to residents living in data poverty.

Tackling financial insecurity

- There are often feelings of stigma and shame in receipt of benefits and the benefits system has inbuilt deterrents to present successful claims.
- Councils and community and voluntary sector partnerships providing support by offering debt and welfare advice.
- There is a requirement to understand the circumstances and reasons behind why residents are unable to pay bills, such as council tax.
- This needs to extend to understand how residents and households can reduce the impact of the COL on them by knowing what help is available and how they can access it – for example, signposting budgeting resources.

Improving communications and reducing digital exclusion

- Improving communication by better informing residents of help and support that is available to ease the burden of the COL crisis – particularly amongst people who are digitally excluded or experiencing digital inequalities.
- Study ways to use existing assets (e.g., libraries, Community Connectors, Digital Champions) to provide training and/or support for residents to help them get online to apply for jobs, access health information, and apply for Universal Credit and other benefits. Where this provision already exists, consider ways on how it could be better targeted.
- Explore ways of communicating information around the above beyond the internet e.g., information sessions at community centres/libraries, phone calls, posters, and flyers.

Understanding diverse experiences in the COL crisis

- The demographics identified in these examples primarily centre on the impact of the COL crisis on families and children.
- Some projects have recognised the detrimental impact on the COL crisis on black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) and social enterprise projects have been created at providing education and training to young people to get them into work and/or running their own business.
- Yet, more work is needed into BAME groups, as well as the impact of the crisis on LGBTQ+ people, senior citizens, and those who have physical and learning disabilities and who are neuro divergent.

3. Local case studies and examples of best practice to tackle the COL crisis

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils ⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing food and energy bills. • Rising inflation leading to falling living standards. • Risk of recession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a five-point action plan: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-ordinating Government support – getting help to those who need it. 2. Exercising discretion providing welfare support and advice to support those facing hard times. 3. Maximising partnership working and established systems to provide targeted support where there is a particular trend and need. 4. Preventing Crisis: Maintaining good health – such as referrals for mental health support, use of council gyms, community-led “wellbeing” initiatives. 5. Ensuring access to food and nutrition – such as healthy eating exercises/initiatives, community gardens and larders, or extra support for local food banks. • Appointing a COL officer to help key agencies across the districts to join forces so help can be deployed where it is needed most. • In addition, the councils will be looking to expand the work it is already doing around social prescribing: working in partnership with health colleagues and partners to help residents maintain good health whether in our green spaces or through access to leisure facilities. • Proposals also exploring new possibilities such as a discretionary fuel and travel voucher scheme to tackle loneliness for people who are isolated or vulnerable ensuring family and friends can continue to visit.
Barnsley Council ⁶ 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased data poverty in the borough. • There is also a lack of confidence amongst practitioners to provide support on costs of broadband and/or mobile data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnsley libraries are working with Good Things Foundation to distribute free SIMs and mobile data to people living in data poverty. • The National Databank scheme is supported by UK mobile networks including Vodafone, O2, and Three.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Things Foundation have reported on rising living costs and digital division and have identified a ‘poverty premium.’ This means that residents on lower incomes are required to be more ‘digital savvy’ than those on higher incomes to understand what speed and packages will meet their needs and navigate a complex market. Good Things Foundation are a social change charity helping to improve people’s lives through digital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnsley residents can register their interest through their library service and can register on behalf of someone else. • To be eligible to access the databank, residents must be over 18 and from a low-income household and meet one or more of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Residents have no or insufficient access to internet at home. ○ Residents have no or insufficient access to the internet away from home. ○ Residents cannot afford their existing monthly contract of top-up.
Belfast City council ⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A need to revitalise the city centre, transform vacant spaces, and bring them back in to use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital grant scheme to bring vacant spaces back in to use. • City council has allocated £700,000 to support start-ups, independent retailers, social enterprises, and cultural and voluntary organisations to help transform vacant spaces. • ‘Vacant to Vibrant’ capital grant scheme will help to regenerate individual properties, contribute to higher quality streetscapes, increase footfall, and create new employment opportunities. • Grants available from £2,000 to £25,000.
Birmingham Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased cost of living due to inflation. • The council set its budget assuming inflation would be 2% this year, with 2.5% wage growth. • “It’s not just rising cost; it’s the rising demand for services as more and more people are tipped into difficulty.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils have more financial muscle in negotiations with suppliers and can achieve economies of scale unavailable to households. • This means they could face lower rates of inflation than consumers. Many, including Birmingham’s, agreed fixed 12-month contracts with energy suppliers before prices rocketed. • Council leader Ian Ward has been convening local charities to discuss a coordinated response to the soaring cost of living.
Birmingham – Birchfield Big Local ⁹ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birchfield is an inner-city area in Birmingham with a population of 8,325. • The Big Local area comprises of seven LSOAs: 5 fall into the top 10% most deprived and 2 fall into 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local people having their say in conferences and working groups to identify key social, economic, and environmental issues and developing methods and timescales to address them.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
	<p>the top 20% on the indices of multiple deprivation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32.4% of children live in poverty and 24% live in fuel poverty. • Area suffers from high levels of unemployment (10.7% are on unemployment benefits in comparison to 2.8% in West Midlands) and high levels of youth unemployment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing community-centred themes such as participation, decision-making, housing, public/private/community services, livelihoods, and local economy. • Developing strong links between leading partners and voluntary and community sector. • Promoting credit unions: high-interest payday loans causing problems amongst some residents. Partnership approached City Save Credit Union to enable training for volunteers who can support local people to provide information and access to credit union services. • Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022 – exploring ways that social enterprises and small businesses in Birchfield can secure supplier opportunities with large local organisations.
Birmingham – Grace Mary to Lion Farm Big Local ¹⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement to improve economic outcomes in the area. • Big Local partnership prioritising reducing debt, improving financial management skills, and employability. • Developing a partnership between CAB Sandwell and Just Finance Black Country to implement these services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Local partnership employed a part-time Financial Engagement Worker to support local families who has produced resources including how to save on food shop, avoiding scams, and effective banking. • Workshops have been setup in the area on issues such as Universal Credit, opening accounts, debt management, budgeting, educating children on good financial habits, and how to avoid high-interest lenders. • Local people have saved on average £200,000 (£650 per household per month) through one-to-one work with local families through a drop-in service. • Social enterprise funded for young people to engage them in running a business. This aims to increase skills of residents and young people while simultaneously educating them about business and financial management.
Blackburn with Darwen ¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly rising poverty levels. • In 2018, provisional median gross earnings for Blackburn with Darwen residents were the 8th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling poverty. • Existing support to residents in the area include:

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
	<p>lowest out of 151 upper-tier authorities in England. In 2017, gross disposable household income average of £12,623 per head was the lowest in the North West.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2017/18, relative child poverty in Blackburn with Darwen had risen to 46.9% of children living in poverty (after housing costs) – the fifth highest rate in UK. • Bastwell ward had the highest rate in the entire country (69.6%) and Audley ward third highest. • Bastwell has several black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities who do not usually ask for help, but the loss of services because of funding cuts has had a detrimental impact. • Young people have also experienced poverty, particularly food poverty, have spoken out about their experiences, the stigma associated with it, and how this can affect behaviour in school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Short-term support from food and fuel banks for those experiencing food and fuel poverty. ○ Support to access employment and volunteering opportunities. ○ Signposting to debt and financial management support agencies. ○ Holiday lunchbox scheme to address lack of access to free school meals during school holidays. ○ Setting up breakfast clubs in schools. • The annual public health report for 2018/19 recommends the following themes for actions that could be adopted as examples of best practice in dealing with poverty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take steps to avoid introducing a ‘poverty premium’ whereby families pay more for essential goods and services because of being poor – around access to or paying for public services. ○ Designing services that are available to all and deliver increasing benefits to those at greater levels of need. ○ Scrutinise policy and practice changes to ensure they do not introduce or exacerbate barriers and stigma for those at risk of experiencing poverty. ○ Engage local communities in the development of actions and services to address child poverty. ○ Provide basic awareness-raising on causes and consequences of child poverty with frontline staff.
Bolton Council ¹²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey targeted towards disabled people who live or work across Greater Manchester. • Aims to find their attitudes and feelings towards the COL crisis. • Can be completed online or by post and offers British Sign Language and in-person support if required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manchester Big Disability Survey 2022. • A previous survey had influenced change by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making humanitarian aid hubs during COVID in councils more accessible. ○ Co-producing a new Mental Health Wellbeing plan ○ Piloting a new concessionary fares process to include neurodiverse people.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making digital inclusion a Mayoral pledge. ○ Making plans for transport and train stations to be more accessible. ○ Ensuring vaccinations were accessible. ● Survey also identified the improvements central government should make for disabled people. ● Survey written in easier standard English and tested with screen readers. ● Easy Workshop survey events for learning disability organisations.
Bradford City council ¹³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District has rising levels of obesity and overweight, and the preventable long-term conditions associated with eating an unbalanced diet. ● Ongoing public consultation (until 31st August 2022) in Bradford for residents to help shape the food system and how fresh, sustainable, and healthy food can be accessed across the Bradford district. ● “Easily accessible and nutritious food for all is at the heart of Bradford’s policies and actions, in order to: reduce health inequalities, improve health and wellbeing and create a secure and sustainable food supply chain that strengthens our local economy.” ● Strategy will also sit alongside and contribute to ongoing work to reduce wider poverty and inequalities. ● Data from the Food Foundation in January 2021 highlighted that 19.87% of residents experienced struggled with food and 8.2% experienced hunger. Post-pandemic, this is reported to increase by over 60%. 66% of households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food strategy consultation. ● Draft consultation report identifies that there is a long-term challenge of a changing climate for food growing and there is a requirement to build a sustainable food system. ● Aim to work to improve the quality of food and reduce food insecurities to improve health, wellbeing, and quality of life across Bradford district. ● In first two years of strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Address impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on food inequalities. ○ Pandemic raised issues regarding the affordability of food on low-budgets and accessing good, fresh food across Bradford district. ○ Explore the possibilities for meeting the increasing interest in food growing across the district. ○ Talk with diverse communities, local producers, processors, wholesalers, and retailers of food to increase council understanding of food people like to eat and what they think prevents them from eating for wellbeing as well as enjoyment. ○ Greater understanding of where food comes from and the opportunities there are to create a resilient food economy and supply networks.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
	<p>experiencing food insecurity contain one or more disabled people, and 1/5th is homeless.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Questions to consider: How can people access food that enables them to eat well on a budget? Which local areas have fresh food readily available, which don't and how can that be changed?
<p>Bristol – Ambition Lawrence Weston¹⁴</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ambition Lawrence Weston (ALW) is a resident-led Locally Trusted Organisation to help administer funding on behalf of the community-led partnership. ● Its aim is to ensure that the money invested in the area circulates between businesses and residents and remains in local economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This project helped to create sustainable sources of employment and income. ● Residents helped create planning policies for better quality housing and incentivising a supermarket to local area to give better access to affordable fresh food. ● Creation of a new community hub offering training and careers advice for young people. ● Funding provided for community assets such as a craft shop, out of school services and sheltered housing.
<p>Burnley Council ¹⁵</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased fuel and energy poverty. ● Badly insulated properties leave people renting their homes struggling to keep warm and expect higher energy bills – especially with soaring gas prices. ● Campaign to clamp down on errant landlords and making it illegal to rent out homes that fail to meet the minimum energy performance rating of EPC Band E. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warmer homes and lower fuel bills for private tenants. • Landlords caught failing to fulfil their obligations can be fined up to £5,000 per property, per breach. • Rule change expected to see energy efficiency upgrades such as loft insulation, double glazing and cavity wall insulation being installed by landlords. • Estimated average bill saving of £180 a year for each home. • Burnley Council received additional funding from the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy to fund an officer to work with private landlords to ensure standards are met.
<p>Cardiff council ¹⁶</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Council recognising financial pressures on families across city during school holiday period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free school meals and sports for children over the summer holidays. • Cardiff's 'Food and Fun' program ensuring children have access to free meals and sports over the summer holidays. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides healthy nutritious meals and opportunities to socialise, engage in physical activity and learn new skills.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'Food for Fun' is taking part in 'Food Cardiff's Veg Pilot' in a bit to support increased use of locally grown produce in school meals. ○ Working together, local growers, Food Cardiff, Cardiff council, and city's school meal supplier will explore how local produce could be incorporated into school meals twofold: through engagement with children and with the supply chain.
Cardiff council ¹⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Challenges posed by climate change, biodiversity loss, diet-related illness, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, war in Ukraine and rising energy costs are likely to change how food is produced, sourced, and consumed. ● Recognising that food security is becoming increasingly important (especially in the continuing COL crisis) and facilitate a transition to a food system to provide affordable and healthy food while reducing negative environmental impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable food challenge to improve local food production and supply. • Partnership established between Cardiff and Monmouthshire councils and other funding bodies to identify and support projects that have the potential of technology, land, and people to increase sustainable production and the supply of locally grown food in the Cardiff Capital Region. • Applicants can apply for funding but must clearly demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "How they will increase the sustainable production of food in the region and generate positive economic, social, and environmental impacts." ○ "How they will supply nutritious, locally grown food whilst ensuring a fair price for producers and the wellbeing of future generations."
Cheshire West and Cheshire Council ¹⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A 'poverty emergency' was declared by Cheshire West and Chester Council in October 2020. ● Recognising the severe impact of poverty on people's lives and how this has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. ● This led to the development of a strategy to contend with the symptoms and causes of poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fairer future. • The council undertook a series of engagement activities to examine the causes of poverty. • Activities included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organising workshops with community and voluntary organisations, staff, elected members and 'community inspirers.' ○ Conference break-out sessions. ○ Attending the Health and Wellbeing board.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a ‘participate panel,’ 26% agreed that poverty was a ‘very big’ or ‘fairly big problem’ in their local area, with 53% agreeing the same in Cheshire West and Chester. Participants also agreed that poverty was likely to get worse in their ‘local area,’ ‘Cheshire West and Chester’ and in ‘England.’ • Some of the challenges faced in the area include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feeling shame and not wanting to ask for help in making first contact. ○ Those living in rural areas face geographical and digital barriers in accessing support services. ○ Young people experiencing poverty impacts on their mental health, diet, living conditions and education. • Difficulty navigating the benefits system, especially amongst vulnerable people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Surveys around public perceptions on poverty and hardship. ○ Engagement tools for groups to provide feedback. • The findings suggest that there is a need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage with people from diverse backgrounds, including young people. ○ To communicate the work to reduce stigma of poverty. ○ Collaborate with organisations to listen to quieter voices. ○ Accessing affordable public transport that is essential for employment, education, and social activities. ○ Improve communications to raise awareness by using community networks to signpost support. ○ Recognising and explaining to others the impacts and anxieties caused by poverty – understanding how it affects vulnerable groups and those on fixed incomes. • Potential solutions the council can do address and alleviate poverty include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using local suppliers, pay local living wage and improve affordable housing. ○ Collaborate with other organisations and work with communities. Solutions to be developed at a community level. ○ Work with businesses and education establishments to improve skills for employment and life. ○ Address health inequalities and work with Marmot community.
Dundee Council ¹⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project working with Dundee City Council to understand the financial barriers at school and the actions that can be taken to reduce them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of the School Day project. • Launched a city-wide approach to "identify and remove key cost barriers so that all children and young people from low-income households can fully engage in their education".

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing support for all schools and development and implementation of Cost of the School Day action plans in consultation with school communities. • Professional learning sessions around child poverty and Cost of the School Day in schools. • Family school link workers receiving poverty and benefits advice training. • Creation of a local Cost of the School Day Practice Network to share challenges and effective approaches for school staff. • Tackling poverty stigma in schools directly with children and young people.
Gateshead Council ²⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 pandemic has seen unemployment rates rise, financial insecurity, and people losing income and jobs. • Growing concern regarding inequalities in the borough. Legacy of COVID-19 is likely to be challenging for the most disadvantaged communities. COVID-19 has “exacerbated the growing gulf between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’”. • Latest figures suggest that 1/3 of children are growing up in poverty and 1 in 16 adults are out of work. • Adults who were on low income and furloughed has placed added pressure and stress on families, with many struggling to meet basic household expenses. • Debt and rent problems have been building up and debt and rent enforcement is likely to become increasingly visible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting residents with debt and financial problems. • Council tax team use arrears to identify people who need help. • This followed a pilot scheme prior to the pandemic where a dedicated team were put together to provide extra support to those who genuinely could not pay their bills. • The team provides debt and welfare advice and other support. 75% of those who were helped said their lives improved as a result. • Team identifies the difference between the ‘can’t pays’ and ‘won’t pays’ and work with adults and families to get into a position where they can pay. • Advisors works closely with the voluntary sector group – Edberts House. They are a series of community hubs located in neighbourhoods that are experiencing challenges of poverty and are run by a steering group of residents. • The hubs employ community developments workers to support the community who also co-work with social prescribers, attached to Edberts House, who are attached to GP surgeries, and local statutory services such as social care or early help.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given rising need, there is discussion to widen the scope of the service provided by food banks. There is often stigma and shame attached to accessing such services. Hence, they are exploring the possibility of setting up networks of markets and shops where residents can take the food they need. This will help to reduce food waste, alleviate poverty, and take away some of the stigma.
Glasgow City council ²¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased food insecurity. Food for Life Scotland (FFLS) supports local authorities to serve school meals that are: good for pupil health, good for the environment, and good for the economy. In a one-year pilot, FFLS beginning to research into other public sector settings including: NHS, prisons, care homes, further and higher education settings, and council-run leisure and culture facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing fresh, local, and sustainable meals to public sector settings across the city. Increased funding from Scottish government enabling to scale up the FFLS program to other areas of Scotland in the future. Insight gathering to include a combination of place-based activity in Glasgow and national intelligence gathering will give a scalable framework for bringing Food for Life to other parts of Scotland in the future. Continue to work towards a fairer, more resilient food system to ensure it supports and provides for everybody. Public procurement of sustainable, local, and climate-friendly food can help to drive a transformation in food production and supply. Development of a City Food Plan in which the council and partners will improve food in the city under key themes including increased local sourcing and low carbon food in public sector catering.
Greater Manchester ²²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 12% of Greater Manchester householders are in fuel poverty (over 130,000 households). 80% of Greater Manchester's 1.1 million homes are more than 40 years old and highly energy inefficient. Anticipated that 4 out of 5 of these buildings will still be in use in 2050. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackling fuel poverty. Community Action Partnership with Greater Manchester's local authorities and partners to progress affordable warmth activity across the sub-region. Produce bespoke detailed 'Fuel poverty and Health' reports and working with local partners to present Health and Wellbeing Boards. Training Environmental Health Officers on the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering energy awareness fuel debt/health training packages to frontline staff. • Developing and delivering bi-annual Fuel Debt Advice Network meetings for advice agencies involved in the provision of fuel debt advice.
Horsham District Council ²³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents across the Horsham district struggling with the current cost of living crisis and need help accessing key services to help them stay independent and healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of new community drop-in sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The events are friendly, informal, and free to attend with no appointments necessary. ○ They are open to everyone in the community who is seeking advice or guidance on a broad range of areas including: money worries, food poverty, energy costs, emotional and mental health including loneliness and isolation, employment, adult social care, carers support and family support including young people and community safety. • It is expected that the following partnership organisations will be on hand to offer advice: Horsham District Council’s Neighbourhood Wardens, Carers support, Age UK, Horsham Matters, West Sussex MIND, Relate, Horsham District Health and Wellbeing amongst others.
Knowsley Council ²⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents need help with food, heating, debt and benefit advice, housing, and job support. • Knowsley Better Together Hardship Fund (KBTHF) established in March 2021 to help vulnerable residents with food, heating, debt and benefit advice, housing, and job support. • Allocations made via referrals from partner agencies working in local communities who are best places to identify and support residents in need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better Together Hardship Fund. • Residents to benefit from a £6.724 million support package to help vulnerable residents across the borough – funding covers March 2021 – 2023. • Support funded through KBTHF (£3 million) and government’s Household Support Fund (HSF) (£3.724 million). • HSF to support residents who receive state pension and receive pension credit. • Support would equate to £103 per pensioner from HSF and Knowsley would top this up from the KBTHF and allocate £200 per pensioner to assist with household essentials and bills.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support plans for 2022/2023 also include continuation of funding for free school meals, activities in school holidays, fuel grants, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service’s Winter Warmth programme, debt and welfare advice, and support for community food and essentials through Knowsley Foodbank and community partner organisations. • Foodbank to receive an additional £0.215 million in funding.
Lewisham Council 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the pandemic, 24% of adults and 17% of families with children were living in ‘low of very low’ food insecurity. Skipping meals, going to bed hungry and not knowing where food can be sourced were common concerns. Problems exacerbated since the pandemic and food bank usage as increased. • The charity Lewisham Local that supports local food projects was helping approximately 2,500 households in the height of the pandemic. • There is a need to tackle food poverty as part of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery and current COL crisis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling food poverty. • Local council is working with local groups to create social supermarkets from food banks and the networks that emerged during the pandemic. • Six food projects have transitioned from food bank to a ‘social supermarket’ model. Residents can shop for weekly food for a small membership fee. It is argued that there is less stigma and shame attached to such incentives. • In one social supermarket, members sign up and pay £3.50 per week for food they collect – helping to make savings and reduce financial burden. • Volunteers run these supermarkets and build a relationship with residents using them. They provide emotional support and waive payments where appropriate. • Food banks and food projects are extending support by offering financial assistance, debt advice, emotional support and employment advice and support schemes to help people move away from dependence on emergence food aid. • Support has also been targeted at ethnic minorities who are disproportionately impacted by income inequality and lacking in access to fresh, affordable food. Moreover, there has been a need to source culturally appropriate foods. • Public Health is commissioning the Food Network and Coordination and Support Service. This will work to assist

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<p>revitalising local and sustainable food chains, raising awareness of food poverty, supporting businesses, and food economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisham Council hosted a food poverty summit in February 2022 where residents, councillors, and local partners worked together to develop a ‘food poverty action plan’. Issues raised and recommendations included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital exclusion as a barrier to claiming for free school meals. Schools opening at end of the school day to provide access to IT to enable parents to make claims. ○ Promoting the help with heating government scheme in libraries and advice centres.
<p>Liverpool City Council ²⁶</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14.4% of Liverpool householders are in fuel poverty (29,484 households). • Liverpool is ranked 20th out of 326 local authority areas in England for experiencing fuel poverty. • Liverpool recorded 170 excess winter deaths – ranked 10th out of 326 local authority areas in England in 2011/12. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling fuel poverty. • Liverpool partnered with the Community Action Partnership to provide a wide range of practical and strategic support to the council and its partners to progress affordable warmth activity across the city. Some of the objectives included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In partnership with Energy Projects Plus, developed and delivered a Fuel Poverty Summit for key fuel poverty stakeholders. ○ Providing advice to Liverpool householders at the City’s annual Winter Fair. ○ Developing a local communications plan for the Community Action Partnership programme. ○ Providing access to NEA’s online fuel poverty and health training course for 7 local organisations and developed a bespoke version for elected members. • Reducing fuel costs for the fuel poor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing grants and subsidies checklists for key workers to assist those in receipt of key benefits. • Increasing housing energy efficiency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Energy saving hints and tips delivered to those targeted by the Liverpool partners.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
<p>Mablethorpe East Lindsey district, Lincolnshire²⁷</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues these areas faces are seasonal employment, lack of access to key services and persistent problems with loan sharks and scams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Lindsey Advice Project (ELAP) set up to offer free, drop-in advice services who make regular visits to local community hubs and liaise and signpost to other services, including GP surgeries. • Local community centres and halls provide a base for the above services to operate and to remain open by sustaining the buildings through refurbishments and ultimately retaining local assets. • Promoting affordable borrowing by developing a community loan fund to increase access to affordable finance. Partnership undertook an awareness campaign on loan sharks and scams and helped develop a new loan model to issue affordable loans with low interest rates. • Application form looks at health, family circumstances and combined income and how this has pushed people into financial crisis. Provides tailored support and connecting to other local organisations and loans have primarily been used to replace items in the home.
<p>Manchester Collyhurst Big Local²⁸</p>	<p>Collyhurst is an area that has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high levels of unemployment • higher likelihood of poor health • poor education and skills • high levels of child poverty, crime, and anti-social behaviour. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collyhurst became a Big Local area in 2013 building partnerships between local tenants, businesses, schools, and other agencies. • It developed a participatory approach to economic change, bringing together a wide array of community-based stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquiring land to place shipping container units that have been transformed into business incubation spaces such as an organic food growing business to address issues around food poverty and healthy eating. • Opening of a community café and a furniture upcycling business to upskill local people and provide affordable furniture. • Establishing a construction academy to provide training and give them access to employment opportunities in Manchester's construction sector. • Making partnerships with Manchester City Council to ensure training and upskilling opportunities are in place locally so residents can benefit from the new developments.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
Middlesborough North Ormesby Big Local ²⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership between Middlesborough Council, the Big Local and North Ormesby Neighbourhood Development Trust and other stakeholders to improve housing and environmental conditions in the area to make it a better place to live and work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a trust to ensure residents have a stake in housing provision and income from new houses benefits local area. Trust purchased six houses and secured financial support from 13 Housing Groups' empty homes scheme. Big Local helping to set up a group for new tenants to ensure there is support so they can make the most of their new homes and giving them access to numeracy and literacy classes, and budgeting and financial health workshops. Big Local carried out a 'Facelift' project where 200 properties received cosmetic improvements to restore neighbourhood pride. Projects include restoration and repairs to terrace houses and the 'Green and Gorgeous' project that introduced floral baskets and planters on the front of houses.
Moray ³⁰ and Aberdeenshire ³¹ councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rising cost of living has put added pressure on accessing affordable period products. Funding from the Scottish Government is enabling councils, such as Moray and Aberdeenshire, to provide free period products as and when they are required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessing free period products. In Moray, residents were able to share their views by completing a survey on what period products should be made available and where they can be accessed. Currently, period products are available in schools and some libraries and GP surgeries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey asks about locations residents would feel comfortable going in to and options of single use versus reusable products. A need has been identified to make period products easily and readily accessible to those with physical disabilities and mobility issues. In Aberdeenshire, they already provide free access to period products, including re-usable alternatives to disposable pads and tampons. A smartphone app called 'Pick Up My Period' has been created which gives an interactive map of locations products are available from.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
North Yorkshire County Council ³²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between April and June, the demand for help with food and energy bills rose by nearly 100% over the same period last year. • Hambleton Foodshare Co-ordinator Alison Grainger said there had been a huge increase in demand over the past three months, with the charity providing 397 emergency food parcels in May, many of which were to working families. She said: “The demand has been unprecedented. We used to think 150 was a busy month.”. • The council’s executive member for corporate services, Councillor David Chance said the authority had consistently put money into supporting food banks and had doubled the number of cash awards people in crisis could receive from its Local Assistance Fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council responded by pledging to help as many people as possible with a fund it launched a decade ago, which has previously mainly been used to help people needing cash help due to issues such as marital breakdown or domestic abuse. • This highlights the authority’s determination to assist vulnerable people and those facing crisis. Council leader Councillor Carl Les issued a statement “while the council is facing difficult forthcoming budget decisions for vital services due to inflation, the domestic crisis is now.” • The Council distributed shopping vouchers, paid for from the county’s second £3.5 million grant from the government’s Household Support Fund to 25,000 households across North Yorkshire. • Criteria was broadened to qualify for the vouchers so that pensioners and other households who receive means tested council tax support will get them as well as families with council tax support. • A flexible approach is going to be needed to adopt to the multifaceted challenges arising.
Oldham Council ³³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to increase food security and aim to reduce reliance on emergency food aid. GOG has provided fresh vegetables to Oldham Foodbank and continues to develop volunteering programmes at Growing Hubs across Oldham. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and green spaces. • Creation of 6 ‘growing hubs’ based around community gardens in parks and green spaces. Volunteers grow fruit, vegetables, herbs, spices, and flowers, and run events and assets such as cafes. • Community-owned green energy company. • Apprenticeship scheme jointly run by council and Oldham College involving horticulture courses at the council aimed at those furthest away from job market. • Procured local food for school meals reducing food miles. • Coordinating holiday meal provision. • Projects co-delivered with residents, or council has facilitated residents to deliver projects entirely.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOG has supported over 80 community food initiatives, engaging over 800 people and employing community-based ‘Health and Growing ambassadors’. • Accessing funding from national programmes and agencies, such as a Food Enterprise Fund to use funding from Well North who issue grants of varying amounts (up to £50,000). The Green Dividend Fund has enabled 1,500 residents and over 500 households to deliver 50 projects.
Oldham Council ³⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Insecurity. • A 160-acre site next to Alexandra Park was identified to be used for community food growing and expertise; training, skills, and research; leisure and tourism; and improving health and wellbeing. • Proposals were made for amenities, governances, and a business model for the site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Roots project. • Plans for the site firmed up and included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community growing and market gardening ○ Walking, biking, and camping ○ Outdoor education ○ Programme of arts and cultural events ○ A microbrewery ○ Teaching and workshop space ○ Forestry • Despite the impacts of COVID-19, the project has been a success and has since involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local volunteers growing fresh fruit and vegetables on the site for communities in food poverty. ○ A free 12-month beekeeping programme was commissioned, and 20 trainee beekeepers have completed their training. ○ Consultation took place November – December 2020 on the creation of a Bike Hub and Trails facility. ○ Digital sources and participant data are being used to inform the development of the project – for example, bikers are uploading their routes. • Toolkits are being developed to learn from the project and the council is considering if it has any commercial value. The business model involves setting up a charity that owns the brand and will

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<p>acquire a long lease on the land and will sub-licence individual assets to operators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council funding project until September 2021. It has been determined that the project will be self-sustaining in the long-term. This could include funding from ethical investment funds and/or community shares.
Portsmouth Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing energy insecurity for both residents and the council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers readjustment. • Financial flexibility to adapt to new challenges. • One of the local authorities are exploring ways to get out of contracts with Gazprom, the Russian state-owned energy giant, after Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. • Public sector bodies are estimated to have bought about £106m of energy from Gazprom since 2016, according to data provider Tussel. • The council expects to face early-exit charges of more than £100,000.
Selby ³⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accumulated financial challenges for workers, families, residents, and the voluntary sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across 2019-20, Selby Big Local formed a partnership with Community First Credit Union to offer saving accounts, loans, and budgeting advice for residents. This included funding a Credit Union Outreach Worker to support these activities. • Redeveloping a derelict shop to open a resident-led community space. • Encourage enterprise and skills development to enable positive change in the community. • Including access to a community fridge and other projects to address food insecurity and digital exclusion. • ‘Community Chest’ grant funding for people and local organisations supporting community activities – up to £1,000 available. Projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delivering a year-long raising aspirations program for Year 6 pupils.

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An 'Over 50s computer club' to improve digital literacy and a volunteer 'Travel Club'. ○ Creation of a community garden.
Slough, Berkshire ³⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People lost jobs at the start of the pandemic. ● Food poverty increasing exponentially. ● Council budget strained even in the years leading up to the pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased partnership with the Voluntary Sector e.g. The Slough Food bank. ● It is not just those who have traditionally been amongst the poorest in society needing help.
Somerset and Eastbourne in East Sussex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rural poverty due to rising food and fuel prices. ● Declared a COL emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At the Annual General Meeting of the council on 23 May members voted unanimously and supported the emergency motion proposed by deputy leader councillor Barry O'Leary – to write to the government asking for more action and organise a conference with support organisations.
Warrington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With its own network of buses to run, the council has been hit by higher fuel costs after diesel prices reached a record high. ● Competition from the private sector on pay means it is struggling to retain drivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● COL is affecting public and private run businesses alike. ● Cooperation and collaboration are going to be key.
Welsh Government ³⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased child poverty. ● £25m of investment from Welsh government in next financial year to tackle impact of poverty on young people's attainment. ● Funding to ensure more schools can operate as Community Focused Schools with the aim of reaching out to engage families and work with the wider community to support all pupils – particularly those disadvantaged by poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in Community Focus Schools. • More support for schools to ensure children have the best start in life, regardless of their background. • £4.9m of investment to be used to expand the number of Family Engagement Officers employed by schools to tackle inequality and absence issues. • Investment will also be used to fund a trial of Community Managers based in schools to network with other agencies to support pupils and wider community and funding research on educational attainment. • £20m to be invested in delivering Community Focused Schools to fund practical ways of improving school facilities to enable greater community use. This includes:

Location	Overview of COL challenges	Outcomes/Responses/Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide equipment storage for community groups running extra-curricular activities. ○ Improve external lighting in sports areas. ○ Install security measures to separate schools and community spaces.
Wigan Council ³⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Residents can't afford bills. ● Community centres now struggling. ● Wigan council has seen its own energy costs increase by about 115%, making it expensive to keep open buildings that homeless and elderly people, and many families, rely on – just when levels of poverty are expected to rise sharply. ● £160m has been removed from its budget since 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Figures show that around 40,000 families in Wigan will receive £650 to help with soaring cost of living. ● Families receiving benefits, including universal credit, jobseeker's allowance, or child tax credits will receive £326 between July 14 and the end of the month. ● Another automatic payment of £324 will be received in autumn to help tackle the COL crisis. ● The Department of Work and Pensions estimate that around 39,800 families are set to receive the payment in Wigan. ● A further payment of £150 will be given in autumn to those who claim disability benefits. ● Around 35,300 disabled individuals in the area will benefit from this payment. ● Peter Kelly, director of the Poverty Alliance charity said: "We can't allow any delays to cost of living support packages. ● Proactive systems of needs assessment need to be set up.
Wolverhampton - Scotland and Bushbury Hill Big Local ³⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Renovation of a community centre and set up of a social enterprise to run it. ● Community support organisation has helped attract £2.5 million in grants and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishing social enterprise has increased knowledge and skills of residents. ● Pre-COVID-19 the centre was used for employment support groups and hosting Wolverhampton Credit Union. ● Community café was opened to provide individually tailored support and training residents as counsellors. ● Upon easing of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, volunteers used the centre to distribute food and meals for residents.

4. Next Steps for the Qual Team

- Contributing to the development of proactive systems of needs assessment in partnerships with other teams within the council working on this.
- Building on the team's existing projects to build a database on work already underway in the borough to identify potential ways of collaboration with already established organisations.
- Use a ground approach by liaising with groups/networks/stakeholders/communities to identify and undertake appropriate research methods. This is important as COL can be a sensitive topic and issue.

Who do we approach?

- Understand the needs and experiences of groups identified as vulnerable in the literature review
 - For example, single/single parent households, children and young people, in-and out of work households, the BAME community, LGBTQ+ people, senior citizens, and those who have physical and learning disabilities.
- Gather insights across East and West Wirral
- Explore ways to reach those who don't access services.

How do we do it?

- Explore possibilities of undertaking a mixed-method approach that combines more traditional and creative methods. For example:
 - Focus groups
 - In-depth and semi-structured interviews
 - Simple questionnaires
 - Participatory observation
 - Friendship interviews
 - A 'silent seminar' method

Timelines

- Develop the Project Initiation Document and workplan – September 2022.
- Gather and report on insight in Q3 2022/23.

5. References

¹ Local Democracy Reporting Service (2022).

² Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2022) “UK Poverty 2022: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.irf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2022>, accessed 04/08/2022.

³ NEA: Action for Warm Homes (2022) “Fuel poverty statistics explainer” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.nea.org.uk/energy-crisis/fuel-poverty-statistics-explainer/#:~:text=Due%20to%20reductions%20in%20household%20incomes%2C%20surging%20energy,more%20than%2050%25%20in%20just%20over%20six%20months.,> accessed on 04/08/2022.

⁴ HM Government (2022) “Annual fuel poverty statistics report: 2022” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-fuel-poverty-statistics-report-2022>, accessed 04/08/2022.

⁵ Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (2022) “Councils consider plan to help residents tackle cost of living” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/news/councils-consider-plan-to-help-residents-tackle-cost-of-living/#:~:text=Councils%20consider%20plan%20to%20help%20residents%20tackle%20cost,support%20residents%20and%20staff%20through%20the%20cost-of-living%20crisis,> accessed 02/08/2022.

⁶ Barnsley Libraries (2022) “Get access to mobile data” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/libraries/your-digital-hub/get-help-with-access-to-mobile-data/>, accessed 28/07/2022.

⁷ Good Things Foundation (2022) “Affording the internet, as costs of living rise” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/what-we-do/news/affording-the-internet-as-costs-of-living-rise/>, accessed 28/07/2022.

⁸ Belfast City Council (2022) “New £700k Capital Grant opens to make vacant spaces in Belfast vibrant” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/News/New-%C2%A3700K-Capital-Grant-opens-to-make-vacant-space>, accessed 01/08/2022.

⁹ Local Trust (2020) *Big Local and Community Economic Development*, September 2020. Available at: <https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CED-BL-case-studies-19.07.pdf>

¹⁰ Local Trust (2020) *Big Local and Community Economic Development*, September 2020. Available at: <https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CED-BL-case-studies-19.07.pdf>

¹¹ Blackburn with Darwen (2019) *Annual report of the Director of Public Health*. Available at: <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/pdfs/Public-health-annual-report-2018-19-1.2.pdf#page16>

¹² Bolton Council (2022) “Greater Manchester Big Disability Survey 2022” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/directory-record/3279/greater-manchester-big-disability-survey-2022->, accessed 09/08/2022.

-
- ¹³ Bradford Metropolitan District Council (2022) “The Bradford district good food strategy consultation” [Online]. Available at: <https://letstalk.bradford.gov.uk/the-bradford-district-food-strategy-consultation>, accessed 01/08/2022.
- ¹⁴ Local Trust (2020) *Big Local and Community Economic Development*, September 2020. Available at: <https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CED-BL-case-studies-19.07.pdf>
- ¹⁵ Burnley Council (2022) “Warmer homes and lower fuel bills for private tenants” [Online]. Available at: <https://burnley.gov.uk/warmer-homes-and-lower-fuel-bills-private-tenants/>, accessed 28/07/2022.
- ¹⁶ Cardiff Council (2022) “More children than ever to access free meals and sports this summer as Cardiff responds to increased cost of living” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.cardiffnewsroom.co.uk/releases/c25/29525.html>, accessed 01/08/2022.
- ¹⁷ Cardiff Council (2022) “£2.6 million sustainable food challenge to improve local food production and supply” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.cardiffnewsroom.co.uk/releases/c25/29445.html>, accessed 01/08/2022.
- ¹⁸ Cheshire West and Chester Council (2022) “A Fairer Future” [Online]. Available at: <https://participatenow.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/fairer-future>, accessed 28/07/2022
- ¹⁹ Child Poverty Action Group (2022) “Cost of the School Day in Dundee” [Online]. Available at: <https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/cost-school-day/cost-school-day-dundee>, accessed 01/08/2022.
- ²⁰ Local Government Association (2022) “Gateshead: Supporting residents with debt and financial problems” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/gateshead-supporting-residents-debt-and-financial-problems>, accessed 28/07/2022.
- ²¹ Glasgow City Council (2022) “Food for Life Scotland Public Sector Expansion Pilot to deliver more fresh, local and sustainable food in Glasgow” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29518>, accessed 01/08/2022.
- ²² Community Action on Fuel Poverty (2019) “Greater Manchester: CAP in Greater Manchester” [Online]. Available at: <https://fuelpovertyresource.org.uk/cap/around-the-uk/greater-manchester/>, accessed on 04/08/2022.
- ²³ Sussex World (2022) “‘Drop-in 'cost of living' sessions to be held across Horsham district” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/politics/drop-in-cost-of-living-sessions-to-be-held-across-horsham-district-3781217>, accessed 02/08/2022.
- ²⁴ Knowsley News (2022) “£6.8 million support package to support Knowsley residents over two years” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.knowsleynews.co.uk/6-8m-support-package-to-support-knowsley-residents-over-two-years/>, accessed 28/07/2022.
- ²⁵ Local Government Association (2022) “Lewisham: Working with partners to address food poverty” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/lewisham-working-partners-address-food-poverty>, accessed 28/07/2022.
- ²⁶ Community Action on Fuel Poverty (2019) “Liverpool: CAP in Liverpool” [Online]. Available at: <https://fuelpovertyresource.org.uk/cap/around-the->

[uk/liverpool/#:~:text=Liverpool%20City%20Council%20was%20committed%20to%20developing%20a,which%20helped%20engage%20senior%20leaders%20and%20decision%20makers., accessed 04/08/2022.](#)

²⁷ Local Trust (2020) *Big Local and Community Economic Development*, September 2020. Available at: <https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CED-BL-case-studies-19.07.pdf>

²⁸ Local Trust (2020) *Big Local and Community Economic Development*, September 2020. Available at: <https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CED-BL-case-studies-19.07.pdf>

²⁹ Local Trust (2020) *Big Local and Community Economic Development*, September 2020. Available at: <https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CED-BL-case-studies-19.07.pdf>

³⁰ Moray Council (2022) “Free period products in Moray – where should they be?” [Online]. Available at: <https://newsroom.moray.gov.uk/news/free-period-products-in-moray-where-should-they-be>, accessed 28/07/2022.

³¹ Aberdeenshire Council (2022) “‘Pick Up My Period’ app to help you access free period products” [Online]. Available at: <https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Apps/News/release.aspx?newsID=8580>, accessed 28/07/2022.

³² Local Democracy Reporting Service (2022) “Council pledges to help residents facing cost of living crisis in North Yorkshire” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/news/politics/council/council-pledges-to-help-residents-facing-cost-of-living-crisis-in-north-yorkshire-3777715>, accessed 02/08/2022.

³³ Local Government Association (2022) “Food and green spaces in Oldham” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/food-and-green-spaces-oldham>, accessed 28/07/2022.

³⁴ Local Government Association (2022) “Food and green spaces in Oldham” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/food-and-green-spaces-oldham>, accessed 28/07/2022.

³⁵ Local Trust (2020) *Big Local and Community Economic Development*, September 2020. Available at: <https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CED-BL-case-studies-19.07.pdf>

³⁶ Sky News (2022) “Cost of living crisis: Eat or heat now a 'huge reality', as councils face 'unprecedented' pleas for help” [Online]. Available at: <https://news.sky.com/story/cost-of-living-crisis-eat-or-heat-now-a-huge-reality-as-councils-face-unprecedented-pleas-for-help-12537295>, accessed 02/08/2022.

³⁷ Welsh Government (2022) “£25m investment in Community Focused Schools to tackle the impact of poverty” [Online]. Available at: <https://gov.wales/25m-investment-community-focused-schools-tackle-impact-poverty>, accessed 01/08/2022.

³⁸ The Guardian (2022) " 'Rising prices and wages land councils with their own cost of living crisis' [Online]. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/apr/02/rising-prices-and-wages-land-councils-with-their-own-cost-of-living-crisis>, accessed 02/08/2022.

³⁹ Local Trust (2020) *Big Local and Community Economic Development*, September 2020. Available at: <https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CED-BL-case-studies-19.07.pdf>