

# Decision of Executive Director of Neighbourhoods

24 July 2020

**Present:** Alison Knight – Executive Director of Neighbourhoods  
Surjit Tour – Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer.

## Procurement of a supplier to provide an emergency food response to support vulnerable residents during covid-19

Emergency Committee on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020 approved the option to close the food hub at Tipton Sports Academy on or before 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 and engage with the voluntary and community sector in providing alternative options for residents to source food. The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods was given delegated authority to enter into negotiations with a food supplier to provide and deliver food parcels to families up to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

It was also requested that the potential to utilise the voluntary and community sector for the provision of emergency food parcels was explored. This had been undertaken and it was recommended that an external food supplier was utilised for emergency parcels only as they were able to provide the scale and response required.

### Agreed that:

- 1) the contract for the supply and delivery of food parcels to vulnerable families be awarded to MKG Foods Limited for a minimum of 2000 food parcels up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- 2) the contract provision enable the number of parcels to be increased if required as a result of any second spike of Covid-19.



### **Reason for Decision**

If a further spike of infections in Sandwell did occur it would be a significant undertaking for the council to re-establish the food hub quickly. It was felt that a supplier with existing stocks and the required infrastructure in place would provide a more immediate and sustained approach.



**Signature**

**Alison Knight Executive Director of Neighbourhoods**

**Date Decision**

17/8/2020

## Executive Decision Taken under Cabinet Delegated Authority

<b>Subject:</b>	Procurement of a supplier to provide an emergency food response to support vulnerable residents during covid-19
<b>Director:</b>	Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Alison Knight
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No  If yes the matter should have been included on the Forward Plan
<b>Delegation Reference</b>	42/20 of the Emergency Committee held on 24 <sup>th</sup> June 2020.
<b>Contribution towards Vision 2030:</b>	
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Service Manager – Business Excellence, Nicky Denston  nicky_denston@sandwell.gov.uk

### 1. DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

**(1) That the contract for the supply and delivery of food parcels to vulnerable families be awarded to MKG Foods Ltd for a minimum of 2000 food parcels up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.**

**(2) That the contract provisions enable the number of parcels to be increased if required as a result of any second spike of covid-19.**

## **2 Reason(s) for Recommendation**

- 2.1 Emergency Committee on the 24 June 2020 approved the option to close the food hub at Tipton Sports Academy on or before 31 July 2020 and engage with the voluntary and community sector in providing alternative options for residents to source food. The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods was given delegated authority to enter into negotiations with a food supplier to provide and deliver food parcels to families up to the 30<sup>th</sup> September (Minute Number 42/20 refers)
- 2.2 It was also requested that the potential to utilise the voluntary and community sector for the provision of emergency food parcels was explored. This has been undertaken and it is recommended that an external food supplier is utilised for emergency parcels only as they are able to provide the scale and response required.

## **3 Alternative Options considered and discounted**

- 3.1 If a further spike of infections in Sandwell did occur it would be a significant undertaking for the council to re-establish the food hub quickly. It is felt that a supplier with existing stocks and the required infrastructure in place would provide a more immediate and sustained approach.

## **4 Purpose of the report**

- 4.1 To demonstrate the need to procure a supplier to deliver emergency parcels to vulnerable people after the food hub at Tipton Sports Academy closes on or before 31 July 2020.

- 4.2 To provide details and assurance of the council's emergency response for food supply after 31 July 2020.

### Strategic Resource Implications

- 4.3 The use of MKG Foods to provide food parcels and deliver them to residents would require the council to purchase a minimum of 2000 parcels at a cost of £15.71 per box. Delivery of the boxes would cost an additional £7 per box. The total of the service excluding VAT would be £22.71 per box. The total cost for 2000 parcels would be £31,420 excluding VAT. Our current food parcel costs £24 per box and this does not include delivery.
- 4.4 The cost of £22.71 per box is for a next day delivery service. If an emergency food parcel was required within 4 hours, this would cost an additional £15-25 per box based on where the driver for that day was located and what time of day it was to be delivered. It is anticipated that these numbers would be extremely low, as the enquiry team will make every effort to identify alternative provision or next day delivery.
- 4.5 All costs directly related to food will be fully funded from the Covid grant received by Ministry of housing communities and local government (MHCLG) due to the emergency response to the crisis.
- 4.6 Using a supplier for future food parcels will not impact on the EU procurement threshold of £189,330 therefore a formal procurement exercise in line with EU legislation is required. The Councils Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules have been updated as follows; *"For new contracts below the threshold for supplies and services set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) a direct contract award may be made, provided that value for money can be demonstrated and subject to budget holder approval"*.

## **5 How does this support Vision 2030?**

- 5.1 Providing food parcels to vulnerable people across Sandwell during the covid-19 crisis assisted 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 supports residents to stay at home and protect their own health, the NHS and care providers.

## **6 Current position/Background Details**

### The Current Provision

- 6.1 There are currently 2700 people on the shielded list who have been receiving government food parcels. Work has begun on contacting these individuals to identify the best pathway for them to source food on a sustainable basis.
- 6.2 In recent government food parcels individuals have received letters explaining that the delivery of these parcels will cease by 31 July 2020. Contained within the letter are options to assist with obtaining food such as supermarket slots and NHS volunteer responders. The letter also indicates that if individuals are in urgent need and have no other support to contact the local council. This indicates that the council has a responsibility to provide an emergency response.
- 6.3 For those vulnerable residents experiencing covid-19 symptoms or having to self-isolate, Adult Services are working with the community offer to design pathways to ensure those still in need of food support or experiencing food poverty continue to be supported. Food banks in Sandwell are another potential opportunity for those who may not be classed as vulnerable but are experiencing financial issues.
- 6.4 In cases where an emergency food parcel is the only option, it is intended to use a supplier, MKG Foods to deliver a parcel to the resident. The referral will come via the practical support unit or direct from a social worker. Each day prior to 4.00pm a spreadsheet of referrals will be sent to the supplier and a parcel delivered to them the next day between 7.00am and 2.00pm.
- 6.5 For the most severe emergencies an email will be sent to the supplier and a food parcel will be delivered to the resident within a maximum of 4 hours.

- 6.6 The emergency food parcel has been designed in conjunction with public health to ensure it meets minimum dietary requirements and provides food stock to last 6 days. As this is an emergency parcel for those in immediate crisis, only one food parcel will be delivered to an individual or family.
- 6.7 If there is a second spike in covid-19 infections in Sandwell, there is the ability to upscale the response by utilising the scale and response of the provider. After purchasing a minimum of 2000 parcels, we can purchase more parcels to meet emerging needs.

### Background and Main Considerations

- 6.8 In response to the urgent need for food supplies for those on the vulnerable list or self-isolating, a food distribution hub was created at Tipton Sports Academy with support from Sandwell Leisure Trust from the 23 March 2020.
- 6.9 *Providing emergency support without developing a long-term dependency on the council has been a key achievement.* 43% of residents received only 1 food parcel over the last 11 weeks and less than 2% of residents had more than 5+ parcels. This has demonstrated that the food hub has been effective at delivering an emergency only response which hasn't led to a reliance on continuous food parcels. This will lessen the impact on residents when the food hub is closed.
- 6.10 Government food parcels were provided to those individuals within Sandwell who were on the national shielded list. They have been provided with weekly food parcels, delivered by the supplier Bidfood. Some individuals will have received parcels since March 2020, others as they have appeared on the list and some have come off the list as they de-registered due to sourcing alternative food provision.
- 6.11 In total over 13,000 food parcels have been provided to vulnerable residents in Sandwell. The decision was taken to focus on immediate and urgent need and parcels are provided to residents on a one-off basis unless a further referral is accepted by the practical support unit. The intention from the commencement of the food hub was to identify alternative pathways for support and the

offer from the voluntary and community sector has proven to be a real success as we have seen referrals from the practical support unit reduce significantly over the past 4-6 weeks.

6.12 One of the major outcomes of the Sandwell food hub has been the response to immediate need but also the transfer of need to more sustainable options. Working in partnership with voluntary and community sector partners to find community-based solutions that meet on-going needs has included the Good Neighbours initiative and Community Offer as well as, relatively small scale, community kitchens and food pantries.

6.13 The current operating model of the food banks will not be able to provide an emergency response to vulnerable individuals. Only one of the food banks has been providing a delivery service and this has been on a small scale both in terms of volume and geography.

### Consultation

6.14 In developing a proposal to cater for an emergency food response, consultation has taken place with the community offer. It was felt that it would place significant pressure on the providers to respond to emergencies and it was better placed to deliver the transition to more sustainable options.

## **7 Implications**

<b>Resources:</b>	The use of MKG Foods to provide food parcels and deliver them to residents would require the council to purchase a minimum of 2000 parcels at a cost of £15.71 per box. Delivery of the boxes would cost an additional £7 per box. The total of the service excluding VAT would be £22.71 per box. The total cost for 2000 parcels would be £31,420 excluding VAT. Our current food parcel costs £24 per box and this does not include delivery.
<b>Legal:</b>	As part of the government arrangements for supporting residents Sandwell has responded by providing food parcels for those individuals on the NHS shielded list and those residents identified as being on Sandwell's vulnerable-risk list.




	<p>The NHS shielded list will continue to be added to and no end-date has been provided by government yet. It is important that the council has an emergency response in place to support these residents as well as to be ready for a potential second spike in covid-19 cases in Sandwell.</p>
<b>Equality:</b>	
<b>Risk:</b>	<p>Risk implications, including any mitigating measures planned/taken</p>
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	<p>As part of the transition arrangements from the food hub residents continuing to receive parcels will be provided with a leaflet identifying alternative arrangements to support them in gaining access to food. As well as containing information on the vulnerable persons offer from supermarkets.</p> <p>Public health had input into the final contents of the supplied food parcel to ensure it meets nutritional standards. The food parcels will contain non-perishable items and there are the opportunities to cater for dietary requirements.</p> <p>A second wave of the pandemic is predicted for autumn/winter. This could be significantly increased localised outbreaks or a new wave of general transmission across the community. If we see localised outbreaks we would work with the supplier alongside Public Health to take requests for support to the individuals affected, in coping with time limited self-isolation. If there is a new wave of transmission, then the supplier would be engaged again to produce and deliver food parcels directly to residents.</p>
<b>Other:</b>	<p>For the purposes of GDPR, the council is the data controller and MKG Foods are the data processor. The information being shared for the purposes of delivery is the name and address of the recipient. Although this is not sensitive under the terms of GDPR, it does require adequate protection.</p> <p>Each day, Sandwell will transmit data to MKG (either individually or by bulk spreadsheet) in password</p>

protected documents (password sent via two factor authentication). This is direct to a named contact at MKG customer service. This data is shared only with the operations manager and the driver performing the delivery. Once the deliveries have been made, all records held by the driver and the operations manager would be deleted. At the end of the day, MKG would report any "failed" or "exceptional" deliveries to Sandwell but only sending the unique reference number of the client concerned and not their contact information. Once this has been sent, MKG would delete the final copy of the spreadsheet held by their customer service. These would be immediately inaccessible and delete off backups within 31 days as per standard data retention policies.

In accordance with the authority delegated to Chief Officers to act on matters within the authority delegated to them under Part 3 of the Council's Constitution or by a decision of Council, its Committees or the Cabinet, I intend to take the action(s) recommended above.

I ~~do~~ do not have an interest to declare in this matter

Executive Director of   
~~Director of Adult Services~~ Neighbourhoods

~~15 July 2020~~

17. August 2020

If the Constitution requires the decision to be taken in consultation with another chief officer, the following signature box should also be included

I confirm that I have been consulted on the above proposals and have no objection to their proceeding.

**Director of XXXXX**

*N/A*

**Date X**

**8. Appendices**

None

**9. Source Documents**

None

