

Committee:	Date:
Finance Committee	13 October 2020
Subject: Report of Action Taken – Public Decisions taken under Delegated Authority/Urgency procedures since the last formal meeting of the Committee	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information
Report author: John Cater, Town Clerk's Department	

Summary

This report advises Members of urgent and/or delegated public action taken by the Town Clerk since the last meeting of the Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Orders No. 41(a) and 41(b).

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main report

1. Subject: £20,000 Donation - DEC Coronavirus Appeal - Protecting refugees and displaced people (Delegated Authority) – 22nd July 2020

Background

The coronavirus outbreak is a global health emergency that is affecting the way every one of us goes about our daily lives. As restrictions begin to lift in countries around the world there is now focus on the most disadvantaged communities by international aid organisations.

Millions of lives are at stake as the Covid-19 pandemic hits refugee camps and countries suffering conflict. Families who have been forced to flee their homes and lost everything in places like Yemen, Syria and Somalia face a deadly new threat.

- Covid-19 is spreading in the world's most vulnerable communities – people living in refugee and internal displacement camps who have been forced from their homes after years of war or instability.
- Living in cramped conditions with limited access to handwashing facilities and difficulty maintaining social distancing, they are extremely vulnerable to the virus.
- Limited health facilities do not have the staff or equipment to cope, putting millions at risk if the virus goes unchecked and spreads freely.
- Combined with malnutrition and chronic ill health, the virus is likely to have a higher mortality rate here than elsewhere.
- But with the right assistance and support, simple measures can make a huge difference to help people protect themselves and their families – as we have seen here in the UK.

· DEC charities are already delivering aid on the ground but donations will allow this vital work to be scaled up, helping prevent countless cases and save lives.

RESOLVED –

The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee agreed the IDF should always be ready to respond to any DEC appeals that are launched or be able to respond to International Disasters. Since the start of the Coronavirus Pandemic the IDF has focussed its efforts in response to the impact of the Pandemic in London and the UK awarding three donations totalling £60,000 to the British Red Cross, Team Rubicon and St John's Ambulance.

A donation to this DEC Appeal demonstrated that the IDF still has an International focus. In light of the budget for the year, **a donation of £20,000** was considered appropriate to ensure there is ample budget remaining to respond to other appeals later in the financial year.

2. Subject: £20,000 Donation - British Red Cross – Beirut Emergency Appeal (Delegated Authority) – 17th August 2020

Background

On Tuesday 4 August 2020, a large explosion obliterated the port of Beirut, the capital city of Lebanon. The blast rippled through several areas of the capital, destroying buildings, shattering windows and doors, collapsing balconies and causing widespread devastation. The impact of the explosion was so great that the sound could be heard 150km away and as far as the island of Cyprus. Tragically, it has been reported that at least 100 people have died and more than 4,000 have been injured, with numbers expected to rise as emergency responders search through the rubble. Hospitals have also suffered extensive damage and are overwhelmed by the number of casualties, with many wounded being treated in the streets and the most serious cases being evacuated outside of Beirut.

People in Lebanon are not only dealing with injuries, the loss of loved ones and damaged homes, but are also living through the brink of severe economic decline with food prices more than doubling recently, and continual electricity shortages. All of this is further exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. People in Beirut now have an even higher risk of getting COVID-19 as social distancing becomes impossible in the chaos and overcrowded medical facilities.

Response of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The Lebanese Red Cross has sent all of its emergency medical support to the scene, with more than 75 ambulances and over 375 emergency medical responders from across Lebanon rushing to the area to help evacuate and treat the injured. This is crucial to get people to hospitals outside of Beirut for life-saving treatment.

To support the overwhelmed hospitals, which are having to turn injured people away, the Lebanese Red Cross has set up triage and first aid stations in and around Beirut to help those wounded. As well as this, as the only blood donation organisation in the country, the Lebanese Red Cross is urging anyone in Lebanon to donate blood in the coming days to save lives.

Alongside emergency medical responders, Red Cross search and rescue teams are also looking through the rubble and devastation to find anyone trapped. Lebanese Red Cross responders are working tirelessly to save lives.

The British Red Cross remain in close conversation with the Lebanese Red Cross who have been responding to the crisis since it happened. We are ready to support as needed during and after this crisis.

RESOLVED –

The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee agreed to a donation of £20,000 from the International Disasters Fund via the British Red Cross to support the Lebanese Red Cross in providing relief to those effected by the explosion in Beirut in the short and long term.

Contact:

John Cater

Senior Committee and Member Services Manager, Town Clerk's Department

020 7332 1407