

Cabinet Member Briefing Note

Provision of Food to Vulnerable Residents

To: Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation and Education and skills

Date: 18th March 2021

Author:	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets / Head of Revenues & Benefits
Wards:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To review of the allocation of the £227,827 grant from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to provide food and essential supplies to those struggling to afford these essentials.
- 1.2 £107,364 of this grant remains unspent following its initial allocation to the Swindon Emergency Assistance Fund and local charities. DEFRA has asked that the grant is used by the 31st March 2021 and food and essential supplies are provided.
- 1.3 This distribution and provision of food will assist the Council in delivering Priority 4 which is to 'Help People to Help Themselves while Always Protecting our Most Vulnerable' and in particular Pledge 17 which is to 'Provide early support so that Swindon residents are financially included and avoid getting into debt.

2. Recommended Action to be taken by Officers Under Delegated Powers

Recommended that the Cabinet Member agrees to:

- 2.1 The Head of Revenues and Benefits allocating the remaining balance of the DEFRA grant as shown below in the table below, using his delegated authority under paragraph 38 (part 8 of the Constitution).

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 During the Covid19 pandemic, the Council and a number of local organisations have been providing food to those 'shielding' and to those unable to afford to pay for food. In September 2020, the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) made a grant available to Swindon Borough Council for £227,827 to assist with this.

Cabinet Member Briefing Note

Provision of Food to Vulnerable Residents

To: Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation and Education and skills

Date: 18th March 2021

-
- 3.2 To date £120,524 of this has been utilised. £62,500 has been given in grants to other local charities to provide food and organisation and £58,024 has been used to provide food and essentials by the Council's Emergency Assistance Fund and Live Well Hub.
- 3.3 In September 2020, the Council's Hardship and Social Enterprise groups, which comprised of officers and local voluntary organisations, identified the local charities that were providing assistance and the numbers of residents that they have been helping and the £62,500 of grants were awarded on that basis.
- 3.4 These charities will be offered the grants shown below. The amount of grant is based on the numbers of households currently being assisted. Each Charity are being asked to confirm that they will continue to provide more food to the vulnerable.

Table 1 Suggested Allocations and who will be Assisted

Organisation or Fund	Allocation or Grant	Purpose & Who is Assisted
Swindon Food Collective	£40,000	Over last 3 months providing food for 686 people a month and bulk food donations to other local charities.
Swindon Scrapstore	£15,000	As of March 2021, providing 25-30 food parcels to vulnerable households per week. Households referred by Council staff and Advice Agency staff.
Swindon Night Shelter	£15,000	30-50 food boxes per week provided to persons presenting to the Night Shelter as homeless.
Harbour Project	£15,000	Providing 60 food parcels a week to those without recourse to public funds (the DEFRA grant allows for this) and to those who lost their jobs and had no benefits in payment.
Bags/Boxes of Hope – Gorse Hill Baptist Church	£15,000	As of March 2021, providing between 40-45 boxes per week to individuals or families in need with reduced income or loss of employment. Referrals from schools, housing, social care

Cabinet Member Briefing Note

Provision of Food to Vulnerable Residents

To: Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation and Education and skills

Date: 18th March 2021

Organisation or Fund	Allocation or Grant	Purpose & Who is Assisted
		teams and other churches.
Swindon Carers	£5,000	Providing food parcels for 10 families as at the beginning of March 2021, but could provide for a few more individuals and families with funding.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 No other options have been identified that utilise the DEFRA grant by 31st March 2021.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 This grant has been provided to the Council by DEFRA and the suggested allocations do not incur the Council any administration costs.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights have been taken into account and the award of these grants are compliant.

Climate Change Impact

- 5.3 The proposals would not bring a change in service delivery and Officers believe that there is no expected effect on the Council's carbon footprint.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 The provision of food and essentials to the vulnerable promotes financial inclusion.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken and reviewed and no adverse impacts identified. It is believed that the grant allocations will make sure all vulnerable members of the community can receive assistance and help with inclusion.

Cabinet Member Briefing Note

Provision of Food to Vulnerable Residents

To: Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation and Education and skills

Date: 18th March 2021

Risk Management

- 5.6 The risk to the Council is that the grant will not be used as intended, but the organisations concerned are trusted partners who have already been providing food to households in need.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Corporate Director of Finance and Assets (s151 officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 None

9. Declarations of Interest

- 9.1 Cabinet Members are reminded to consider whether they have any known interests in any of the matters referred to in this Briefing Note. If such an interest exists this should be declared to the Monitoring Officer (or Committee and Member Services Manager), and they should take no part in the consideration of the Briefing Note and should refer the Briefing Note to the Leader of the Council instead for consideration.

10. Sign-off

- 10.1 The Cabinet Member is requested to respond with 5 days of the date of this report (by 23rd March 2021).
- 10.2 The Cabinet Member is requested to indicate one of the following responses to the Recommendations set out in Section 2 of this report:

[To be signed electronically but the signature will be redacted on the published version.]