

Subject:	Covid-19 Emergency Food Provision - Update		
Date of Meeting:	24th June 2020		
Report of:	Interim Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 This report provides an update on emergency food provision in the city during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) public health crisis. Since mid-March 2020, the city council has work with the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership to co-ordinate the demand and distribution of emergency food provision. The demand for emergency food is rising;

- Week commencing 27th April 2020 40 local food projects gave out emergency food parcels to 3001 households, supporting over 4831 people (including at least 996 children) and served 3966 meals.
- In the week of 30th March 2020 this was 1400 parcels and 1800 meals.

As a comparison, prior to the Covid-19 crisis, emergency food providers were giving out 420 parcels a week.

1.2 The demand for the children centre food bank has increased by more than 200% since March. In the week starting 27 April:

- 113 parcels distributed (increased to 130/140 parcels in May)
- Supporting 131 adults and 194 children

Referrals to the council run Community Hub have also risen: week commencing 11th May the community hub received 164 requests, 130 of those were for food help, 92 couldn't afford food but only 4 people said it's because they had lost their main source of income. The Local Discretionary Fund team reports significant increase in applications including a food need especially in certain wards. See table 1 appendix 1. Fareshare distributed 71 tonnes of surplus food in March 114 tonnes in April, and 131 in May (as of 28th May 2020).

1.3 For the following reasons the council has provided funding to the value of £124,500 for emergency food provision for a further 12 weeks (June-August), that:

- emergency food need does not appear to be abating.
- recovery for the city may not be a linear path with the possibility of resurgence of the virus and reinstating of lockdown measures.

- numbers on the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable list likely to fluctuate as new individuals awaiting clinical procedures join the list and may need additional food support on top of/instead of the government doorstep delivery as well existing individuals who have been removed from the CEV list whose doorstep delivery has been stopped but still have a food need.
- The new community led neighbourhood food hubs developed to provide additional capacity to existing food banks may need to close as their venues – i.e. community centres - revert to their original use as lockdown ease. This will require the food banks to take on their resident lists

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Sub-Committee:

- 2.1 notes the exceptional work of the projects in the emergency food network and by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership; and
- 2.2 notes the Urgency Decision taken by the Chief Executive (attached as Appendix 4) to commit funding of £124,500 as outlined in paragraph 3.9.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In early March the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership (BHFP) held its quarterly meeting of the city's Emergency Food Network. The timing of this meeting was fortuitously just prior to the 23rd March COVID-19 lock down. The anticipated impact of Covid-19 on residents meant a significant shift in tone of the meeting with an expanded list of invitees to focus on managing the emergency response for food.
- 3.2 BHFP's initial focus was on working with existing members of the Surplus Food Network co-ordinating the collection and re-distribution of surplus food from closing restaurants, cafés and bars bringing the food to a central hub and then sending it out to neighbourhoods city-wide. It also launched a crowd-funding appeal (HungryAtHome) with the aim of raising £15,000 to buy emergency food in bulk from catering wholesalers in the city. The target was quickly reached and doubled to £30,000. When that target was reached the council provided match-funding of £30,000 to support the effort to purchase emergency food.

The Council also provided grant funding of £15,000 to BHFP to manage and co-ordinate the emergency food distribution and helped to secure a local secondary school as the premises for the food processing hub.

- 3.3 Three things became clear immediately:
 - There would not be enough food available through collection of surplus to meet the needs of the city's most vulnerable residents
 - Food banks, though located in the neighbourhoods, didn't have the capacity to meet the anticipated increase in need for food from vulnerable residents
 - There are large areas of the city and certain communities that weren't covered by pre-existing food banks

- 3.4 The HungryAtHome campaign funding (plus other fundraising by BFHP) has been used to provide food to foodbanks, food hubs and community meal projects - either in the form of cash or food depending on the experience and set up each project. The funding has also been used to pay the Fareshare fee until October (meaning individual food projects do not have to pay this), to buy food for same day emergency food parcels for referrals from the community hub, and for cleaning and PPE equipment for the food projects.
- 3.5 BHFP co-ordinates the central food processing hub, based at Hove Park School (valley site), where purchased and donated food is collected and packaged into individual food parcels or for meal preparation. BHFP also purchases food for food banks that were in operation prior to the crisis as all reported increased demand / challenges of food supply, as well as for the new neighbourhood food hubs across the city that are providing additional capacity/options i.e. food parcel deliveries. The work also includes sourcing food from local farms and businesses as well as buying from wholesalers. See appendix 2 for list of food banks, food hubs and meal projects.
- 3.6 In addition, the BHFP central processing hub provides same day emergency parcels for individuals contacting the council's community hub providing on average 50 food parcels a day. It also provides bulk food for the council's children centres.
- 3.7 Alongside the community response the council, working with not for profit organisation Pay It Forward, set up provision of meals for housed rough sleepers, and working with local food business Little Tums (whose income stalled over night as a meal provider for the city's nurseries) and homeless charity Justlife for residents in emergency accommodation.
- 3.8 The city's successful response to the emergency food needs of residents has been dependent on the presence and capacity of the emergency food network and of Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, along with the swift establishment a cross sector and multi-disciplinary food cell. The cell is jointly lead by the council and the Food Partnership, is chaired by the Food Partnership, and its purpose is to provide oversight for matching food supply with priority groups, managing volunteers and coordinating existing voluntary sector provider response; in order to identify gaps.

A key factor in the success of the work has been the speed at which the cell and the emergency food network have been able to work through problems and solutions. This has been as a direct result of the pre-existing relationships and trust between organisations and individuals and the city's prior commitment to sustainable food and tackling food poverty.

- 3.9 The funding of £124,500 has been allocated as follows:

Expenditure	Total
Funding contribution approximated on number of parcels/meals provided and/or value of food provided via BHFP	
Funding for food banks in existence before the	30,000

crisis: 8 receive £500 per month for three months 6 receive £1,000 per month for three months	
Funding for food hubs: 6 receive £500 per month for three months 11 receive £1,000 per month for three months	42,000
Funding for community meals: 7 receive £500 per month for three months 3 receive £1,000 per month for three months	19,500
Funding for same day emergency parcels April and May costs approx. £12-13,000 per month	13,000
Funding for children's centre food bank: Average approx. cost of £12 per family per week (costed on a four-person family for 2/3 days of food) 140 parcels per week for 12 weeks	20,000
Total costs	124,500

3.10 The funding for the banks and hubs has been passported through the BHFP. This allows each project and the BHFP to reach an arrangement that best suits their individual set up and maximise value for money. In addition, it provides flexibility as the new food hubs need to close and food banks take on their resident lists.

One food project reported the following about being in the network: "Speaking to other food providers in the city, I was able to redesign my service to one that met the immediate need. It was massively reassuring to know that I was now part of a team; I wasn't on my own. In sharing information around the evolving situation in B&H, issuing the most up-to-date guidelines on e.g. food handling, provided guidance, morale support and a single point of contact. I am convinced that our struggling families have benefited from being in a city that has collaborated in the way that it has".

3.11 In order to help people transition away from dependency on emergency food provision BHFP will work with each project and ensure that they provide the Partnership and the Food Cell with data so that we can better understand the need and develop responses to reducing food poverty. This includes monthly snapshot data as well as demographics of their resident lists which the city council will map. Based on data gathered and analysed in June we will work with projects in July / August on their longer-term plans including helping them to take on people as the temporary hubs shut and being part of the 'what next' programme. Furthermore, the July and August funding would be dependent on engagement with others working in their neighbourhood and strategic discussions on need and solutions.

- 3.12 The Food Cell is also working on a set of standard 'step-down' criteria for food projects to use to enable them to safely remove people off their lists as well as a standard set of triage questions that food projects and council services can use to ensure residents have been signposted to all relevant advice and support.
- 3.13 As the city recovery programme develops, the Food Cell will transition to become a sub-group of the Welfare Support & Financial Inclusion Recovery Working Group. This will allow for the work to contribute to a strategic approach to addressing community disadvantage arising from the public health crisis. It is proposed that a report will be brought to the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Recovery Sub Committee outlining the work that is taking place around welfare support and community disadvantage.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Alternative options considered including doing nothing, with local food projects being reliant on their own fundraising and donations of surplus food and from general public. This would transfer the financial pressure to the project, majority of which are volunteer led. To manage within their resources the projects would have to reduce the number of residents they provide for, reduce the content of the food parcel i.e. 1 / 2 days' worth of basic provisions as opposed to 3 or 4.
- 4.2 Another option considered was to provide a greater level of funding. Long term funding of food banks is unsustainable. It is preferable to consider the funding available to advice and welfare support in the city to support residents to maximise their incomes and manage their money.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The funding requirements were devised in partnership with the Food Partnership and based on data returned by the food projects and that held by the Partnership.
- 5.2 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the council, the Convenor of the Green Group, the Leader of the Conservative group, the Lead Member for Food and the Chair of the Health and Well-Being Board were consulted about the decision.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The main reasons that people use food banks are low income, debt, benefit delays and benefit changes. These reasons have not changed during COVID19. Food poverty is the driving demand for need for food banks and hubs. Peoples shopping options in lockdown became more expensive – local shops are more expensive, the cost of delivery charges, unable to bulk buy food cheaply and more people at home to feed - especially households with children and young people.
- 6.2 As part of recovery planning it is critical that tackling food poverty is incorporated into the consideration of economic renewal, carbon reduction, community wealth building.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The financial implications are set out in the main body of the report, showing that £45,000 has already been provided and a further £124,500 is committed for the period June to August.
- 7.2 The funding source will be the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund and this will be reported separately as part of the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) report to Leaders' Group and Policy & Resources Committee, as set out in the COVID-19 Financial Position Statement P&R report of 30th April 2020.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Michael Bentley Date: 05/06/20

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 Under the Council's Scheme of Officer Delegations in cases of urgency, Chief Officers can take decisions provided that they have consulted with the Chair of the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee. The action take must be reported to the Committee or Sub-committee. The use of Officer Urgency Powers Protocol requires that the Opposition Spokes are consulted – this has been carried out as set out in the Urgent Decision Record.

Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland Date: 03/06/2020

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 All people should have access to food that provides sufficient calories and nutrients to promote good health. Food poverty is a key symptom of inequality and key groups affected are those in low income work, single parent households. Funding food for the emergency food network provides a short-term solution to food poverty exacerbated by COVID19 while longer term community recovery plans are developed and while the risk of COVID remains.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 Zero hunger is one of the UN's 12 Sustainable Development Goals providing a framework to many authorities work on sustainability. It encourages countries to: meet the immediate food needs of their vulnerable populations, boost social protection programmes, keep the domestic food supply chain moving and support small farm holders' ability to increase production. COVID19 has highlighted the food insecurity experienced by many residents in the city. This funding will help to meet the immediate food need and incorporate of food poverty in to the city's recovery planning will be critical to develop more sustainable solution.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.6 None

Public Health Implications:

- 7.7 Access to sufficient healthy food is a prerequisite to good health.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.8 As noted above the city's successful response to the emergency food needs of residents is testimony to the pre-existing collaborate relationships between communities and between the voluntary sector and the city council, and the city's work on sustainable food and food poverty.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Applications to the BHCC Local Discretionary Social Fund January to April 2020
2. List of food banks, food hubs and meal projects in the emergency food network

Applications to the BHCC Local Discretionary Social Fund January to April 2020					
	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	
Ward	Total Food Applications	Total Food Applications	Total Food Applications	Total Food Applications	Increase From Jan to April
Total	94	70	139	238	153%
Queen's Park	14	10	25	32	56%
East Brighton	17	8	21	30	76%
St. Peter's and North Laine	9	5	13	23	156%
Hollingdean and Stanmer	3	2	9	19	533%
Hangleton and Knoll	3	2	5	18	500%
Regency	7	2	8	18	157%
Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	2	1	5	13	550%
Hanover and Elm Grove	4	6	7	12	200%
Central Hove	2	2	1	10	400%
Goldsmid	2	2	6	10	400%
Withdean	0	1	3	7	
No Fixed Abode	10	3	10	7	-30%
Preston Park	2	1	3	6	200%
Westbourne	1	2	2	6	500%
South Portslade	4	1	0	5	25%
Wish	1	1	2	5	400%

Woodingdean	1	2	1	5	400%
Patcham	2	1	7	4	100%
North Portslade	2	1	2	3	50%
Rottingdean Coastal	3	2	3	2	-33%
Brunswick and Adelaide	2	7	3	1	-50%
Hove Park	0	0	0	1	
East Saltdean and Telscombe Cliffs	3	1	0	0	

List of Fourteen Food Banks operating before C19

- Salvation Army Food Bank - Hove and Central
- The Purple People Kitchen Food Bank – Portslade
- Hangleton Food Bank
- Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project (BUCFP)
- Brighton Food Bank
- Craven Vale Food Bank
- The Gathering Place (Hollingbury)
- Whitehawk Food Bank
- Bevendean Food Bank
- Chomp (families across city)
- Mutual Aid Vegan Food Bank
- Real Junk Food Project - food parcels and meals
- Voices in Exile Food Bank - migrants and refugees
- Time to Talk

List of Seventeen New Food Hubs

- Central Brighton (council run C19)
- The Hop - Cornerstone community
- Florence Road /One Church (Preston Park area)
- Brighton Table Tennis Club
- Phoenix Community Centre
- Portslade Village Centre
- Hangleton & Knoll Project - St Richard's
- The Edge Community Centre – Pankhurst
- Java Community Cafe – Woodingdean
- BELTA - Bristol Estate
- East Brighton Food Coop
- Saltdean Community Hall
- Hollingdean Community Centre

- Old Boat Community Centre
- Coldean St Mary Magdalen Church Hall Coldean
- The Carers Centre - unpaid family carers
- BMECP Centre, Muslim Forum and Brighton Cauldron

List of Ten Community Meal Projects

- Hove Luncheon Club - Food and Friendship
- BELTA - Bristol Estate
- East Brighton Food Coop
- Coldean St Mary Magdalen Church Hall Coldean
- The Bevy and the Food Factory based at BACA
- Hollingdean - World Food Project
- Table Tennis Club
- Lunch Positive - people living with HIV and their carers
- Time to Talk - older people living alone
- Real Junk Food project

TYPICAL FOOD PARCEL CONTENTS		
<p>All hubs will have vegetarian options. These parcels are subject to review of there is large demand for specific items please speak to us. If hubs have regular gluten-free, no cooking equipment people or larger households please let us know. If vegan please refer onto vegan food bank. Fresh produce depends on turnaround time/ storage. If hub has fridge hope to supply yoghurt. All contents will depend on supply / donations.</p>	Cereal or Porridge	500-750g
	Pasta or Rice	500-750g
	Tinned soup	1 tins
	Tinned tomatoes	2 tins
	Tinned protein (meat, fish, pulses)	3 tins
	Baked beans	2 tins
	Tinned veg	2 tins
	Tea Bags	30 bags
	Biscuits (remove from Diabetic)	1 pack
	Instant food eg cupasoup, rice pots, noodles, packet sauces etc	2 packs
	Crisps, snacks, treats, fruit juice etc (as donated)	
	Milk - UHT or fresh if project has fridge and quick turnaround time	1 -2 litres
	Eggs	6 pack
	Bread	1 - 2 loaves
	Onions, Carrots, Potatoes	8-10 pieces
	Fruit	6-8 pieces
	Toilet roll	2 rolls
	Soap or toothpaste or shower products	1
	To be sourced by hubs to be added to bags if needed - period products, baby food, pet food etc.	