

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

28 July 2015

Report of the Director of Public Health

**SOLUTIONS TO FOOD POVERTY IN DERBYSHIRE
(Health and Communities)**

1 Purpose of the report:

To seek approval to implement a preventative and sustainable approach to reducing food poverty in Derbyshire.

2 Information and analysis:

Background

On 07 October 2013 approval was given to develop a small grants scheme for the growing number of food banks in Derbyshire. An initial fund of £108,000 was increased to £125,765 as the number of food banks that were known to the County Council increased from 14 to 22. The funding was found from the ring-fenced Public Health budget because food poverty has both a short and long term negative impact on health and is likely to exacerbate health inequalities.

19 of the 22 food banks made an application for a small grant and all were successful. The value of the grants ranged from £573 to £10,000, the latter being the maximum grant available. Food banks used the grants for items such as storage boxes, shelving, freezers, volunteer expenses and to pay part-time staff. The food banks were very grateful for this support and many emails and letters of gratitude were received.

The grant scheme was repeated in 2014/15, and this time it was administered by Rural Action Derbyshire. 20 applications from food banks were received and supported at a total cost of £120,722. Rural Action Derbyshire also took over hosting the food bank forum, a regular meeting of food banks to share best practice and providing an opportunity to network.

From April 2014 the County Council began monitoring data from food banks. Of the 22 food banks in Derbyshire, 16 regularly send in their data to the Council. The data is therefore an under-representation of total food bank use. During the year 2014/15 these data show that 13,176 adults and 8,338 children were fed by emergency food parcels in

Derbyshire. The prime reasons for referral were benefit delay, benefit change and low income. A wide range of agencies refer people to food banks. In 2014/15 the most frequent referrers were JobCentre Plus, Children's Centres, Citizens Advice Bureau and housing agencies. Many clients initially refer themselves and are usually asked by the food bank to obtain a formal referral from an authorised source.

Moving forward

It is clear from the data emerging from the food banks in Derbyshire that the need for emergency food parcels is not decreasing and is increasing in some instances. This reflects the national picture, with the Trussell Trust, a Christian charity that runs the biggest network of food banks in the UK, reporting a 19% increase in provision of emergency food parcels in 2014/15. Food poverty is likely to remain a key issue for a substantial proportion of the people in Derbyshire for the foreseeable future.

The situation with regard to emergency and, increasingly, chronic food poverty remains a public health issue in Derbyshire, as elsewhere. Food is a basic necessity and lack of food impairs health and wellbeing in the short and long term. Specific examples of especially vulnerable groups include pregnant women, children and people who need to eat before taking their medicines. The health and financial costs of food poverty are borne by the individuals concerned and the agencies which commission and provide public services, especially the NHS and the County Council. There is therefore an economic as well as a moral case to take preventative action to address food poverty. The Council regards this as a key priority and recognises that more must be done to prevent the need for emergency food parcels, in addition to supporting their provision.

To this end, the Cabinet member for Health and Communities has convened a partnership of agencies which are equally committed to tackling food poverty in Derbyshire. The group has explored a range of initiatives that offer non-stigmatising solutions to food poverty in communities, some of which have been developed elsewhere and are working successfully. The following section of this report summarises these initiatives, with an approximate costing for each. The information that follows is an initial scoping exercise so the details will require further analysis and more precise costings should this programme of work be approved in principle.

1) Provision of a Fareshare depot in central Derbyshire.

Fareshare is a charity which accepts food from supermarkets that would otherwise be discarded. The food is usually perishable and includes fresh fruit and vegetables, ready meals and other food that requires

refrigeration, such as dairy products, cooked and uncooked meats and desserts. Food banks and other community based organisations are able to subscribe to Fareshare at a cost of between £500-£1,200 and are able to take as much food as they require from the Fareshare depot as often as necessary. There is a Fareshare depot in Leicester which is too far for most food banks in Derbyshire to access, although a small number do use it. The Council has identified potentially suitable premises to open a Fareshare depot in Derbyshire near junction [29/29a] of the M1. The estimated cost includes rent, business rates, staffing and transport costs. Some preparatory cleaning is required which would add to this cost. The warehouse would then require purchase of food storage equipment, including refrigeration, shelving etc. This option is critical to most of the other options below and is therefore the number one priority.

Estimated cost: up to £65,000 in year 1, £48,000 in years 2 and 3.

2) Fareshare subscriptions for food banks

Derbyshire food banks would welcome a Fareshare depot in Derbyshire but, as very small enterprises, they are concerned about the affordability of the subscription fee. It has been suggested that the County Council could cover the subscription fees for food banks in year 1 at an approximate cost of £20,000. This would allow food banks time to assess how useful the Fareshare facility is and give them time to fundraise in subsequent years.

Estimated cost: £20,000 as a one off expense

3) Breakfast clubs

From September 2013 CAYA and Public Health have jointly funded breakfast clubs in 24 schools, selecting schools with the highest numbers of pupils receiving free school meals. Evaluation has shown that this has improved pupils' learning and behaviour. The scheme is popular with pupils, parents and teachers. Some schools have made their breakfast club financially sustainable and Public Health is working with the other schools to encourage them to do the same. Fareshare may be able to provide breakfast foods to schools at a lower cost than they currently pay. This offers an opportunity to reduce the cost of school breakfast clubs and extend them to more schools.

Estimated cost: £30,000 a year

4) Super Kitchen/food hubs

Super Kitchen uses Fareshare food and local volunteers to cook and provide nutritious meals in community settings at very low cost, for example, £2 per two course meal for adults and £1 per two course meal for children. Super Kitchen originated in Nottingham where their community meals have become financially self-sustaining. Super Kitchen works closely with Fareshare and are keen to support the

development of community eating in Derbyshire. Venues could include children's centres, schools during school holidays, community and adult education centres, churches and luncheon clubs. Start-up costs are estimated at £500 per group for a year, after which the group should be sustainable without external funding.

A similar project has been developed by South Derbyshire District Council which they are calling a 'food hub'. The food hub offers cooking skills courses as well as nutritious meals at low cost. They especially target housing association tenants.

Estimated cost: £8,000 for two Super Kitchen groups in every district/borough.

5) Social supermarket/community shop

Social, or community shops are a new development in the UK. The first one opened in Goldthorpe, near Barnsley, in 2013. They sell on residual grocery products, such as those with damaged packaging or incorrect labelling, that manufacturers and supermarkets reject. They are located in areas of poverty and deprivation and match surplus food with social need. Customers must be in receipt of means-tested benefits. Customers pay a small amount for their purchases which overcomes the stigma of receiving 'charity' which food banks report many clients are uncomfortable with. Chesterfield food bank has expressed an interest in developing a community shop. Community shops aim to become financial sustainable but require initial investment, including a project worker, to become established.

Estimated cost for one community shop: £52,000 in years 1 and 2; £26,000 in year 3.

6) Affordable food box scheme

An affordable food box scheme would use locally produced food as well as Fareshare's food to offer a low cost home delivery food box scheme, along the lines of organic veg boxes that more affluent people can afford. Linking in with grow your own schemes/allotments/ community orchards and incredible edible schemes will make best possible use of locally sourced produce along with the surplus food from the private sector. This would require a development worker which comprises the majority of the cost. The scheme would prioritise areas of deprivation before extending to cover as much of the County as possible, aiming to become self-sustaining after three years.

Estimated cost: £20,000 a year in years 1 and 2; £10,000 in year 3.

7) Map community food outlets

A diverse provision of voluntary community food outlets already exists, for example, the Jericho café in Gamesley (Glossop), the kitchen run by Salcare in Heanor, Salvation Army soup kitchens and numerous

luncheon clubs. These need to be mapped to ensure that new developments happen in areas with gaps in community food provision and to make these outlets aware that they can subscribe to Fareshare if they wish.

Estimated cost: £4,000

8) His Church

His Church is a Christian organisation which has worked with Trading Standards teams across the UK and negotiated with them to donate counterfeit goods to charity. Every year customs and trading standards spend a lot of public money on storing fake clothes while waiting for a court decision, and then once the items have been proved to be fake the authorities have to pay further for incineration or landfill costs. His Church has removed all such costs and passes on the high quality goods to some 250 homeless centres and women's shelters across the country. There is a His Church depot in Lincolnshire which a food bank in Shirebrook uses to help its clients. His Church provides goods by the pallet load and they include pallets of non-perishable food, pallets of toiletries and pallets of clothes. Each pallet costs the recipient, e.g. the food bank, £150. His Church is keen to support the work in Derbyshire and could bring pallets of goods to the Fareshare depot when we have one. Most food banks could not use a full pallet of goods so pallets could be purchased and shared collectively. If a Fareshare depot can be found for Derbyshire, His Church would deliver pallets to the depot and food banks and other charities could take what they need from there. Testing this arrangement with 10 pallets will demonstrate its utility in Derbyshire. If found to be useful, local food banks and charities will be encouraged to share the cost of pallets in future years, making this option financially sustainable after year 1.

Estimated cost: £1,500 for 10 pallets

Other considerations and opportunities

- 1) Rural Action Derbyshire has led a multi-agency partnership application to the Department of Health's Innovation Fund for the voluntary sector. The application incorporates all the options described above. The total cost over 3.5 years is just under £600,000. The outcome of the application will be known in 'late summer' (DH). If successful, the DH expects the work start in September 2015. The fund is always heavily oversubscribed and we are advised to be cautious in our expectation of a successful outcome.
- 2) The County Council's Heart of Derbyshire programme can be embedded into this work to promote the nutritional quality of these initiatives. For example, advice on the nutritional content of Super Kitchen group meals, provision of cooking skills to food bank clients and supporting community food outlets to achieve the Heart of Derbyshire

quality award.

- 3) This programme of work can be incorporated into the proposed food strategy for Derbyshire.
- 4) Some of the projects described above have management costs built in to the estimated costs and others do not. Consideration needs to be given to which agency(ies) are best placed to manage this work should it be funded.

3 Financial considerations:

1. An estimate of the costs and funding options is as follows. The outcome of the application to the Department of Health is not expected until late August 2015. Due to the current uncertainty about the availability and precise costs of some of the key initiatives described in this report, it is recommended that Cabinet delegates decisions on individual details of the Public Health food poverty budget to the CabCo for Health and Communities.

Project	Cost year 1	Cost year 2	Cost year 3
Fareshare depot and association running costs	£65,000	£48,000	£48,000
Fareshare subscriptions for food banks	£20,000	£0	£0
Breakfast Clubs	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000
Super Kitchen	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000
Community shop	£52,000	£52,000	£26,000
Affordable food box scheme	£20,000	£20,000	£10,000
Mapping of community food outlets	£4,000	£0	£0
His Church pallets	£1,500	£0	£0
Management & evaluation @ 10%	£20,050	£15,800	£12,200
TOTAL	£220,550	£173,800	£134,200

Funding subject to confirmation	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Public Health	£126,000	£126,000	£126,000
One off funding	£84,700	£68,700	
TOTAL	£210,700	£194,700	£126,000

Unconfirmed funding	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Department of Health (to RAD)	£87,947	£202,286	£203,386	£101,869

4 Legal Considerations:

The proposal is that the Council make grant payments to Fareshare and to the other organisations for the specific purposes as set out in this

report. The proposed use of a grant agreement rather than a contract following procurement means that the Council will have less ability to performance manage Fareshare and to enforce conditions of performance or outcomes. To some extent this can be mitigated in respect of the warehouse by means of the lease agreement for the premises. As well as the drafting the lease, the Director of Legal Services will also prepare a grant agreement with Fareshare to reflect the aim for the organisation to be self-funding within 3 years. As recipients of the grants, Fareshare and the other organisations are not contractually obliged to deliver the services although the Council would seek to claw back grant in appropriate circumstances were there to be significant non-performance.

5 Other Considerations:

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

6 Background Papers

Cabinet report dated 30 July 2013
Cabco report dated 07 October 2013
Cabco report dated 02 December 2014

7 Key Decision:

Yes. Although the intention to make this key decision has not been included in a Notice of Key Decisions (which is the normal legal requirement), the Chair of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee has been consulted, as is required by the Constitution in situations of special urgency, and he has agreed that the taking of the decision cannot be reasonably deferred.

8 Call-In:

Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No

9 Officer's recommendations:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approve the implementation of the preventative and sustainable approach to reducing food poverty and the need for crisis-driven

food parcels, as set out in this report;

- 2) Approve the provision of a Fareshare depot in Derbyshire, including a grant for operational costs including rent, staffing, travel and equipment, for three years from the project start date (estimated to be September 2015);
- 3) Delegates decisions on the allocation of the remainder of the Public Health food poverty budget to the CabCo for Health and Communities.

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