

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

10 September 2020

Report of the Director of Public Health

Financial support to Derbyshire foodbanks

1. Purpose of the Report:

To seek Cabinet approval to provide a grant to the value of £0.150m to Foundation Derbyshire for the purpose of supporting foodbanks across Derbyshire.

2. Information and Analysis:

Over the last few years, household food insecurity has increased amongst British 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.

COVID-19 has magnified this issue. The Food Foundation estimates that close to 5 million adults are currently food insecure, compared with 2 million pre-lockdown, and this includes 1.7 million children living in these households.

The Feeding Derbyshire Network connects 28 Food Banks and there are many more foodbanks across the county that are not part of this network that the Council and Foundation Derbyshire have supported over the last 3 months. Food projects, including foodbanks in the Feeding Derbyshire Network, have been a lifeline for many individuals, families, and communities during the Covid-19 crisis. During the last 3 months, Derbyshire food projects have doubled the amount of food provided to local people.

In March 2020 as the COVID-19 crisis hit, Derbyshire County Council made £0.100m available to food banks via Foundation Derbyshire. Foundation Derbyshire is the operating name for Derbyshire Community Foundation, an independent charity, building an endowment fund to provide vital grant funding to voluntary and community groups across the county.

Foundation Derbyshire administered distribution of this funding in two stages.

In Stage One, Council funding provided “Emergency Grants” of £1,000 to: (a) established Foodbanks in Derbyshire or (b) established organisations that already run a foodbank service as part of their suite of support to local communities.

The speed with which the Council were able to commit their significant level of funding, enabled Foundation Derbyshire to begin awarding these emergency payments before the end of March. By 9th April, 17 emergency grants, totalling £16,800 had been awarded to Derbyshire based Foodbanks. This funding was being sought to purchase additional food as well as pay for fuel, PPE, hygiene products and thermal bags as many foodbanks and community cafes were moving to food parcel and pre-prepared hot meal delivery to those in isolation.

A further £32,900 strategic grant was also awarded to Fareshare, who were seeing that demand for deliveries had risen by at least 30% across Derbyshire. Community cafes, for example, were no longer able to take an income from the public but wanted to continue helping their community. Foodbanks were starting to see a reduction in donations from the public and anticipated this only getting worse, as supermarkets had limited stock. Mindful that many foodbanks were augmenting their food stocks by shopping at local supermarkets (and keen to ensure both the safety of their staff/volunteers and access to more cost effective food sources), this strategic grant funding was awarded to Fareshare East Midlands, in order to increase its capacity to deliver free food supplies to foodbanks and community cafes at this critical time.

In Stage Two, Foundation Derbyshire launched its second wave of Foodbank funding to run alongside the Stage One Grants, using £42,300 of remaining funding from the Council. All food banks that had successfully claimed the initial Stage One grant were now able to claim an additional grant ranging from £1,000 to £4,000. This could be used for the continued

purchase of food and resources, additional volunteer expenses, storage and PPE. However, aware of the impact that the increased demand was having on Foodbanks' core costs, the criteria for Stage Two applications was widened to include items such as:

- Staff costs to provide for extra hours worked
- Proportionate and reasonable costs linked to rent and utilities if venues are opening longer hours to cope with demand
- DBS checks
- Costs for employee drivers

In light of the unprecedented level of demand being faced by Foodbanks and the challenging operating environment in which they continue to provide such a vital service to our communities, Foundation Derbyshire decided to set a monitoring deadline of 3rd December 2020 for all Food Bank grants, thereby enabling them to focus their time and resources on their frontline emergency response. A final impact evaluation will therefore be provided in January 2021. In the meantime, all Foodbanks applying for a Stage Two Food Bank grant are required to submit evidence that their Stage One grant has been fully spent and also provide an end of grant report.

To date, the £0.100m funding from the Council has enabled Foundation Derbyshire to award 41 grants to 27 organisations. In addition to the one-off grant of £32,900 to FareShare, in stage 1, 26 grants were awarded totalling £24,750, and 14 stage 2 grants have been awarded totalling £42,350.

Although the original peak of the COVID-19 pandemic has passed the longer term effect on poverty and food insecurity is continuing. For example, there has been an increase in the number of families eligible for Free School Meals, an indication that family income is reducing. It is expected that this will get worse as the government furlough scheme ends with a potential rise in unemployment. Additional funding of £0.150m will provide further support, through Derbyshire's foodbanks, to vulnerable people across Derbyshire who are experiencing financial crisis and food insecurity.

The additional funding will allow Foundation Derbyshire to:

- Continue to provide 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.
- Provide representation, involvement and input at the Feeding Derbyshire COVID19 Group and associated working to ensure co-ordinated effort and minimisation of duplication.
- 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.

Foundation Derbyshire have indicated that they may be able to access further funding through the Department for Culture Media & Sport's "Community Match Challenge". The £85 million Community Match Challenge is part of the £750 million package of funding that the government has promised to charities responding to the impact of coronavirus. Selected coronavirus charity campaigns have been invited to apply for a share to match new donations raised. Charities who are able to demonstrate they have received contributions from Local Authorities that would not otherwise have been spent on Coronavirus response may be eligible for a £1 for £1 match under the "Community Match Challenge" initiative.

On 30 July 2020 Cabinet approved proposals for the future funding of Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure providers. Creating empowered and self-sufficient local communities is a key priority for the Council, and supporting the voluntary and community sector to grow and thrive will be key to achieving this. In part this recognises the role of VCS infrastructure organisations in supporting local community and voluntary sector groups. Foundation Derbyshire fulfils this function by providing vital funding to voluntary and community groups across Derbyshire. Through the previous Council funding, Foundation Derbyshire has developed positive relationships with many local food banks, and therefore are ideally placed to be able to administer this additional funding on the Council's behalf.

3. Financial Considerations:

The total cost is £0.150m which will be grant-funded to Foundation Derbyshire, with the cost met from the Public Health Grant budget.

4. Legal Considerations:

The Council's standard grant agreement shall be used to set out the terms and conditions for which the grant is made.

5. Other Considerations:

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: equality of opportunity, health, human resources, environmental, transport, property and crime and disorder considerations.

6. Background Papers:

None

7. Key Decision:

Yes

8. Is it required that the Call-in period be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed within this report?

No

9. Officer's Recommendation:

That Cabinet approves funding of £0.150m Foundation Derbyshire to provide continued support for Derbyshire foodbanks.

Dean Wallace
Director of Public Health