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Agenda Item No

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

11 March 2021

Report of the Director of Public Health

**Feeding Derbyshire - Affordable Food Network
(Health and Communities)**

1. Purpose of the report:

To seek Cabinet approval to provide a grant to the value of £0.300m to Rural Action Derbyshire to enhance work of the Feeding Derbyshire project, by supporting the set-up of an additional affordable food network across Derbyshire over a 2-year period.

2. Information and analysis:

Over the last few years, household food insecurity has increased amongst Britain's 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.

Feeding Derbyshire seeks to help those struggling with low incomes, debt and poor access to affordable, nutritious food. It Aims to reduce the negative impact of hunger by working to ensure projects are inclusive and reach the most vulnerable people in the county and give families and individuals the confidence and capacity to be self-reliant, able to meet their own and their children's needs.

Rural Action Derbyshire (RAD) co-ordinate a network of 34 foodbanks operating across 41 locations, as part of the Feeding Derbyshire Partnership. The alliance also currently supports the work of a number of Community Cafés, School Holiday Clubs, Breakfast and After-School Clubs across Derbyshire. Additionally, in direct response to COVID-19, RAD set-up a batch cook-delivery scheme involving 12 projects providing ready meals to some of the most vulnerable people in the county. All are essential and even more so in the current climate but alone they cannot form a long-term solution to food insecurity.

The affordable food network work proposed in this report will add value and provide a steppingstone out of crisis by creating a longer term and more sustainable alternative to food banks. This will be achieved by:

- Building a network of Community Shops and Pantries across Derbyshire that give people access to good quality, affordable and nutritious food locally.
- Utilising existing networks of partners to provide support to individuals and families with financial/economic challenges, in order to strengthen personal resilience.
- Adopting a model that enables community shops and pantries to be self-financing and sustainable within 2 years, e.g. not-for profit/social enterprise

The network would start off with a small number of outlets across the county, with an aspiration to increase this to 12 settings by the end of the first year. Longer term outcomes associated with this intervention include:

- Reduced reliance and dependency on emergency foodbanks
- Potential to restore and strengthen people's self-esteem and improved mental wellbeing.
- Increase in self-reliance and community resilience by supporting people to help their budgets go further and reduce the risk of falling into debt and crisis.
- Expansion of opportunities to support people with additional 'wrap-around' advice services to maximise their income.
- Opportunities to provide community shop/pantry customers with additional services to support them, for example with their food knowledge and cooking skills.
- Reduction in reliance on grant funding amongst the community food sector in the medium to long term

Work has already started to scope out the project, and 3 models of delivery have been identified:-

1. High Street/Pop-up – using an existing vacant high street property, for example shop, post office, food outlet, pub.
2. Within a community venue – locate within a community venue, for example church or village hall, community centre.
3. Mobile/Delivery facility – convert vehicle for a mobile shop/advice point

The delivery model utilised will vary across the County and be determined by a combination of local area assets available and identified need. Two pilot areas have already been identified in Shirebrook and Holmewood. Both of these communities have Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) overall scores that rank them in the 10 – 20% most deprived Lower Super Outcome Areas (LSOAs) nationally (Derbyshire Observatory, 2021). They also link to existing Feeding Derbyshire food projects and provide an opportunity to develop at pace, as they have already identify potential premises. Learning from these initial projects will inform work in other localities. An evidence-based approach will be applied to target communities across Derbyshire. The project will ensure all 8 Districts and Boroughs have the opportunity to develop a setting during the first 2 years.

All projects will be encouraged and supported to use a membership and donation system which will provide income to assist with running costs and enable sustainability. Projections vary across the different models of delivery due to running costs, but are based on each outlet attracting 100 members, paying a £12 per annum membership fee and then a suggested donation of £5 towards the cost of the food for the weekly visit to the shop. The estimated income builds over the 2-year period as membership increases enabling self-financing and sustainability in the longer term.

This approach will support delivery against a number of key public health outcomes including building resilient communities, healthy start, healthy lives, and the foundations of health such as reducing income deprivation. It will support reducing health inequalities across our communities, measured by adopting an Outcomes Based Accountability Approach. Evaluation embedded within the project will also enhance the significant intelligence already gathered as part of the Feeding Derbyshire approach.

3. Financial Considerations:

The proposed cost of £0.300m will be grant funded to Rural Action Derbyshire to deliver the project outlined in this report. Costs will be met from the existing Public Health ring-fenced 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:

No

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 the funding of £0.300m to Rural Action Derbyshire, to support the set-up of an affordable food network across Derbyshire over a 2-year period, as outlined in this report.

Dean Wallace
Director of Public Health