

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING WITH CABINET MEMBER, HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

30 November 2017

Feeding Derbyshire Sustainability Plan

1. Purpose of the report:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to award a grant of £20K per annum for 3 years to Rural Action Derbyshire to enable the Feeding Derbyshire network to continue beyond March 2018.

2. Information and analysis:

In July 2015 Cabinet approved a programme of interventions that are designed to support communities through the redistribution of surplus food in Derbyshire. The interventions include the following:

1. A distribution hub for surplus food in Holmewood, managed by the charity Fareshare
2. Subscriptions for Derbyshire food banks to join Fareshare for one year
3. Provision of free breakfast clubs in 24 existing schools plus an additional 12 new schools in areas with a high prevalence of free school meals
4. Community-based cooking and eating projects known as Super Kitchens in all eight districts/boroughs in the County
5. A social supermarket/community shop/mobile food truck
6. An affordable food box scheme
7. Mapping of community food outlets
8. Subscriptions to a church-based charity which provides pallets of goods such as non-perishable food and toiletries, to be distributed via food banks
9. An independent evaluation of the programme, procured through the commissioning process.

Feeding Derbyshire has been operational since September 2015 and is one of 12 official pilots of the Feeding Britain strategy. The programme started in September 2015 and is receiving funding from the Authority for its first three years, to August 2018

Evaluation and review

A key evaluation criterion was to ascertain the sustainability of the programme after its first three years. Projects have been reviewed and evaluated against this criterion.

A Cabco report approved on 19 October 2017 set out the findings of the mid-term evaluation, covering the period September 2015 to February 2017. The successful projects include the Food Hub run by Fareshare East Midlands, breakfast clubs, school holiday activity projects and community cafes, all of which have the potential to be independently sustainable beyond year 3. The projects that were unsuccessful have been stopped. Others are still being piloted, for example, affordable food boxes and food bank plus.

Leadership of the programme

The development of Feeding Derbyshire originated in the voluntary sector, led by Rural Action Derbyshire. Rural Action Derbyshire observed the rise of food banks in the County and worked with the food banks and other partners from the voluntary and public sectors to develop a programme to reduce the need for food banks.

A steering group was established on which Derbyshire County Council is represented. The group is currently chaired by the Cabinet Portfolio lead for Health and Communities and supported by officers from a range of Council departments including Public Health, Children's Services and Policy and Research.

Led by Rural Action Derbyshire, the Feeding Derbyshire Steering group applied for a Department of Health voluntary sector grant to fund the programme for three years. A decision was expected in Summer 2015. When no decision was forthcoming, the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities approved the use of some of the ring-fenced Public Health grant to fund the programme from September 2015. The Authority assumed leadership of the programme at this point, taking responsibility for the investment of Authority funding.

Future leadership

The future leadership of Feeding Derbyshire has been debated at recent Steering Group meetings. There is consensus that the leadership of Feeding Derbyshire should be returned to the voluntary sector, for a number of reasons. First, the majority of activity delivered by the programme is carried out by voluntary sector organisations. Second, the programme will be eligible for a range of funding opportunities if it is located within the voluntary sector which are not available if it is led by a public sector organisation. Third, transferring the leadership of the programme from the Authority to the voluntary sector reflects the philosophy of the Authority's recently elected Administration.

The steering group considered which voluntary organisations in Derbyshire were suitable to lead Feeding Derbyshire. Requirements include: being a Derbyshire-wide organisation; a remit which covers the whole population; having experience of working in relevant fields of activity; having sound governance; and a strong history of delivering successful programmes. It was agreed that Rural Action Derbyshire meets all these criteria. It also has the experience of being the organisation that started the programme. The Board of Trustees of Rural Action Derbyshire have welcomed the opportunity to take on the leadership of Feeding Derbyshire and plan to recruit a part-time project officer to manage the programme should the transfer be approved.

Continuing support from Derbyshire County Council

Public Health and other Council officers will continue to support the continued development and success of this programme including breakfast clubs, school holiday activity projects and community cafes.

Public Health will continue to oversee the independent evaluation of Feeding Derbyshire and will retain control of the budget for this aspect of the programme.

3. Financial considerations:

The majority of the Feeding Derbyshire budget will be spent by March 2018. It is proposed to transfer any monies remaining to Rural Action Derbyshire on 1 April 2018, to be restricted to the Feeding Derbyshire programme (excluding evaluation costs). The current estimate is there will be up to £43,000 of unspent budget by 31 March which it is proposed will be transferred to Rural Action Derbyshire to be used to support the programme. A service level agreement will allow the impact and outcomes of the grant to be monitored.

From April 2018/19 a grant of £20,000 a year for three years is proposed to enable Rural Action Derbyshire to take on the leadership role of the Feeding Derbyshire initiative with the funding being available from the ring-fenced Public Health Grant budget.

4. Social Value considerations:

The evaluation has demonstrated the excellent social return on investment of the Feeding Derbyshire programme through its good use of food that would otherwise be wasted; through the numerous volunteers that have come forward to work on the various projects and through the social benefits of bringing communities together in a fun and healthy way.

5. Other considerations:

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

6. Background papers:

Cabinet Report 28 July 2015: Solutions to Food Poverty in Derbyshire
Cabco Report 19 October 2017: Feeding Derbyshire Mid-Term Review.

7. Key Decision:

No

8. Call-in:

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report?
No

8. Officer's Recommendations:

1) That any unallocated monies up to the value of £43,000 remaining in the Feeding Derbyshire budget be transferred on a restricted basis to Rural Action Derbyshire on 1 April 2018

2) That Rural Action Derbyshire receives a grant of £20,000 a year for three years from 1 April 2018 from the Public Health ring-fenced grant budget.

Dean Wallace
Director of Public Health