


## REPORT TO EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

24 June 2020

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Use of donations received by the Council during Covid-19</b>
<b>Director:</b>	<b>Executive Director - Neighbourhoods Alison Knight</b>
<b>Contribution towards Vision 2030:</b>	
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b>	Nicky Denston, Service Manager – Business Excellence

### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

**That :**

1. The donation fund is closed for public donations from the 5 June 2020.
2. The donated funds are used to support the Albion Foundation's 'Meal delivery to schools' project.

#### 1 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 Sandwell requested monetary donations from the public and businesses to provide support to vulnerable people during the covid-19 crisis. A total of £2608.50 has been collected. It is recommended that this fund is now closed for donations from 5 June 2020 and to consider options on how to use the donation fund.

## **2 IMPLICATIONS FOR VISION 2030**

- 2.1 The use of donated funds to provide food parcels to vulnerable families and children will assist them in getting the best start in life. We want Sandwell to be a place where we live healthy lives and live them for longer and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for. Providing healthy food parcels and improved cooking and life skills will support those objectives.

## **3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The council has been providing care packages of essential items including food to those residents in Sandwell who most need them. To support this, a donation fund was created and the public and businesses were provided with the opportunity to make a cash donation, however large or small.

## **4 THE CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 As at the 5 June 2020, a total sum of £2608.50 had been donated.

## **5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)**

- 5.1 A number of schools have been asked for their feedback on the 'meals for schools' project. The feedback has been extremely positive and has been a real support to vulnerable families and children.
- 5.2 Public Health undertook a survey with schools on food support and holiday hunger. One third of schools did not know where to signpost families to get support for lack of food.

## **6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 6.1 The options for consideration to utilise the donations were as follows:
1. Use the donation fund to offset existing spend on the food hub
  2. Use the donation fund to offset spend used to support food banks across Sandwell
  3. Use the donation fund to purchase additional food stocks for the food banks to assist them in sustaining provision over the next few months
  4. Identify a community project to fund which would deliver positive outcomes by supporting communities who continue to be impacted by Covid-19

## 6.2 Option 1

Sandwell been allocated a government grant of approximately £21m to cover the range of costs associated with Covid-19, including the costs of providing food parcels to elderly and vulnerable residents during the Covid-19 crisis. It is not yet clear whether this grant will be sufficient to fund all financial pressures incurred by the council but a £2.6k contribution would not have a material impact on this. This is therefore not recommended as a suitable option.

## 6.3 Option 2

The expenditure on food, used to support Sandwell's food banks and ensure they are well stocked to meet the growing needs of people on low incomes during this period has been included in the expenditure total of the food distribution hub. It is not yet clear whether this grant will be sufficient to fund all financial pressures incurred by the council but a £2.6k contribution would not have a material impact on this. This is therefore not recommended as a suitable option.

## 6.4 Option 3

The food hub has been supporting the food banks with supplies of food stocks over the past 10 weeks as well as sharing donated stock including juice, bread, sauces and meat. This has helped to increase the amount of food stocks available and the contacts identified through the food hub project are being shared with food banks so that those relationships can be sustained going forward.

## 6.5 Option 4

The Albion Foundation's meal delivery initiative, which is having a very positive impact on vulnerable families and children across 63 of Sandwell's schools has been curtailed severely due to the furlough of the club's chef. As a result, the numbers of families who can be supported at this critical time has been severely reduced.

They have engaged the supermarket, Morrisons to provide food parcels which will be packed at Tipton Sports Academy's food hub and delivered by Foundation employees. The foundation will also host a food collection point at The Hawthorns and donated items will be transferred to Tipton to be included in food parcels.

There is an opportunity to pool resources and effort to extend the meal delivery initiative and the education food parcel deliveries to address the gaps left by the furloughing of the club's chef. The additional funding from the Council would enable the initiative to increase the amount of food parcels provided and improve on the specific contents of them to meet specific needs.

## **7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Sandwell been allocated a government grant of approximately £21m to cover the range of costs associated with Covid-19, including the costs of providing food parcels to elderly and vulnerable residents during the Covid-19 crisis. It is not yet clear whether this grant will be sufficient to fund all financial pressures incurred by the council but a £2.6k contribution would not have a material impact on this. This is therefore not recommended as a suitable option.
- 7.2 The funds of £2608.50 would be used by the Albion Foundation to purchase 700 food parcels from Morrisons supermarket at a cost of £3.76 per parcel. This is part of a partnership approach agreed directly with the supermarket and is cheaper than the food parcels produced at the council's food hub. The food parcels would feed a total of 2634 families.
- 7.3 These parcels will be delivered directly to 63 of Sandwell's schools who have been working with the Albion Foundation to identify children and families in need during the Covid-19 pandemic. To supplement the delivery of parcels the Albion Foundation are going to produce recipe cards and online videos to support families to use the food items within the parcels to create more healthy meals. This is going to be delivered by the Albion Foundation at no cost to the council. In partnership, we will be supporting the production of the videos by using information from our public health colleagues and local voluntary and community sector groups.

## **8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 The outcomes from delivery of the 'meals for schools' project will be captured and reported back to the Leader of the Council.

## **9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 An equality impact assessment is not required at this stage.

## **10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 Personal information on children and families is held by schools only. The delivery of food parcels and the process of receiving the recipients contact details including name, address and telephone address have been agreed by the council's information governance unit.

## **11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 11.1 Provision of food parcels provides support to families where many of them are experiencing financial hardship. This support can prevent incidences of crime linked to deprivation within families with little or no support networks.

## **12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS**

- 12.1 The food distribution hub has been providing food parcels to 359 children each week who are eligible to receive a weekly sum of £15 from free school meals. In addition, schools have referred vulnerable families who need support directly to the food hub and we have been supporting 14 schools throughout the last 7 weeks.
- 12.2 The Albion Foundation's meal delivery initiative, which is having a very positive impact on vulnerable families and children across 63 of Sandwell's schools has been curtailed severely due to the furlough of the club's chef. As a result, the numbers of families who can be supported at this critical time has been severely reduced. The provision of the donated funds will enable the Albion Foundation to feed a total of 2634 families. These parcels will be delivered directly to 63 of Sandwell's schools who have been working with the Albion Foundation to identify children and families in need during the Covid-19 pandemic. To supplement the delivery of parcels the Albion Foundation are going to produce recipe cards and online videos to support families to use the food items within the parcels to create more healthy meals. This is going to be delivered by the Albion Foundation at no cost to the council. In partnership, we will be supporting the production of the videos by using information from our public health colleagues and local voluntary and community sector groups.

### **13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)**

- 13.1 The children and families from the 63 schools being supported will benefit from receiving fresh produce on a weekly basis as well as support and guidance through recipe cards and online tutorials to improve their knowledge and skills. This will lead to improvements in the diets of these families and support and sustain a healthier lifestyle in the future.

### **14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND**

- 14.1 Tipton Sports Academy will continue to be used for the packing and distribution of food parcels.

### **15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 15.1 The donation fund has been open for donations during the main period of the Covid-19 pandemic. The volume of donations received has now significantly reduced. It is felt that the donations would be create additional benefit to the community if they were utilised at this point, where many families are still being impacted by reductions in finances and a lack of school meal provision.
- 15.2 The rationale for recommending option 4 for the use of the donated funds of £2608.50 are:
- Supporting vulnerable children and families in Sandwell which has been a key outcome of the council during the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - Increasing the numbers of children and families being supported across Sandwell.
  - Project is already mobilised and the benefits can be felt in the community quicker.
  - Enables an existing positive project to continue for a longer period and support those families detrimentally affected by the Covid-19 situation.
  - By pooling resources, infrastructure and expertise established during the last 10 weeks, it will ensure that the project is delivered effectively.
  - Working as a joint initiative will continue to demonstrate the positive working relationships with The Albion Foundation as a partner.
  - The good work delivered by the Albion Foundation in supporting Sandwell's schools would cease by end of June 2020 if no alternative funds could be sourced.
  - The existing project has delivered significant outcomes and received excellent feedback from recipients and schools.

**16 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**17 APPENDICES:**

None

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**Executive Director - Neighbourhoods**