

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Strategic Lead – Housing and Employability****Council: 26 August 2020**

Subject: Supporting Foodbanks**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work done with West Dunbartonshire Community Foodshare to develop their plans for long term sustainability.
- 1.2** The report will also provide an update on discussions with neighbourhood foodbanks, in particular 'Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels' and 'Faifley Foodshare' about their efforts in addressing food insecurity during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that Council note
- (i)** Support for Community Foodshare to develop their plans for long term sustainability. This support has been agreed with Community Foodshare and includes an organisational review and health check, and the development of an appropriate business plan.
- (ii)** Financial and practical support for Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels and Faifley Foodshare. This includes an appropriate level of community development and financial support that will complement the broader plan to address food insecurity in West Dunbartonshire following the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Background

- 3.1** Food insecurity is a common experience throughout Scotland influenced by insufficient weekly income, low pay and unpredictable income. It is concentrated by higher costs of living, lack of family and food knowledge and access issues.
- 3.2** In recognition of the prevalence of these circumstances and the growing use of local food banks among residents, the Council has taken wider action to address this in a number of ways, for example
- Extending the provision of free school meals
 - Supporting programmes to address holiday hunger during school holidays

- Addressing community-based food insecurity by providing financial support for the established foodbanks operating in West Dunbartonshire, Community Foodshare and Food 4 Thought.

- 3.3** As a direct response to community risks from Brexit, a West Dunbartonshire food insecurity group was established to co-ordinate support and maximise access to additional resources being made available by the Scottish Government. The food insecurity group is attended by Working4U and fully formed and functioning local food banks. It also promotes the long term sustainability of foodbanks through collaborative work on business planning and organisational development.
- 3.4** Working4U services ensure foodbank users are supported to overcome the challenges and circumstances that led them to seek support from foodbanks in the first place. This includes support to stabilise personal circumstances, maximise benefits, address debt issues and seek employment where appropriate. In effect, joint working to address cause and symptom.
- 3.5** Community Foodshare is a key member of the food insecurity group and that, along with other development work, ensures the organisations has complied with the conditions for access to the additional funds made available by the Council to support their sustainability.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** Foodbanks have played a key role in the response to the Covid-19 crisis, and the need to support shielded and vulnerable families. The two main foodbanks were provided with Covid-19 specific food funding to provide emergency food supplies to households supported by the West Dunbartonshire Council Crisis Support Team.
- 4.2** To date the crisis support team has fielded requests for assistance from 2,290 people, with 722 households being assisted with emergency food supplies. These were families that would not have previously received support from the foodbanks and were additional to their existing workload.
- 4.3** The food insecurity group has used the Covid-19 food funding:
- To meet the needs of the additional group by purchasing food to be distributed by the foodbanks
 - To meet some of the additional staff costs incurred by the foodbanks as a result of the significant increase in demand.
- 4.4** It is anticipated that on the basis of the availability of the food insecurity fund, this additional support will remain in place until September.
- 4.5** A number of smaller, newly established organisations have emerged to provide support within their communities during the pandemic. These include:

- Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels
- Faifley Foodshare

4.6 These organisations have also sought to address food insecurity in specific communities within West Dunbartonshire. Their activity is predicated the view that Covid-19 has intensified the need and, as such, they have sought donations from the general public to address that need in their community albeit in an ad hoc way.

4.7 Discussions between Working4U and the two groups focused on their processes for accountability and governance; the scale and justification for their interventions, the target groups they focus their efforts on, their storage, and delivery infrastructures.

4.8 As a result of these discussions these organisations will be provided with £3,000. This is consistent with their scale of operations. This funding will come from the Covid-19 Food Fund and will be used to cover the cost of food purchase up until the end of September 2020.

4.9 As a result the support they provide will be consolidated until September and we will jointly review the potential for continuing support. The funding will be provided to September will be on condition that:

- Food insecurity funding is available;
- Each organisation engages with Working 4U to ensure that people provided with emergency food are from a vulnerable group;
- Service users are encouraged to use Working 4U support to address benefit/debt employability and learning opportunity challenges that caused them to seek support; and
- The organisations work with the West Dunbartonshire Council communities team to establish and address their longer term organisational development needs.

4.10 We will review the impact of the investment through discussion with the two organisations

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications from this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 The financial implications are a grant of £3,000 awarded to Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels and to Faifley Foodshare, paid from the Covid-19 Food Fund lasting until September 2020, subject to West Dunbartonshire Council Conditions of Grant.

6.2 There are no procurement issues.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There are no additional risks beyond those normally managed through the grant award process. The grant will be monitored within the established policy/process context for managing external grants.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An equalities impact assessment has been carried out. It is assumed that the activity will have positive impacts as it is directed towards supporting vulnerable individuals and families.
- 8.2** In addition, community-based organisations and voluntary groups will have the opportunity to refer their service users to the available support. This can be done by contacting the foodbanks directly or by referring people to the crisis support service through established routes, at:
<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/coronavirus/additional-support/>

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The report draws on information gained through consultation with representatives from Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels and Faifley Foodshare. Through this, an understanding of the rationale for the service was gained, who the organisations will target, the areas they will serve and their general plans for development.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The proposal is set within the strategic context of delivering efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents;

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Date 28 July 2020

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All Wards