



**FOR PUBLICATION**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**Thursday, 22 February 2024**

**Report of the Director - Public Health**

**Use of Contain Outbreak Management Fund to provide additional support to food banks**

(Cabinet Member for Health and Communities)

**1. Divisions Affected**

County-wide

**2. Key Decision**

2.1 This is not a Key Decision

**3. Purpose**

To seek Cabinet approval to use Contain Outbreak Management Funding to support food insecurity work across Derbyshire as follows:

- £0.400m to Foundation Derbyshire for the purpose of supporting food bank work across Derbyshire.

**4. Information and Analysis**

4.1 Food insecurity has increased amongst families over the last few years, 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 26.6% (England 23.8%) of families eligible for Free School Meals in 2022/2023 compared to 24.7% in 2021/2022 (22.5% 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**

- 4.5 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.

- 4.6 Derbyshire County Council has provided a series of grants administered by Foundation Derbyshire totalling £0.850m to support food banks, 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/projects have benefitted over four phases. Demand for this support has been extremely high with the fourth phase of £0.200m taken up by 25 food projects between December 2022 and October 2023. There is a low administrative overhead charged by Foundation Derbyshire.
- 4.7 The additional funding requested in this report 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.
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 As part of this work, Foundation Derbyshire will continue to encourage and support food banks who apply for funding to become part of the Feeding Derbyshire network, where they are not already a member.
- 4.10 Rural Action Derbyshire (who provide the Feeding Derbyshire network) have committed to working closely with Foundation Derbyshire and DCC Public Health to plan sustainability of food projects over the course of 2024 and this will be reflected in the service specification that is put in place with Foundation Derbyshire for this last allocation of funding from Contain Outbreak Management Funding. Groups will need to

demonstrate sustainability planning and participation in strategic sustainability activity in order to receive funding.

- 4.11 Funds not provided to food projects by Sep 2024 will be reviewed by Derbyshire County Council Public Health and likely timescales for allocation of funds to groups will be assessed. If required within the terms and conditions of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund these funds will be returned to Derbyshire County Council. This will be added to the grant agreement.
- 4.12 There will be robust monitoring and evaluation by Derbyshire County Council Public Health of the use of funds.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 Foundation Derbyshire have been consulted and discussed how they are able to administer this further grant.

## **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.

## **7. Implications**

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

## **8. Background Papers**

- 8.1 [21 September 2022 - Cabinet Member Report: Use of Contain Outbreak Management Fund to strengthen Food Banks and provide additional wrap around support in Derbyshire](#)
- 8.2 [23 January 2023 – Cabinet Member Report: Use of Contain Outbreak Management Fund to provide additional support to food banks](#)

## **9. Appendices**

## 9.1 Appendix 1 – Implications

### **10. Recommendation(s)**

That Cabinet:

- a) Approve grant funding of £0.400m to Foundation Derbyshire for the purpose of supporting food bank work across Derbyshire.

### **11. Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

- 11.1 To enable food banks and community pantries to purchase emergency supplies of food and cover other costs in order to ensure provision of food to vulnerable families and individuals during ongoing cost of living pressures. To improve their nutrition and increase their 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 these - the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) - is managed by Public Health. £0.400m will be allocated from the COMF grant to fund the additional support to food banks. This funding will be administered by Foundation Derbyshire.

### **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 above £0.100m require Cabinet 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.

### **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