

Notes from Online Network Meeting January 2025

Introductions

Main topic

Bread and Butter Thing

Discussion and concerns shared with Caroline Lee Bradford Council

Below is a an edited down transcript of the discussion.

Here is a summary of the discussion.

Caroline explained the way Bread and Butter Thing (BBT) worked and how the council would like to spend two lots of £150,000 to set up in the end 10 BBT hubs. This is attractive proposal as the £300,000 would be a one of payment to have 10 hubs run long term in the district. It would pay for staffing and a van and after that the payment of £8.50 per client per pick up would mean that it was self sustaining. BBT would be looking for community organisations and volunteers to host its hubs and help with packing up the food bags. The food is brought over by van. The food is pre ordered, and will be approx. 12 to 13Kg of food so very good value for the customers. There are no referral requirements. People self refer. It is supporting those who are struggling but not those in absolute food crisis, we know that there are a lot of people in that category. In other areas most weeks deliveries are over subscribed. There is no choice but there is a veggie option for those who do not eat meat or have religious requirements around food. The food comes from surplus, BBT tells us that they do not source from local sources so will not be taking food away from local charities who collect surplus. There are hubs in quite a lot of areas including 10 in Kirklees.

Concerns from the group

- Lack of wrap around support
 - Most of our food projects work very hard to provide wrap around support – and this takes quite a bit of time and resources. This is missing from this BBT proposal. This feels like a major omission, and a backward step. We all know that a food bag in itself is just a stop gap, without welfare and other support we can't help people more on.
- Lack of relationship building/real change
 - Most of our projects are based on building relationships with the people we support, this enables us to understand the deeper issues, and help people move on with their lives. This seems like a rock up and give food out project, we have been working very hard to not do this as a sector so this seems a backward step.
- Dignity/lack of choice
 - Thought people pay for the food bag there is only 2 choices – to get or not to get, and to go for veggie or have any meat products. We live in an area with a lot of need in communities who have lots of different dietary needs. The only option is to be veggie. Also with no choice there will be wasted food. Even at foodbanks most groups try to give some choice and cater for different needs. The group felt very strongly that that was also a backward step and particularly not appropriate for our diverse community in Bradford.
- Open to all not just those most in need

- Though we recognise that there are many people who are struggling to make ends meet there was concern that as this is open to all, it did not prioritise those with greatest need. In face the risk was it prorated those who were most able to deal with the App and texts system. People could come from any post code and didn't need to prove anything to register. This of course makes is easy but has risks in taking resources from those in real need. Why is public money being spent on this?
- Organisations hosting get nothing back
 - BBT come in with their vans, wanting a community venue to provide a free venue and volunteers – this is costs the venue but there is no provision to cover this. The relationship is between BBT and the customer so it is not even building those relationships locally with the community center.
- Concerns re demand on surplus food
 - Though BBT say they source food which is different from that sourced by food projects we are not convinced that that is fully true. We know that Bradford businesses have already given products to BBT that would have been accessed by local charities. They might not collect short date supermarket surplus but many charities rely on charities like FareShare to provide stock. FareShare are certainly finding it harder to collect surplus. Bradford's own homegrown The Storehouse also gets less access to surplus. It is an increasingly crowded market. There is not an endless supply of surplus if BBT get it someone else doesn't.
- Commitment to FoodSavers and other 'better' models
 - As a network and as the council has committed to supporting more holistic models, we would urge this to continue. Local homegrown innovations like FoodSavers have been recognised nationally for their pairing of saving schemes with food pantries. Many of our local foodbanks do more than just give out food incorporating welfare advice and other support into their work so reducing the dependence of food aid. All these models are help people be less vulnerable to food poverty and are seen as sustainable solutions in the true sense of the word.
- Home grown solutions
 - We have many excellent projects in the district who would like to get more support from the council and could and would do more if there was more funding. We would like to propose that the money goes to our Bradford district projects keeping the money in Bradford supporting local projects
- The Bradford £
 - When we think about regenerating Bradford it is common practice to think about the Bradford Pound. This money both the 2 X £150,000 and all the clients £8.50s – that if they are fully subscribed with 80 customers in 10 hubs will be £6,800.00 leaving Bradford every week for Oldham where the company is based. Even if not fully subscribed that is £300,000 a year going out of Bradford rather than into local generated projects. It is really a commercial operation that yes provides some food to those on low incomes but we should be seeking local sustainable solutions that are Bradford based, giving power back to Bradford organisations and keeping the pound local!

Edited transcript of meeting below.

Caroline Lee Council is concerned that HSF might not keep being renewed and are looking to create something sustainable which after start up funding could continue without further funding. We know that the work of foodbanks and pantries and various other projects form a much needed service, but they are at risk if HSF funding wasn't extended. There would be a big gap in provision.

Bread and Butter Thing (BBT) is such a model, which just looks for one off start up funding and is after that self sustaining. It's a charity and runs in different places across the country. There are 10 hubs in Kirklees, the council there used HSF to fund their start up. There are also quite a few in a number of parts of Greater Manchester.

It is low cost food – including fresh and frozen which is surplus collected from manufacturing companies not usually the same suppliers like supermarkets that most local charities get donations from.

The funding is £150,000 to set up 5 hubs (£30,000 each) and that covers all set up costs. The van, staff time, promotion, the online platform. They work with local partners who provide the space and volunteers. BBT come in for around 3 hours set up, have two hours giving out reordered food, and clear away. The Local venue doesn't need to worry about sourcing food, or where to store it, as all that is taken care of.

Its there for anyone who wants to access it. Working or not – so it is helpful to help people make their limited budgets stretch further.

You become a member and get messages asking if you want food that week, or not so no commitment to get every week, just pay when you want it. They can cater for around 80 families per hub. Once membership grows some weeks if over subscribed those who missed out will get priority the following week.

Cathy Henwood – I believe its £8.50 a week is that right?

CL – Yes £8.50. For that customers get about 12 to 13KG of food.

CH - I understand people can order vegetarian food but are not able to make any other specifications in terms of Halal or things like that.

CL – yes the faith friendly option would be the vegetarian offer, its hard re storage and other things to meet all faith requirements, and hard to source halal surplus so it would be vegetarian

CH – I know that people have a lot of issues and concerns but I would like to first of deal with questions people might have about the model so we all have a common understanding about how BBT works.

Maria Varley-Tawfik - is there choice in what people get

CL no you can't choose your items

MVT so if people say don't like bananas and there is a big bunch of bananas there could well be waste and the family would get less? In pantries we have tried to opt to giving people choose in what they get.

You said people get a text or something what about those who are digitally excluded.

CL yes it is text based – the community organisation could try to help people with that, but that is the way they generally operate. Its not a one size fits all approach but many people could access it.

MVT we know quite a lot of people who access the pantries across the district to have problems with technology one way or another.

CL yes it won't work for everyone but it is a choice that would work for some people – I understand that people get a wide range of items so it does work well for some people. Others will want to go to other sorts of projects.

I should point out that it is to add to existing provision not to drive out other providers but to offer another provision that will suit some people.

Laura Chalmers Two questions one re where food is procured and how that is different from where pantries and foodbanks get food from, and two we know that it is not really lack of food but lack of income that brings people to our projects. We have learned that tackling those underlying issues is key to helping people not need to come back. Is this part of the offer or is it just a food offer?

CL So I agree with you that what we want to do is improve the offer of support to help maximise their income and support people out of poverty. BBT do encourage the local partner to help tap people into support. This however is not part of their offer. However many of the people who access BBT when I worked in Oldham weren't on benefits or out of work – so no in food crisis but were wanting access to fresh food at a lower cost or maybe at the end of the month when money was getting tight – so the need for wrap around support maybe isn't as great as someone accessing a foodbank.

In terms of your first question- the notes I made from a meeting with BBT they said it wasn't using supermarket surplus that many projects pick up so shouldn't fly in the face of that. They get a lot from farms, manufacturers and distribution centres rather than supermarkets directly

LC I am just looking at their website – seems like they get surplus so it is kind of at the whim of what is available

CL yes I think that is right.

Clare Leighton – so two fold question – first who is responsible for recruiting and managing the volunteers, and how does it work. If it is in a place something is already happening – we are putting the input in but BBT are taking all the money and resources back with them. That seems to create a hole in or operating

CL so the BBT don't recruit the volunteers, its up to the council, the community the voluntary sector to work out how to do that. As all the organising is done by BBT it would be a short time slot of a couple of hours for volunteers, so there is a increase in demand for volunteers but a limited number of hours

Clare – for us its all about relationship building, if you don't have that relationship you are just handing out low cost food – nothing changes – and who holds those relationships if the BBT hold all the relationships. But if we need to build that part there is nothing coming back to us in terms of overheads, but there are costs, of heating, finding and managing volunteers, paying staff time. Our pantry doesn't provide lots but it does provide a bit of those over heads.

If we don't build the relationships then it is just handing out food, nothing changes for that person, but if we put the time and effort in to do more then there is no funding coming in to support that time, staffing, heating, coffee and snacks. It feels like a massive step backwards 5 years if we simply provide space and volunteers.

CL this might not be something that fits with the ethos of your or all organisations, but the demographic that it is likely to attract might be people outside the welfare benefits and don't need a lot of wrap around support or relationship building. They do need food in that week, due to whatever reason. As there is no restriction as to who can be a member. So it will build up provision in the district which will suite some people.

Dan Palmer – Is the model fixed or could it be reworked with BBT. They have a good ability to source surplus, and many pantries are constantly battling to get enough food. Could there be a collaboration between BBT and the pantries?

CL It's a point for consideration. I don't know if it matches either model.

Josie Barlow - so do you see BBT as filling a different part of the need. So you have foodbanks, then pantries and then higher up the level there is BBT

CL Yes its on top of that, so people who don't have high dependency on free food would be more likely to use BBT to top up and make their income spread further, above that is people who don't need any support. Its not taking away from additional support for existing provision. For the council a big advantage is that this is a one off payment that doesn't need additional support. We don't know if the funding we get will still be there. We don't want a crisis and falling off the cliff edge. But this will help people on a low income, without being reliant on Government funding to enable it to continue.

JB so is the council still wanting to support us, at the foodbank and pantry level? This is something additional

CL yes this is open to all so people might access this along with other things but its an additional thing. This is not about taking it out of existing provision. It a one of payment to get something sustainable set up. This has been the experience of other local authorities that the service continues without further funding. So if HSF went those hubs would service. We are looking at building that capacity across the district which isn't dependent on funds which we don't know will be available.

Funding is always so short term 6 months, 12 months often not knowing till the shortly before, starting with covid and its continued with the cost of living – HSF. We do know we are getting funding this next financial year ahead of when we usually did, but we are getting a little less next round.

Jane Lees I don't understand why the council is not opting to use this money to increase capacity with our FoodSavers Network, its not perfect but they are listening and improving things. It gives savings, choice and that relationship, it connects people to other services. Wouldn't be worth thinking about if Inn Churches could use it to increase capacity of our own homegrown FoodSavers model.

CL We are keen to see the growth of FoodSavers but currently it does reply on ongoing HSF to continue if is not self sustaining at the moment. Its not that we are sold on or committed to BBT in itself it is more that it is a one of funding and that is it. If there was a homegrown model like that we would look at and explore that.

JL yes I get that – it is just that as a network we are trying to get people off dependency and help them manage their money better that is the sustainability we are thinking about rather than the council one of payment.

We have found with FareShare it has got much more expensive, and we get less of the things people want. An injection of money to FoodSavers pantries might help to make them more self sustainable.

CL its something we all need to explore how to make provision more sustainable.

MVT – my concern is the council is spending this quite large amount of money supporting people who are not the neediest, who may not ‘need’ it at all but if the money goes and another year we don’t get HSF what happens to those people who really need it then.

CL I think from the councils point of view if HSF goes then at least there would still be BBT with the established hubs. Its not to take away form what’s happening now but if the HSF goes then there will not be the money for all the food support that we have now. What do we do then?

Helen Eskriett, where does the £8.50 go? And so who is responsible for any short fall say few people turn up with their £8.50 – they are sending a van of food who pays for it?

CL I don’t fully know but Id be surprised if they were not oversubscribed. There is a limit on 80 households per hub. The money goes to the BBT its their van and their sourcing the food I understand. The £8.50 generates the cost to keep it going week on week.

CH do people make payments when they pick the food up or in advance?

CL I’m not 100% sure. I think I remember them saying they had access to payments by direct debit and card machines probably also pay by cash. I think it is when they pick the food up.

Sam Kirkby – so a bit of clarification from what Helen and Clare were saying. If we had a hub where I’m based in Holmewood – we would be expected to fund utilities, staffing etc so the building could be opened up etc. Is there are better solution which keeps not only the upfront cost but the £8.50s in Bradford rather than Manchester. When we talk about economic development we talk about the Bradford district pound. That’s my thoughts about it.

LC my concern is that many people who are not in full crisis but do need support – when we have that conversation, we find they are entitled to something they are not claiming. Someone I at one of my foodbanks was in that category and after advice had had £10,000 back-payment. My worry is if someone like that was going to this sort of provision. I would worry that no one will pick this up at a provision like the BBT. But like Clare was saying for most of us here its kind of about building that relationship finding out why people are struggling.

Also I know there was a lot of BBT activity round Manchester during covid, and there are big questions round the dignity of it. Getting food you have paid for but have no choice over out the back of a van with no-one asking you what’s going on in your life is like a step backwards from what most people in this room are trying to achieve.

This doesn’t seem people focused – its more process focused – that seems like the wrong direction to me.

The wider thing for me and from a Tussle perspective is a longer term aim for HSF to continue and be ringfenced for local welfare support. A cash first solution to enable people to buy food in a short term crisis.

Also we don’t have a clear picture of need – with charities doing so much support. Its easy not to count it and end the money. As a third sector we shoot ourselves in the food a bit in that way as we respond to the need.

CL I agree there is a lot that needs to be campaigned for around HSF and the rigid terms of the grant funding terms and conditions. That often flies against what we would like to do with the money if we could. Moving people out of poverty and being more strategic about it. HSF seems to want always to do crisis support. We would all welcome that more strategic approach.

I feel like I am advertising BBT and I am not, it is just a different model.

Also I don't like the image of BBT people getting food out the back of the van – we would hope it would align with other support

I want to reassure you that the council wants to continue to support projects like those represented here, and welfare advice

CH In the end it is the councillors decision isn't it. So if you have strong concerns I would suggest you speak to your local councillor

MVT Do we know the time scale?

CL we know there are concerns within the sector – it was going to be this round of HSF but it has been pushed back to the next round in the spring.

JB I think we need to keep an eye on the proliferation of food projects. When we started there was us and Bradford Met, it expanded a bit to cover most of the district and then there are the pantries which is a great step forward too. But during and since Covid there has been a huge growth in the numbers of project. How can we maintain quality of support, reducing dependence and all that when there are so many projects

Also surplus – there is already competition for surplus. They say they are not going to compete but it would be amazing if they didn't reduce what is available locally be that from supermarket pick ups

JL or FareShare – that is their model and lots of projects like ours rely on them, if they reduce what they can get that will cause lots of problems further down the line.

Bal. Its great that bring more food to Bradford but we know that while many people do struggle there are many who will use projects who don't really need it – this means that some in need miss out. There is no restrictions here. This can be an issue now with so many projects doing food but this seems to add another whole group of unmonitored food.

Imogen Stewart. You need to be really clear if and where the gaps are. Are there hot spots of need. Lots of very good projects are represented here and across the district – no one wants to feel things are imposed on their area. If there are areas of unmet need this may be good but otherwise – do your research

Sabine – I've lots of questions and am not quite convinced. I'd need to know more before I would consider asking our foodbank volunteer team (we are all volunteers at our foodbank) Our need has grown and we are seeing more clients who need deliveries as they either live in very rural areas or have big health concerns. This project doesn't meet that issue at all.

Also many of our families have very little control over their lives, having some control over their food is one of the few things that they can control – so this seems a backward step. That's sad. Scandalous actually.

CH I think we are talking about a dignity issue really aren't we

Caroline is it ok if I share your email address with people

CL yes no problem – can I reassure people though that we are not out to undermine all the work that your projects are doing.

Janet the Immanuel Project – concerns that there are so many charities who do the work they do because they are passionate about serving people, passionate about making Bradford better. We run a homeless project feed 700-800 meals a week – 5 days a week. We rely on Inn Churches, FareShare, giving vouchers to foodbanks. Our guys aren't going to benefit from this with a text or App. We don't get funding from the council. And I don't feel like the council appreciate the work that is being done by charities such as ours and many others. We couldn't afford to feed all these meals without all the support we get. The money should be used to fund local charities and coordination so we can work better together, more administration to avoid people getting support from all over and others getting nothing.

CL a lot of the money that comes in from HSF does go directly to people or to organisations providing food. This is a fairly small percentage of that money. We give money to lots of schemes for white goods, fuel, care leavers, family carers. I think you will be benefiting from the HSF via Storehouse. But sorry you feel like that. I have worked for local authorities, and for Bradford Council and I know members and officers appreciate the great work charities do. Its not my experience that people don't appreciate the work.

Juli Thompon (by chat) Immanuel get surplus food from us not via HSF as they are not a foodbank or pantry.

CL if people want to lobby against this of course you are free to, I wouldn't encourage you to email your councillor, they don't know the details. Please send concerns to me – but we need a model where one input of cash would bring food beyond that input of cash. People are free to email me

Caroline Lee (R&B) Caroline.Lee1@bradford.gov.uk

CH I will end this discussion here. Thank you, Caroline, for your time and bearing with us while we air our concerns. I have been struck with the strength of feeling on this. So I am guessing it is not the last we will hear about it.

Can I invite Sophie Aoun from Food Cycle to tell us about her project and an ask for any interested group.

Sophie Aoun Food Cycle. We've been in Bradford for about a year now, running a community meal that happens every week on a Thursday evening and it's free to anyone in the community. The idea is we're trying to welcome people, no questions asked. There's no referrals needed.

We want to create a social community dining experience. People can come out and it's a sit down kind of three course meal, vegetarian food cooked by volunteers, there's a team of volunteers who do the hosting. So it's a bit, you know, it's a bit more than just a meal. It's coming to get that social connection. And we've been at the Rockwall Centre for Edge but they're having to relocate to a smaller community venue so they can't accommodate us anymore.

So we're looking at a few other venues in, in Bradford, you know, we'd be happy to move to another day of the week, another evening.

We don't want to conflict with anyone who is doing a community meal in a specific night of the week, wherever we end up. But I think just wanted to put that out there that yeah, we're considering a new venue.

We're aiming to host, we try to host about anywhere between 30 to 40 guests every night. So we're looking for that kind of size.

It's entirely volunteer led and run with just. I'm just we're just two members of staff in the region, so that's, you know we we're supporting the volunteers to kind of get it going and get it running. We've got a lovely team of volunteers right now.

So yeah, we've looked at the deaf centre in Bradford. We've looked at the Karmend Community Centre as well. And I've been to the Millside community centre. If you know of anyone or of any space that you think might be suitable, I'd really appreciate some information.

CH it's a community meal. But you where you provide the food, but it's an offer for community centre which has a building and a kitchen that they could run. Would they also need to recruit volunteers or do you bring volunteers?

SA No,. We've got our volunteers. We want it to be a collaboration, not just us coming into hire the space like it really is about making it and this is what's hard about moving from one community to another. We were really established and Thorpe edge in the community there. So a lot of our volunteers were from Thorpe Edge.

Now that we're having to move, we're just aware that we're going to have to, build that up from the ground. Again, we are coming with some of our volunteers. We'll do all our own recruitment.

But any support that we can get from whichever centre we end up collaborating with would be really great. Obviously, we don't expect anywhere to be hosting us for free like we would contribute towards utilities and I guess like a rent cost, all of that we've put, yeah, looking to partner up really.

We can also just put my e-mail in the in the chat here and if you come across anything or have any interest or you want to find out more than please yeah, do let me know.

Sophie Aoun sophieaoun@foodcycle.org.uk

CH Thanks Sophie

Any other business, have a couple of updates on the Healthy Start champion scheme

That Katie Smith who runs NHS trainings on this she's going to put on a healthy start update session. Notes from her email below

The NHS Healthy Start scheme.

The NHS Healthy Start scheme helps young families on low incomes to buy healthy food and milk.

If you are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, and receive certain benefits, you could be eligible for NHS Healthy Start.

If you are eligible, once on the scheme, you'll receive a Healthy Start card with money on it, that you can use in some UK shops. The card will be topped up with payments every 4 weeks.

You can use the card to buy:

- Plain liquid cow's milk
- Fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables
- Fresh, dried, and tinned pulses
- Infant formula milk based on cows' milk (one that is suitable from birth.)

- You can also use your card to collect 'Healthy Start vitamin tablets' for during your pregnancy and the 'vitamin drops' for babies and young children.
- For full details of the NHS Healthy Start scheme, and to find out if you are eligible for the scheme, please go to the website – www.healthystart.nhs.uk

In addition to the national Healthy Start scheme, in the Bradford District, there is a local Healthy Start vitamin distribution scheme, please ask any person or family you are working with to speak with their Midwife team, Health Visitor Team or other Healthcare professional for further advice regarding the Healthy Start vitamins.

Please note there are a few points to update you and your colleagues about regarding the NHS Healthy Start scheme –

- For full details of the eligibility criteria for the national NHS Healthy Start scheme, please see the website - healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/
Please see the schemes eligibility criteria webpage for all the current information and links.
- There has been a new section added to the national scheme's website, there is an 'update your details' section – the website address is healthystart.nhs.uk/update-your-details/
This section is for if you are currently getting Healthy Start payments.
- The promotional resources (Such as posters and leaflets) were updated in October and November 2024. There is a link to all the schemes resources in the first paragraph within the healthcare professionals part of the website - healthystart.nhs.uk/healthcare-professionals/

If you work with young families and would like to become a volunteer NHS Healthy Start Champion – please speak with Cathy

If you would like any further information, regarding the national and or the local schemes, please let me (Katie) know

If you would like an update on both the local and national schemes, I am (Katie) running a 1 hour online update session in the last week of February – please email me (Katie) for further details and to book on the session

Thank you.

Katie Smith

Nutrition Improvement Dietitian

Please note I work Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8am-2.30pm.

Nutrition & Dietetics | SLH.

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

T: 01274 36 5108

M: 07506 016505

<http://www.bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk>

CH We've been having some meetings with MPs across the district, working with Trussel as a team we have met and have met Nass Khan (West) Imran Hussain (East) and Anna Dixon (Shipley). We will continue to do that because I think it's really important to to know keep in touch with elected Members and tell them the things that we can concerned about. And one of the things I've been raising is how household support fund is structured and how we'd actually like a bit more flexibility and guidance. So that sort of wrap around support and other things could be sort of better funded and there could be more like longer term approaches to lifting people out of poverty.

I know feeding Britain's Andrew Forsey from Feeding Britain to say that the house, the half programme, the holiday activities and food programme HAF has been extended. That's hot news. So I think we knew we thought it was running out this year and it's actually going to be extended on at least for another 12 months and hopefully longer.

Again, we'd sort of be happy to have organisation hosting us for that. We usually try and like to have one face to face meeting towards the north of Bradford so you know either sort of Shipley Bingley, Keighley direction and the other one we usually have more central or in the south of the district

Meeting closed.