

## RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

### APPROVAL FOR THE GRANT FUNDING OF FOOD BANKS IN WILTSHIRE IN RESPONSE TO THE CORONA VIRUS

#### 1. Decisions made:

- 1.1. The council undertakes promotion of the work of food banks to encourage the community to donate food.
- 1.2. Further exploration of use of Charitable Funds to support local food banks.
- 1.3. The Council provides grant funding of an average of £2.5k per food bank ( total of £ 47.5k) upon request to match fund grant provided by Wiltshire Community Foundation. This to be funded from the local welfare assistance budget reducing this budget to £100k.
- 1.4. Council offers food banks the opportunity to take grant funding in the form of food direct from suppliers from the Council's wholesale suppliers.

**Made by;** Simon Hendeby, Director of Housing and Commercial Development

#### Background

1. By power given to me pursuant to paragraph 1 of Part 3 Section D2 of Wiltshire Council's Constitution Scheme of Delegation to Officers (as last updated in February 2016) adopted by the Council at its meeting on 9th November 2010 or any subsequent successor constitution, I am authorised to make the above decision.

#### Reason for decision

2. The widespread effects of the Covid-19 virus mean that there are a number of vulnerable households who need to self isolate and have not been able to source food or other supplied from either friends and family or the voluntary and community sector. In addition there has been a significant increase in the number of Wiltshire households who have made a claim for state benefits due to loss of income through loss of employment. This has led to a dramatic increase in demand for food provided by food banks , in some cases a 300% increase being reported. This is taking place at a time when donations and normal supply of food to food banks has tailed off due to the impact of the crisis.
3. Nine food banks have approached Wiltshire Community Foundation for grant funding to pay for restocking supplies. Wiltshire Community Foundation are providing grant funding of varying amounts but about £ 2.5k per food bank. Rather than providing grants for food stock they normally provide funding for food bank infrastructure/ running costs to ensure sustainability. Therefore, via the Community Resilience Hub, Wiltshire Community Foundation has approached the Council to enquire whether the Council would match fund so that the Council is paying for the food whilst the Wiltshire

Community Foundation provides funding to maintain food bank operations. To date the Wiltshire community foundation has provided just under £ 20,000 directly to food banks in Wiltshire.

4. Food banks have reported a fall in donations as well as an increase in demand. The Council can help by promoting the work of food banks in the County.
5. The Council can investigate and support food banks to seek additional charitable funding to help them maintain their food stocks. This work will be undertaken by the Council's community engagement managers working in the respective localities.
6. The Council is investigating whole sale food supply as a means of providing the food for emergency food parcels. This supply may offer economies that could be .made available for food banks.
7. If the Council is minded to provide direct grant funding to food banks it would have to do so for all 19 subject to request. If that was based on £ 2.5k per food bank that would equate to £47.5k. This would be new unbudgeted expenditure for the Council but could be funded from the increased local welfare assistance (increase from £50K to £150K as at the 1st April 2020) budget as in effect the ability of food banks to provide food for the most vulnerable will mitigate the call on that budget and scheme. It would demonstrate the Council's commitment to grant funding services for the most vulnerable households in the County..
8. I confirm that in making this decision I have considered the following in line with Wiltshire Council's Constitution: **(Please insert 'Yes' / 'No' / 'Not Applicable' and any other comments necessary to evidence the issue identified has been addressed)**

Key decision requirements	Y
Views of relevant cabinet member(s), committee chairman, area board(s)	Gold Meeting of xx considered this proposal.
Consideration of the area boards and delegated decision checklist for officers on the issue of when and how to involve local councillors and area boards in decisions about local services	NA
Implication of any council policy, initiative, strategy or procedure	This is a new grant offer to meet the needs of vulnerable households in emergency situation
Consultation in accordance with the council's consultation strategy	Relevant heads of service and directors have been consulted
Range of options available	Given the unprecedented circumstances this is considered to be the appropriate

	option at this time. Others are examined below.
Staffing, financial and legal implications	Finance were fully consulted in the decision making process
Risk assessment and equality implications	The risk of not providing food to vulnerable households and the financial risks to the Council are mitigated by this proposal.
Involvement of statutory officers and/or directors	Yes
Regional or national guidance from other bodies	Limited regional and national advice available although similar approaches are being adopted by other LA
The council's constitution	Yes
This contract is suitable for execution under the e-signature process.	N/A

### Conflict of Interest

9. Not applicable.

### Other options considered

10. The Council could make funding available to Area boards for them to prioritise response to provide food for vulnerable households. This was discounted as there is no guarantee the funding would find its way to food banks and thus would not meet identified need nor match fund other charitable funding sources.
11. The Council could increase the local welfare assistance scheme budget still further to meet needs of vulnerable households who need food. Again this would not maximise overall funding available to meet needs and as such was discounted.

Cost centre:

Approved by: 11April



Simon Hendey, Director of Housing and Development

Recommended by:

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020.