

Title of Report: COVID 19 Access To Food Programme	Officer Presenting: Director of Health and Community Author: Head of Community Development and Leisure
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the allocation of funding provided by the Department for Communities, Voluntary and Communities Division (VCD) in response to the COVID 19 crisis under the Access to Food Programme.

2 Background

- 2.1 Members will be aware of the following allocation from the Voluntary and Community Division of the Department of Communities. Min Ref: (HC144/20).
- 2.2 £750,000 – COVID19 Access to Food Fund. The Access to Food Fund will help to deliver a more strategic response that will shape any future emergency response and for ongoing and future policy development, reflecting how we work in partnership to co-design and co-deliver support.
- 2.3 From the above allocation across Northern Ireland, Council has been provided with an allocation of £82,944.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 COVID-19 has shone a light on the vulnerabilities of households across the city/district and the number of people experiencing or at risk of food poverty/insecurity.
- 3.2 The pandemic highlighted the need for Co-Design with Councils and VCS and other stakeholders to enable support and facilitate a collaborative approach to deliver a more effective and efficient and flexible supply of food (and other linked supports) to those in critical need.
- 3.3 In response to the need of citizens experiencing food poverty/insecurity the Local Growth Partnerships/NRP's have been working closely with APEX Living Centre, Churches Voluntary Trust and Strabane Community Project. These organisations are involved in the delivery of Food Banks and Social Supermarkets and are well placed

to provide interventions in the area of food poverty.

- 3.4 The project will bring together all the current assets/resources/knowledge/expertise available in the DCSDC area to provide a centralised, accessible and more sustainable infrastructure to address the current food insecurity/poverty in the city and district.
- 3.5 The Growth Partnerships/NRP's in the Urban area will provide a wraparound service, assessing/processing referrals within their respective neighbourhoods. The Waterside Growth Partnership/NRP will provide this service in the Waterside and Faughan DEAs.
- 3.6 Strabane Community Project will work with the Growth Partnerships in Sperrin and Derg and provide a service across these two DEAs and Strabane Town.
- 3.7 Apex Living Centre (Urban DEAs) and Strabane Community Project (Strabane, Sperrin and Derg) and Churches Voluntary Trust (Waterside and Faughan) will prepare all food parcels as required. Options will exist for individuals/families as to where they wish to collect their food parcels or for delivery. Easilink Community Transport will support delivery across the rural areas.
- 3.8 In order to reduce dependency, it is anticipated that there will be a cap placed on the number of emergency food parcels individuals/families can access in any 6 month period. However, if they require more long term, regular, weekly support with food they could then be referred to the Social Supermarkets which will enable them to access food supplies weekly up to 6 months.
- 3.9 This funding required a co-design approach with officers from Department for Communities. Council, in partnership with stakeholders have met with and outlined the draft proposals as presented in this report and in the Appendices to Departmental officials and have received a very positive response on the approach.
- 3.10 Given the situation at present all of the stakeholders in the project and the Department for Communities are keen to deliver this project on the ground as soon as possible.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement, Rural Needs and other Implications

- 4.1 The Voluntary and Community Division of the Department for Communities has provided financial assistance of £82,944 for the COVID – 19 Food Partnership Fund. There is no requirement for match funding from Council.

- 4.2 The Department for Communities has provided written confirmation of allocations to each of the Council areas. However, all Councils currently await the Letter of Variance to the Community Support Letter of Offer.
- 4.3 There are no other Legal, HR, Improvement or Rural Needs Implications.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that Members approve the following allocations, subject to Letter of Offer confirmation from Department for Communities and confirmation of Lead Partners from each of the Growth Partnerships who will receive the Letter of Offer in the respective DEA/DEA's.

An allocation to the Growth Partnerships as follows:

Waterside/Faughan	£11,300 (Appendix 1)
Moor	£7,100 (Appendix 1)
Foyleside	£7,100 (Appendix 1)
Ballyarnett	£7,100 (Appendix 1)
Strabane/Sperrin/Derg	£30,344 (Appendix 3)
An allocation to Apex Living Centre	£20,000 (Appendix 1)

Background Papers

- Appendix 1: Access to Food Proposal Urban & Faughan
Appendix 2: Access to Food Proposal Strabane & Rural
Appendix 3: Costs – Strabane Access to Food

Mins Ref: HC144/20