

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Response and Recovery Update: Food</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director Economy, Environment &amp; Culture</b>		
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report updates members on the work that is being done around provision of food during COVID-19, in terms of emergency provision and consideration of a longer-term strategic approach to food.
- 1.2 The report also responds to a request from members that the Food Policy Officer continues to work with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership and the wider emergency food network on developing stronger analysis of options for moving to a more sustainable emergency food network, which builds upon the initial analysis outlined in paras 3.7 to 3.28 of the report dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the members of the committee note the work happening around the city to provide residents with food and put on record their thanks to all the volunteers and the staff involved.
- 2.2 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee agrees that as a city Brighton and Hove should continue to take a vouchers/cash first approach supported by food/essential items provision.
- 2.3 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee notes the ongoing needs of the Emergency Food Sector in para's 3.17 – 3.50 which currently costs over £0.931m per annum and the unfunded budget of support needs in financial year 2022/23 as laid out in the table 3.51 of £0.302m.
- 2.4 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee consider Emergency Food needs in future budget setting decisions to prioritise and redirect funding to the 'Food Cell' approach. This will develop the mechanism to underpin recovery, renewal and will lead to long-term resilience.
- 2.5 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee agrees the following commitments:

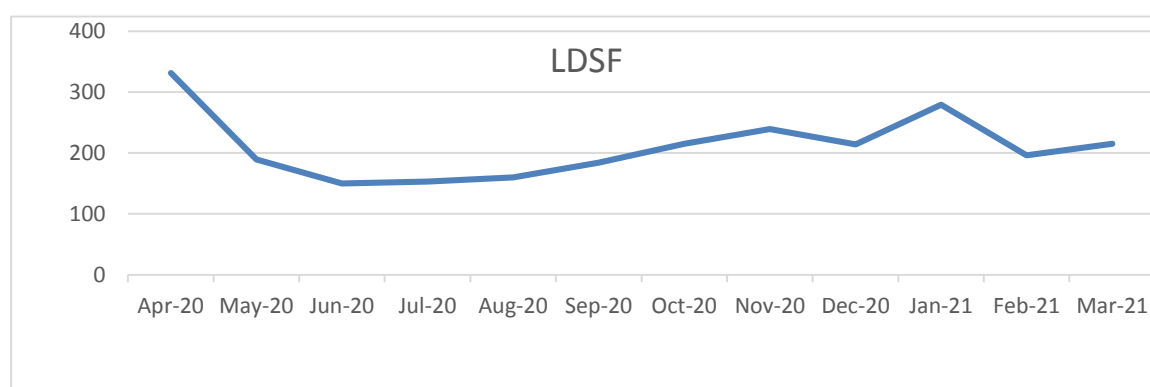
- 2.5.1 That the annual cost of £3,400 for parking dispensations and staff time to administer the scheme be incorporated in the 2022/23 General Fund Revenue Budget including through the use of one-off resources if necessary.
- 2.5.2 That the underwriting of a 3-year lease and associated staff to coordinate premises to provide storage and processing space for emergency food (as described in paragraph 3.21 – 3.23) at an annual cost of £65,142 be incorporated in the 2022/23 General Fund Revenue Budget including through the use of one-off resources if necessary.
- 2.5.3 That options for addressing the remaining funding shortfalls in 2022/23, laid out in the table 3.51, of £233,399 are kept under review as the strategy developments and, if necessary, consideration is given to making allocations to address the shortfall if one-off resources or grant funding become available in 2022/23.
- 2.5.4 That options for addressing the potential £24,582 funding shortfall for the purchase of food for this Winter 2021/22 are kept under review and allocations from existing resources and/or grants made subject to availability.
- 2.6 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee are requested to instruct Officers to amplify and support a food & essential items donations campaign through the communications team at the council, to bring public attention to this issue, which, if feasible, should include instating donation points at Brighton & Hove City Council public buildings.
- 2.7 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee instructs officers to commission an exploratory piece of work to look at strengthening organisations supporting Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee & Asylum Seekers to provide food access, by working together and providing staff capacity and reporting back to the appropriate committee.
- 2.8 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee instructs officers to undertake further work to explore commissioning a city-wide delivered community meals service for residents who cannot afford to pay for existing providers, to understand need and likely financial implications and report back to the appropriate committee.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 As part of the city's community response to supporting vulnerable households and those that were shielding during the Covid-19 Pandemic, a citywide network of 50 neighbourhood food hubs was co-ordinated by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership. Several of the temporary food hubs have since closed, there are 36 organisations in the Emergency Food Network likely to remain open.
- 3.2 The need for emergency food provision has fluctuated over the last year. In April 2020, 3001 food parcels were being given out per week and 3966 meals. This reduced to 1991 weekly parcels in July 2020 and has reduced to 1430 weekly

parcels in July 2021 and 2650 meals. The Emergency Food Network is still operating at a 240% increase from pre-pandemic levels (please see Appendix 1 for the Emergency Food Network report). The expectation is that this number will increase in Autumn 2021 when furlough ends and the £20 Universal Credit uplift is removed. Numbers of people needing food support are always higher in winter because of the explicit link between fuel and food poverty. Older residents and those with long term disabilities are particularly vulnerable at this time of year.

- 3.3 Local Discretionary Social Fund claims have fluctuated throughout the year but are still averaging significantly high numbers. Food expenses from April 20 – Mar 21 were £54,610 (24 % of claims), with other kitchen equipment £67,083 (30% of claims)



- 3.4 The School Meal voucher scheme has successfully prevented many families from needing to access Emergency Food support. BHCC school meals service has previously offered vouchers and is currently developing a national approach to providing support through supermarket and shop vouchers. Vouchers give more dignity to the families to access food (food preferences, cultural and dietary needs).
- 3.5 In 2020/21 Children’s Centres report 274 families were supported for food access. A total of 2964 supermarket vouchers were issued with a value of £95,485 during this period to families with children aged under five years eligible for the Government’s Winter Grant payments. 587 of those vouchers were for families accessing the Children’s Centre Foodbank.
- 3.6 A total of 6505 food parcels were delivered via the Children Centre’s foodbank, with many more additional deliveries for emergency supplies for the home such as kitchen utensils, bedding, clothes, toys and books, nappies, sanitary products, and toiletries.
- 3.7 The council funded an initial £45,000 in March 2020 and a further £124,500 for the period June – August 2020 to cover Emergency Food provision. The COVID19 Winter Grant money allocation was £116,000 to support the community and voluntary sector in Winter 2020/21 given out in small grants and £40,000 for youth providers. This financial year there is a further £90,000 within the Winter Grant allocation for 2021/22 for groups to buy in food & essentials.

Local Outbreak Plan funding (LOP) £215,000 & Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) of £100,000 are outlined in tables 3.8 and 3.9.

3.8 Breakdown of proposed spend on the Local Outbreak Plan funding (LOP) budget:

Organisation	What	How much	Spent/ Allocated
BHCC Children's Centres	Buying in food for food bank 1st April 21 - 31st March 22	£28,000	£28,000
Brighton & Hove Food Partnership	Support for Emergency Food Network 1st April – 31st March 22 Central processing hub Hub closed in June 21	£30,000	£30,000
Impact Initiatives	Food Access Support Worker and Volunteer Coordinator (to help with residents who can afford to pay, but can't access food) 1st April – 31st March 22	£48,000	£48,000
Brighton & Hove Food Partnership	Six-month extension to support affordable food pilots 1st April – 31st Sept 21 On the day emergency parcels 1st April - Jun 21	£14,852	£14,852
Impact Initiatives	Fund for 'on the day' shopping (people who are isolating because of covid, but need someone to pick up some food for them who can't afford to pay) Jun 21 – 31st March 22	£6,000	£2,160
Moulsecoomb Hall	Moulsecoomb Hall (BHFP Central processing hub)	£9,000	£7,630
BHCC Parking team	Parking permits	£3,400	£3,400
Mixed providers	Food budget (split proportionally between emergency food providers who have recognised need)	£50,000	£50,000
	Reserve (decision to be taken by Jan 22 when further needs have been identified)	£25,748	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£215,000</b>	<b>£184,042</b>

3.9 Breakdown of spend on the COMF budget for capacity and resilience:

Organisation	What	How much	Spent/ Allocated
Brighton & Hove Food Partnership / BrightStore	Affordable food Project extension including Whitehawk Children's Centre pilot (Brighton & Hove Food Partnership employing coordinator of BrightStore who already have 4 stores) 13th Sept 21 – 15th April 22	£21,000	£21,000
BHFP/BHCC	Healthy start campaign + training	£5,000	0

	Winter 21/22 In line with national digitalisation launch		
Trust for Developing Communities / BHFP	Food Community Development Worker to help with capacity building for food banks (employed by Trust for Developing Communities with support from Brighton & Hove Food Partnership)	£30,000	£30,000
BHFP search	Shared premises/facilities - rent and searching	£10,000	£3,000
Mixed providers	2 - 5k pots for groups to bid in for capacity and resilience	£24,000	£20,000
	Reserve (decision to be taken in Jan 22 when further needs have been identified)	£10,000	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£100,000</b>	<b>£74,000</b>

### What has been achieved already?

- 3.10 The city's Emergency Food Network has been in existence since 2013. Coordinated by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership it brings emergency food providers together from across the city to connect, share, learn and develop joint solutions. In 2020 Brighton & Hove City Council set up a covid response team to focus specifically on food – the 'Food Cell', this brings together partners across the city to work strategically and escalate problems.
- 3.11 The BHCC Community Hub and Local Discretionary Social Fund team take enquiries from people who are in poverty and signpost them to the most appropriate service(s) to help address their issues. The LDSF will offer vouchers first before signposting to a food bank.
- 3.12 If someone is struggling to access food but can afford to pay, they will be signposted to the Impact Initiatives' Food Access service.
- 3.13 In August 2021, due to escalating COVID19 rates and the need to isolate, Impact Initiatives also agreed to do an 'on the day' shop if someone had no money and no food but needed to isolate. This scheme has worked well as it provides the food the person requires rather than a food parcel. Please see Appendix 2.
- 3.14 In Nov 2020 BHFP secured initial funding of £0.050m from the Big Lottery Coronavirus support fund to establish 7 'Affordable food projects'. These are membership-based schemes where members pay a small fee (£3.50/£4.50 a week), to enable them to access a larger amount of food sourced from surplus, donations and from local farms via Brighton Food Factory. These offer a next step on from emergency food, help with longer term food insecurity and give members, choice, dignity and access to healthy, local, food. BHCC has provided further funding to continue the pilot with match funding from Sustainable Food Places. This project has recently been shortlisted for a Eurocities Award. BHCC in partnership with BHFP & BrightStore is now piloting putting in affordable food schemes in Children's Centres.

- 3.15 A Food Policy Coordinator post was created in Brighton & Hove City Council, which was filled in May 2021.
- 3.16 The Trust for Developing Communities in partnership with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership are working with emergency food providers to support their capacity and resilience by providing support on organisational development, fundraising etc.

### **What does the Emergency Food Network need?**

- 3.17 29 out of 37 emergency food providers filled in this year's annual food bank survey conducted by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP) in July 2021 (please see Appendix 1). BHFP conducted a focus group with 16 providers. The Food Policy Coordinator interviewed 8 food banks. These requests are based on the answers to these surveys and previous Emergency Food Network meetings.

### **Scaling up**

- 3.18 Winter pressures including the ending of furlough support, the ending of the Universal credit uplift, food supply chain issues pushing up food prices, fuel supply issues pushing up fuel prices, the seasonal demand for heating, plus the usual expense of the winter holiday period, mean that it is very likely that demand for emergency food will increase from the levels captured in the July survey. Therefore, there is an expectation that the numbers captured in points 3.26, 3.39 – 3.51 below are under-estimates.
- 3.19 There is also less food available now from surplus sources because of fuel shortages and supply chain issues.
- 3.20 BHCC Food Policy Coordinators, in partnership with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP), will escalate concerns through the Food Cell if demand outstrips supply. BHFP will monitor demand through the Emergency Food Network.

### **Premises**

- 3.21 8 of the 29 organisations who completed the EFN survey need to find more suitable premises for processing, food storage and distribution. BHFP is undertaking a premises search and there is funding within the COMF budget to pay for rent in the short-term. There is a lack of available buildings, due to many different competing needs for community and business space. The vacant buildings which are available need leasing, commitment to rent long-term (3 years) and come with other associated costs such as maintenance, services, and refit.
- 3.22 Premises to use for food processing or storage would help solve issues relating to food shortages and supply chains. Land & buildings for food systems infrastructure should be prioritised to improve the local food economy. Premises would be up to £35,000 per year. This unit would also need to have a Premises

Coordinator at a cost of £30,142 a year (3 days of work at Grade SO1/2 rate, plus 30% employer on-costs, plus a £5,000 operating budget). This would support long-term food systems infrastructure to assist food security.

- 3.23 Members are asked to agree to underwrite a 3-year lease and staffing to coordinate premises to provide storage and processing space for emergency food in the event that the sector cannot find space in existing community facilities. This would cost annually up to £65,142 if underwriting is required. Ideally, a council-owned space could be found, but in that case the funding would take the form of rent foregone, and funding would still be required to provide for a post to co-ordinate the space.

### **Funding for food & essential items (such as toiletries)**

- 3.24 When asked the question 'what would you spend a small grant on to help your organisation's capacity and resilience' 14 of the 29 food banks surveyed specified that they would use it to buy in food and essential items.
- 3.25 Food banks buy in extra food (especially fresh fruit and vegetables) to provide a nutritionally balanced food parcel. The food that is available from Fareshare Sussex and other surplus sources is dependent on what surplus is available, this sometimes means that it cannot provide the right nutritional balance. Last year, Fareshare UK was given a grant from DEFRA to buy in essential item such as pasta, tinned fruits & fish etc but that grant has finished. There is less surplus food available now (due to 2050 targets to halve food waste) and it is shared between more organisations and a greater number of people needing support. Additionally, surplus organisations have been impacted by supply chain issues e.g., the HGV driver shortage and fuel shortages.
- 3.26 Emergency Food Network are spending at least over £5,300 a week buying in extra food to supplement what they get from surplus food & donations. This is a yearly spend of at least £0.275m (plus the Children's Centres spend of £0.028m). Grant-making organisations do not tend to fund this kind of expenditure as it is seen as 'unsustainable', however it is unavoidable. Also, a lot of the grant making organisations are closing their covid response funding streams.
- 3.27 It is worth noting that the money that is spent here could be made to work better for the local economy. If it could be spent in local food businesses and farms (rather than the national supermarkets), this could be an important element of medium/long term plans for economic recovery and shortening supply chains for the Greater Brighton area.
- 3.28 Increasing donations from members of the public is a priority, however there is a reported decrease in donations from the public. During the crisis there was an outpouring of support from local people and businesses. There is now less public awareness about the continuing need, and it is harder for people to donate as lives are busier and sometimes the messaging is confusing about where/when to donate (as the 36 organisations have different donation needs).

- 3.29 To address the gap and meet ongoing need, Members are requested to consider providing £24,582 extra funding to purchase in food in Winter 2021/22.
- 3.30 Members are requested to instruct Officers to amplify and support a food & essential items donations campaign through the communications team at the council, to bring public attention this issue. This could include instating donation points at Brighton & Hove Council public buildings.

### **Parking**

- 3.31 Parking is an essential part of being able to deliver food around the city and has enabled food banks and meal providers to reach the most vulnerable in society. 83% of Emergency food organisations are still delivering despite the end of lockdown. The 'volunteer letter' (which allowed volunteers to park in any BHCC parking bay without risk of a parking ticket) was popular amongst food banks because of its simplicity, but this has been discontinued. Since then, parking dispensations have been issued at a cost of £40 per dispensation with 85 dispensations being funded from the LOP budget at a total of £3,400. This will require funding in future years (or a return to the much simpler letters option).
- 3.32 Members are asked to agree annual funding of £3,400 to cover the cost of the parking dispensations the scheme.

### **Volunteer drivers and other volunteers**

- 3.33 There is a high turnaround of volunteers (especially volunteer drivers) across the network. This is because volunteers return to work and there is a low percentage of car ownership in the most deprived wards in the city, where the food banks are located.
- 3.34 There are 350 volunteers working 1650 hours a week, which, if they were paid at the living wage would cost £15,675 a week, or £815,100 a year. Volunteers incur expenses such as petrol costs. However, most organisations felt that volunteers wanted to contribute their time for free and even where they could claim expenses, they often don't. Food bank volunteers are contributing £815k to the local economy through donating their time.
- 3.35 However, there are volunteers in some organisations in coordination roles (food ordering, volunteer management, fundraising, safe-working practices etc), which are very time-consuming. If these continue to be unpaid, then they risk volunteer burn-out and the potential closure of those organisations. While most volunteers get a great experience out of volunteering, they will only do so if in well-managed roles. This is being supported through the Food Community Development Worker role employed by the Trust for Developing Communities and BHFP.
- 3.36 Members are not asked to consider paying all volunteers as there is no need or desire to institutionalise volunteering. However, if organisations reach a certain size and capacity, they do need to recruit staff to manage the volunteers. This is explored below.



## **Staff capacity**

- 3.37 At the 3 December 2020 Policy & Resources Committee, it was agreed to ask officers for a further report that gives due consideration to paid positions at key food hubs around the city that are currently reliant on volunteers alone.
- 3.38 There are already 61 staff working across the organisations working 361 hours per week on emergency food (although staff are likely to have other roles within the organisations). At a coordination rate of £12.82 per hour this would equal £4,628 a week. These posts are currently paid for from fundraising from grants & donations.
- 3.39 Three organisations are looking for help to either pay current volunteers a staff wage or bring in staff to release capacity within the organisation. These three organisations have significant reach and are likely to need significant staff time (at a minimum four full time roles). A continued cost of £240,657 per year for the current paid staff, with an additional funding need of £100,000 for the new roles the total to pay all staff yearly would require a grant of £340,657. Within the COMF budget there is development time with the Trust for Developing Communities to support these organisations until March 2022, to be able to employ people and find further funding to do so.
- 3.40 Unless funding can be found to provide for staff across the wider Emergency Food Sector it would not be equitable to fund specific food banks. However, there is a good case to invest in key organisations, to develop their staffing, capacity and resilience in the short and medium-term to strategically deploy resources where they will have most impact. This is explored in points 3.41 – 3.48.

## **Support emergency food for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugees and Asylum seeker communities**

- 3.41 The three main organisations supporting Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic communities and Refugees and asylum seekers have critical funding issues to provide staffing and rental costs. There is an expected increase of Refugees & asylum seekers in the city due to issues in Afghanistan.
- 3.42 National research highlights the issue ‘Throughout the crisis, BAME communities have consistently encountered disproportionately higher levels of food insecurity compared with white ethnic groups. Comparing our data to before the pandemic, inequality in food insecurity has widened between those from BAME backgrounds and white ethnic groups.’ [FF\\_Impact-of-Covid\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/FF_Impact-of-Covid_FINAL.pdf) ([foodfoundation.org.uk](https://www.foodfoundation.org.uk)).
- 3.43 Members are requested to commission an exploratory piece of work to look at strengthening organisations supporting Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee & asylum seekers to provide food access, by working together and

providing staff capacity. This could result in proposals for a new or separate food bank or further resources for the existing banks.

### **Support organisations delivering a 'Meals on wheels' service**

- 3.44 In response to the pandemic, East Brighton Food Co-op set up a delivered meals-on-wheels service as of July 2020 delivering to 260 households daily (with a 7 day a week service). They receive referrals from over 33 organisations. Originally covering East Brighton, they now deliver across Brighton & Hove due to need. Additionally, 4 organisations moved from a lunch club model to deliver to their clients.
- 3.45 The council's contracted Community Meals Service was discontinued on 31/03/2016 after a review. Several factors have changed since this happened:
- an increase in amount of people needing to isolate or remain at home;
  - an increase in amount of people who are in food poverty; and
  - closure of lunch clubs and other provision.
- 3.46 Adults with disabilities have also consistently been more acutely affected by food insecurity during the pandemic compared with those without disabilities. Most recent data shows people with severe disabilities have five times greater levels of food insecurity than those without. Extremely clinically vulnerable people are more than twice as likely to be food insecure than average.' [FF Impact-of-Covid\\_FINAL.pdf \(foodfoundation.org.uk\)](#)
- 3.47 Most clients receiving this support are unable to afford to pay for this service. BHFP is currently undertaking a review of delivered community meals. Nationally, 1.3 million people over the age of 65 are malnourished. National Food & Farming organisation Sustain recommends that one of the steps that local authorities can take to reduce food poverty is to support and enhance meals-on-wheels provision. There is an opportunity to use food provision to link isolated adults to other services and avert escalating health and social care costs through early intervention (health and social care costs). There is also a potential to link support for individuals with support at the Community Hub and through LDSF.
- 3.48 In light of this information, the Committee are recommended to instruct officers to undertake further work to explore commissioning a city-wide delivered community meals service for residents who cannot afford to pay for existing providers, to understand need and the likely financial implications.

### **Development support**

- 3.49 Organisations across the Emergency Food Network need help with a range of development support such as help with fundraising, increasing donations, volunteer recruitment and management, employing staff etc. The current COMF funding has been used to pay for a Food Development Worker employed by the Trust for Developing Communities & with support from Brighton & Hove Food

Partnership to work one-to-one with emergency food providers. This bespoke support will be available until the end of March 21.

3.50 From April 2022 there is currently no funding to support the Emergency Food Network through Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, the Food Access work at Impact Initiatives or the needs of the Children’s Centre Food Bank.

3.51 **Further action needed and potential cost**

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Action needed</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Achieved?</b>	<b>Not yet found</b>
<b>Short-term (Between now &amp; end of March 22)</b>	Short-term premises for storage and processing (Downs View School until Jan 22). Further location needed.	£20,000 (£10,000 staff, £10,000 food budget)	£10,000 (COMF), £10,000 (LOP reserve)	
	Communications campaign for donations	£5,000	£5,000 (LOP reserve)	
	Increase funding for food needs of Emergency Food Providers	£148,540	£90,000 winter grant (70% on food = £63,000) £50,000 LOP £10,958 (LOP Reserve)	£24,582
	Review support needed for food organisations for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic communities & Refugee & Asylum seekers. Provide staff support.	£10,000	£10,000 (COMF reserve)	
	Scaling up Emergency provision	Unknown at this time		
	Scoping work for Community delivered Meals Service	£5,000	£5,000 (LOP reserve)	
	<b>TOTAL further funding needs</b>			<b>£24,582</b>
<b>Medium term (whilst food poverty continues to be this high) 1<sup>st</sup> April 22 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 23</b>	Food Hub premises (Rental, maintenance, utilities)	£35,000		
	Premises Coordinator	£30,142		
	Parking	£3,400		
	Brighton & Hove Food Partnership Support to Emergency	£33,500		

	Food Providers, Affordable Food Network, plus training needs			
	Impact Initiatives Food Access Service	£33,233		
	Grant funding to support buying in food & essential items Based on a 1/3 of need (due to fundraising & donations)	£91,666		
	Grant funding to support staff, capacity & resilience of organisations (invest in key organisations to increase capacity)	£40,000		
	Children's Centres Food Bank	£15,000		
	Review support provided, support for BAME organisations, parking need	£10,000		
	Provide additional Food Policy Coordinator on Emergency food	£10,000		
	Community Delivered Meals Service	Subject to review		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£301,941</b>		

3.52 The expected extra need for funding in this financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 21 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 22 is £24,582.

3.53 The total cost needed for next financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 22 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 23 is estimated to be £301,941 as laid out in Table 3.51.

**How do we move towards a more sustainable emergency food system, which has fair and inclusive access?**

3.54 Working from Brighton & Hove's Food Strategy Action Plan (2018 - 2023) which aims to take a preventative 'upstream' approach to food poverty and ensure equal access to healthy food:

**Prioritise a preventative 'upstream' approach for food poverty. Take action on low wages, insecure employment and the housing crisis.**

- Lobby government to ensure that the provision of welfare, employment and skills is sufficient to prevent the need for emergency food provision
- Promote the living wage
- Reduce people needing to access emergency food to relieve pressure on services and improve capacity
- Invest in sustainable food system infrastructure to help the city transition

from recovery and renewal to building resilience
<b>Help maximise the income of those at risk of food poverty. Take a strategic approach to preventing crises, including strengthening the links between support services, e.g., advice services, Job Centre Plus, food banks and shared-meal settings.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in &amp; increase affordable food schemes to help with long-term food insecurity</li> <li>• Run a campaign to promote Healthy Start vouchers (in line with national digitalisation and relaunch)</li> <li>• Ensure that anyone eligible receives school vouchers</li> <li>• Run school holiday club meals targeting families eligible for free school meals</li> <li>• Explore further activities in schools and Children’s Centres to act on food poverty</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure emergency support for people who do experience crisis. Seek to continue the Local Discretionary Social Fund. Emergency food providers work together to share skills and resources.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote a ‘cash-first’ approach</li> <li>• Help build sustainability &amp; resilience within Emergency food organisations</li> <li>• Reduce the barriers for people to access food support</li> <li>• Improve the nutritional quality of food</li> <li>• Provide culturally appropriate food</li> <li>• Ensure information, advice and access to good food for people in food poverty. Involve people with first-hand experience of food poverty in designing responses to it</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure the limited support available is effectively targeted at those most vulnerable</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data from City Tracker, Joint Strategic Needs assessment, food banks survey</li> <li>• Research delivered meals service, invest in delivered community meals</li> </ul>

#### 4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The risks involved if B & H City Council is unable to support this system are set out below:

Risk	Potential Consequences
Brighton & Hove residents go hungry (most likely to affect vulnerable residents, those with long-term health conditions or disabilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased levels of malnutrition (leading to serious health consequences)</li> <li>• Increase in hospitalisations</li> <li>• Malnourished people more likely to stay in hospital for longer</li> </ul>
Emergency Food Providers need to close due to shortfalls in funding, returning to previous activities or lack of space in community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficiaries would need to find another source of food, putting increased pressure on other food banks.</li> </ul>

buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident's food needs not being met</li> </ul>
Disruption in supply chain means we have food shortages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brighton &amp; Hove Residents suffering hunger and greater food insecurity</li> </ul>

## 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The information provided in this report has been devised in partnership with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP). BHFP hold monthly Emergency Food Network meetings (usually attended by between 15 - 28 people) and monthly affordable food pilot meetings (usually attended by between 8 - 16 people) where organisations bring ideas, issues, and concerns to the attention of the group. This information is fed back into the monthly Food Cell meetings, who aim to address some of the issues and feedback to the networks.
- 5.2 Brighton & Hove Food Partnership undertook an annual survey of the Emergency Food Providers, this was completed in August 2021. They held a focus group of 16 Emergency food providers. The Food Policy Coordinate interviewed 8 food banks.
- 5.3 Brighton & Hove Food Partnership undertook an evaluation of the Affordable Food Projects, this was completed in July 2021.
- 5.4 Brighton & Hove Food Partnership is currently helping evaluate community delivered meals, this research is ongoing.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 A significant and complex voluntary network of emergency food providers has emerged over the last 10 years. The number of providers and demands upon this network have increased significantly as result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. They will need ongoing support and resources whilst the demand remains high. Demand is expected to increase over Winter 2021/22.
- 6.2 Whilst there is so much uncertainty about the financial implications of Brexit and COVID19 on the general population. There is a need to strategically support the food network in the short and medium term (expected until March 23). The long-term aim should be to reach a position whereby emergency food provision is not needed in the city. We therefore need to be careful about not creating a system that embeds emergency provision in the city when in the longer term the approach should be a more preventative approach to tackling poverty and financial exclusion. Key to this is supporting economic and community recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and lobbying government to ensure that the provision of welfare, employment and skills is sufficient to prevent the need for emergency food provision.
- 6.3 There is however, an ongoing need that is not the result of Brexit or COVID19 alone and that is supporting the cities' most vulnerable residents to access food; in particular those that have illness, long-term health conditions or disabilities.

The exploration or continuation of services to support this group is vital to ensure residents health and dietary needs are being met.

- 6.4 The organisations and networks involved are not only responding to a crisis but also contributing to key strategic social, economic and environmental objectives wherever possible. It is unfortunate to note that with potential future impacts from Climate Change on food insecurity it is useful to have a long-term strategic approach.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The report sets out the various costs incurred this year, and projections of costs next year, based on current provision and demand for the delivery of emergency food provision. However, the report focuses on other action aimed at creating a longer-term strategic approach to food provision that may ultimately reduce overall costs. Costs are therefore indicative and are dependent on the proposed strategic approach being embedded.
- 7.2 Aside from this approach, for 2022/23 there are costs that require funding in order to underpin delivery including £3,400 for parking dispensations and £65,142 to cover Food Hub premises rental, maintenance and utilities costs and a Premises Co-ordinator. The committee are asked to accept these costs as a commitment in the 2022/23 budget setting process which means they will either add to the projected budget gap next year or could be funded from one-off resources if available.
- 7.3 There are remaining projected unfunded costs of £233,399 in 2022/23 based on the current model of provision. The developing strategic approach aims to mitigate these costs as far as possible but the committee is being asked to keep this situation under review and, if necessary, consider allocating one-off funding or grant funding to support emergency food provision if funding becomes available during 2022/23. Possible sources could include any outturn underspending or additional government one-off Covid grants.
- 7.4 In the current year, there is also a projected winter shortfall of £24,852. The committee are asked to keep this situation under review and consider allocating further funding from existing resources and/or grants subject to availability.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Nigel Manvell*

*Date: 25/10/2021*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.5 Advice will be sought from the Estates Team and legal services in relation to the detail of the lease to provide storage and processing space for emergency food. There are no other relevant legal implications to note.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Name Elizabeth Culbert*

*Date: 21/10/21*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.6 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.
- 7.7 An Equality Impact Assessment is being carried out for the Food Cell.
- 7.8 Three organisations supporting Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugees and asylum seekers have funding & staffing issues.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.9 The network already shares lots of information from the Healthy Lifestyles team about active travel and Surplus Food Network e.g. have invested in electric vehicles and cargo bikes. The network is also reducing food waste by linking to Surplus Food Network redistribution and cooking surplus, supporting local farmers, carbon reduction, packaging reduction.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.10 The food and fuel supply chain issues have been impacted by Brexit, which has implications on household finances. Food is one of the Critical National Infrastructure sectors. Local Authorities, Local Resilience Forums and Local Enterprise Partnerships should work closely with local food partnerships where they exist on food resilience planning.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Public Health Implications:

- 7.10 There are significant public health implications if residents in the city become malnourished. Food insecurity affects physical and mental health, and social and emotional wellbeing. For children experiencing food insecurity, there are potentially negative developmental consequences.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.11 Food is one of the Critical National Infrastructure sectors. Local Authorities, Local Resilience Forums and Local Enterprise Partnerships should work closely with local food partnerships where they exist on food resilience planning.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. The July 21 Emergency Food Network Report
2. Impact Initiatives Report on food access work