



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

21 September 2022

Report of the Director - Public Health

Use of Contain Outbreak Management Fund to strengthen Food Banks and provide additional wrap around support in Derbyshire

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 County-wide.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is not a Key Decision.

3. Purpose

3.1 To seek Cabinet Member for Health and Communities approval to use Contain Outbreak Management Funding to support food insecurity work across Derbyshire as follows:

- £0.100m to Foundation Derbyshire for the purpose of supporting food bank work across Derbyshire.
£0.067m to the 4 Derbyshire Citizens Advice offices to strengthen wrap around support delivered at food banks in Derbyshire.

4. Information and Analysis

4.1 Over the last few years, household food insecurity has increased amongst families and more people are turning to food banks for support. Nationally, the State of Hunger Report 2019 found that around 11% of children aged under-16 live in food insecure households and around 36%

of food parcels distributed by the Trussell Trust's network of food banks go to children. The End Child Poverty Report in 2019 found that over 42% of Derbyshire children were living in poverty.

- 4.2 Covid-19 has magnified this issue, and this has then been exacerbated by the recent inflationary price rises and increased cost of food and fuel. The Food Foundation estimates that close to 5 million adults are currently food insecure, compared with 4 million last year and 2 million prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, with 1.7 million children living in these households. Also there has been an increase in the number of families eligible for Free School Meals, an indication that family income is reducing. The latest figure for Derbyshire was 24.7% (England 22.5%) of families eligible for Free School Meals in 2021/2022 compared to 22.3 in 2020/2021 (20.8% for England).
- 4.3 Those experiencing food insecurity are amongst the most vulnerable in society and are disproportionately likely to be experiencing poor health outcomes, poor nutrition, and low resilience to illness. Those living in deprived areas experienced higher levels of mortality from Covid-19. These individuals are more likely to have low Covid-19 vaccination uptake rates and are least likely to be able to self-isolate when required. They are highly likely to have had high exposure to the virus due to having to attend workplaces in person or themselves and colleagues needing to choose between attending work with symptoms of Covid-19 or to be able to afford to eat due to zero-hour contracts and lack of sick pay/job insecurity. Car sharing or use of public transport is also higher within the demographic which increase the risk of transmission of infection.
- 4.4 The Covid-19 response: Living with Covid-19 also outlines that local authorities should work to increase mental health and wellbeing of those most affected by the pandemic and promote safer behaviours to reduce future risk of infection. The additional mental burden of food insecurity magnifies the effects of the pandemic such as furlough, job loss and bereavement. In terms of health protecting behaviours, people experiencing food insecurity need support to ensure their adequate nutrition and bolster their health and wellbeing, to improve their resilience in advance of any future outbreaks. Products to enable safer environments (for example soap, hand gel, face masks) are less likely to be a priority over food, so if food insecurity can be reduced then people are more likely to be able to buy these products.

Crisis Support via Food Banks

- 4.4 The Feeding Derbyshire Network connects 34 food banks and there are many more food banks across the county that are not part of this network that the Council has supported since March 2020. Food projects,

including food banks in the Feeding Derbyshire Network, have been an essential support mechanism for many individuals, families, and communities during the Covid-19 pandemic and continue to do so through current cost of living challenges.

- 4.5 Derbyshire County Council has provided a series of grants administered by Foundation Derbyshire totalling £0.350m to support food banks through, since March 2020. Foundation Derbyshire is the operating name for Derbyshire Community Foundation, an independent charity, building an endowment fund to provide grant funding to voluntary and community groups across the county. 44 food banks have benefitted over three phases. Demand for this support has been extremely high with the most recent grant of £0.100m taken up by 23 food banks between February 2022 and July 2022.
- 4.6 The additional funding will allow Foundation Derbyshire to:
- Continue to administer a grants scheme for Derbyshire food banks who supply food to Derbyshire residents who are in financial crisis.
 - Maintain appropriate administrative processes for financial payments to organisations and put in place effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
 - Ensure that the grant will be used to support the availability and accessibility of food for Derbyshire's vulnerable residents who are experiencing financial hardship.
- 4.7 Funding outlined in this report will be used to cover food, volunteer and staffing expenses, fixtures and fittings and fuel costs. Local intelligence indicates that food banks are struggling to get or keep volunteers and that donations have reduced both from individuals and supermarkets as a result of ongoing cost of living pressures.
- 4.8 As part of this work, Foundation Derbyshire will encourage and support food banks who apply for funding to become part of the Feeding Derbyshire network, where they are not already a member.

Wrap around advisory support in food banks - Citizens Advice

- 4.8 Derbyshire Citizens Advice services have been working in partnership with Feeding Britain and Rural Action Derbyshire (RAD) to deliver a project across Derbyshire to provide good quality, impartial, free and confidential advice and information to people accessing local food banks. This initiative is a settings-based approach, aiming to ensure that people in food crisis have immediate access to quality advice to tackle the underlying issues that made them vulnerable to hunger and enable appropriate support to engender independence and mitigate against

continued risk of reliance on the food bank. Current funding for the project has ended, but Public Health recognises the value in the project and are seeking additional funding to continue the approach until longer term sustainable funding is sourced.

- 4.9 Investment into timely advisory services is more cost effective than allowing an individual's financial, physical and mental health to decline to the point that they require more expensive services in the future. Embedding sessions within food bank settings supports those most in crisis and often experiencing emergency situations. This approach can bring rapid stability and resolution to the individual's immediate needs, allowing them to plan and budget for the future and reduce their reliance on food banks and other services for a prolonged period of time. Additionally, individuals will feel more able to cope with their situation and have a greater awareness of where to find early help should it be needed in the future. Strengthening support around this agenda will ensure further resilience against the negative impacts of Covid-19 for this cohort.
- 4.10 Evaluation of the project has shown good outcomes so far between 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022 based on an investment of £0.032m:
- £0.235m of additional income was maximised for food bank clients
 - and £0.073m of debts rescheduled or written off, the case studies in Appendix 2 demonstrate the huge difference made to people's lives by the service. The benefit of providing this service within a food bank is to opportunistically reach those who are particularly vulnerable and experiencing food insecurity.
- 4.11 The additional grant would enable an essential service to continue to support this vulnerable group in order to maximise their income and bolster their health and wellbeing, ahead of any future Covid-19 outbreaks. By improving the income, health and wellbeing of this population people may be more likely to access vaccination opportunities and will have increased economic as well as health and wellbeing resilience.
- 4.12 The provider has advised that they would be able to temporarily double the current additional provision of advisory services within food banks. Provision would be increased from 0.2 wte to 0.4wte per Citizens Advice office, enabling clinics to be run at the food banks as well as follow up work. The increased capacity should enable 750 clients to be seen annually.
- 4.13 As this is a relatively small pot of money, the investment does not allow full coverage in every area. However, Citizen's Advice will work in partnership with Feeding Derbyshire/RAD to identify areas of highest

need in each of the Citizens Advice office geographies and mobilise and move resources accordingly as the project progresses. The grant will cover project costs for a 12-month period, including adviser salaries and on costs, until external funding can be sourced.

4.14 The total £0.067m for wrap around advisory services in food banks will be split between the four Citizen’s Advice services as follows:

Citizens Advice Office	Amount £	Geographical area covered
Derbyshire Districts	£16,800	Erewash, Amber Valley, High Peak and Derbyshire Dales
North East Derbyshire	£16,800	North East Derbyshire and Bolsover
Chesterfield	£16,800	Chesterfield
Mid Mercia	£16,800	South Derbyshire
Total Costs	£67,200	Derbyshire

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Foundation Derbyshire have been consulted and discussed how they are able to administrate this further grant.
- 5.2 The four Derbyshire Citizens Advice offices have been consulted and have come up with the proposal to double the current level of service provision themselves and are able to deliver this within their current staffing level.

6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Do nothing- this would mean that Derbyshire food banks continue to struggle due to the current low levels of donations and difficulties recruiting and retaining volunteers, whilst experiencing high levels of demand from vulnerable populations experiencing food insecurity and limit the ability of the council to increase the resilience of these vulnerable populations to future waves of Covid-19. It would also mean if the additional wrap around support provided in food banks is not continued, then these vulnerable populations are not supported opportunistically to improve their financial situations, and this will also limit the ability of the council to increase the resilience of these vulnerable populations to future waves of Covid-19.

7. Implications

7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

8. Background Papers

8.1 10 September 2020 – Cabinet Report: Financial support to Derbyshire food banks

8.2 [25 March 2021 – Cabinet member report: Derbyshire advisory services in food banks](#)

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Implications

9.2 Appendix 2 – Case Studies provided by Citizen Advice Offices

10. Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities:

a) Approves use of Contain Outbreak Management Funding to support food insecurity work across Derbyshire:

- £0.100m to Foundation Derbyshire for the purpose of supporting food banks across Derbyshire.
- £0.067m to the 4 Derbyshire Citizens Advice offices to strengthen wrap around support delivered at food banks in Derbyshire, split as follows:
 - £0.017m to Derbyshire Districts Citizens Advice
 - £0.017m to North East Derbyshire Citizens Advice
 - £0.017m to Chesterfield Citizens Advice
 - £0.017m to Mid Mercia Citizens Advice

11. Reasons for Recommendation(s)

11.1 To support food banks to provide emergency food to vulnerable people in need. To improve their nutrition and increase their health and wellbeing resilience to bolster their protection from any future waves of Covid-19.

11.2 To ensure that people in food crisis have immediate access to quality advice to tackle the issues that made them vulnerable to hunger and enable appropriate support to engender independence and mitigate continued risk of reliance on the food bank. To increase their financial and health and wellbeing resilience to bolster their protection from any future waves of Covid-19.

12 Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

12.1 No

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 Since the start of the pandemic, the Council has received a number of different grants to support the response to Covid-19, one of which is managed by Public Health. For 2022/23, based on allocations carried forward from 2021/22, there is £17.627m available from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. £0.100m will be allocated from Contain funding to fund the additional support to food banks to be administered by Foundation Derbyshire, and £0.067 to fund provision of wrap around support in food banks, outlined in this report.

Legal

- 2.1 The Council has power to provide grants under the general power of competence set out in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.2 The Council's Financial Regulations state that grants below £0.100m require Cabinet Member authorisation.
- 2.3 The Council's standard grant agreement shall be used to set out the terms and conditions for which the grant is made. This includes conditions for clawback of funding in certain circumstances and states that the Council is not liable for any employment liabilities.

Human Resources

- 3.1 Foundation Derbyshire have confirmed that they are happy to distribute this further amount of money to food banks, and would require an 8% administration fee to conduct this work.
- 3.2 The 4 Derbyshire Citizen Advice Offices have confirmed they are able to double the capacity of the current wrap around advisory service in food banks within their current workforce capacity, for a fixed period of 12 months.

Information Technology

- 4.1 There are no additional information technology implications

Equalities Impact

5.1 N/A

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

6.1 The recommendations in this paper support delivery of the following priorities for the next year in the Council Plan:

- Provided support to people and communities in need, including financial help from our Discretionary Fund, and other activities that promote financial inclusion
- Continued to deliver the ongoing Covid-19 response and recovery in relation to health protection, alongside wider partnership action to tackle health inequalities
- Worked with partners to promote positive mental wellbeing and improve support for local people, with a particular focus on children and young people at both school and in the community

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

7.1 N/A