

Committee(s): Community and Children's Services	Dated: 06/06/2022
Subject: Affordable food provision in the City of London	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 3, 4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y/N
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Summary

This report updates Members on the current position in relation to affordable food provision in the City of London and a food pantry model that is being explored. Data indicates that 2.9 million individuals in poverty in the UK have a low or very low food security status, meaning they are unable to access enough, varied, and/or nutritious quality food.

A foodbank type model for City of London residents has been provided for City of London residents since June 2021 but demand for this provision has been low and the provider is now stopping foodbank provision. Foodbank provision meets a specific need but there is a wider range of people who may not qualify for foodbank provision but still require access to affordable food.

This paper sets out some of the explorations underway around a Food Pantry Model which could meet this wider need in an empowering way.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

Main Report

Background

1. Data indicates that 2.9 million individuals in poverty in the UK have a low or very low food security status, meaning they are unable to access enough, varied, and/or nutritious quality food. Families receiving benefits have very high levels of poverty, with more than half of individuals in families in receipt of Universal Credit and its predecessor legacy benefits being in poverty. Of households in receipt of Universal Credit 43% are food insecure. Another negative effect is the rise in inflation, which will put more pressure on people experiencing food insecurity.
2. The Square Mile Food Bank was set up by volunteers as a Covid emergency response during a challenging time. There was not sufficient data collected to assess the level of need for a crisis service.
3. When the City of London foodbank ended, the First Love Foundation (FLF) was grant funded by the City of London Corporation for 12 months to provide, amongst other things, provision of food parcels and a foodbank and advice service for City of London residents and in neighbouring boroughs.

Current Position

4. Data from FLF shows that there has been a low-level of need for this service within the City of London. From June 1st, 2021, to February 28th, 2022, the FLF fed a total of 16 City of London residents and opened 11 cases concerning City of London residents.
5. At the end of April, FLF closed their food bank offer at short notice as there is a proliferation of food offers in their main operating borough and they wished to focus on other aspects of their work. They did however commit to continue to support any City of London residents they were currently working with.
9. It has been noted however that a foodbank offer only meets the needs of a certain proportion of the population, given its nature and criteria, and that there are other models which may help meet a wider need around access to affordable food.
10. This issue was being considered alongside the FLF service, but the end of the foodbank provision and the low level of need for this service has driven these considerations further.
11. Officers are currently exploring a model of a community food pantry which allows people to pay a small subscription of a few pounds per week to become a member of the pantry. In return members can choose groceries that are worth many times more. The benefits of a food pantry are:

- a. There is no referral needed.
- b. There are groceries to choose from, rather than being given what is on offer at a food bank.
- c. The person is contributing financially and is therefore empowered.
- d. Food pantries often become neighbourhood hubs that can develop other initiatives and ideas – for example healthy cooking classes.

12. The model is a franchise model called Your Local Pantry which was originally developed by Stockport Homes Group in 2013 and the Your Local Pantry social franchise is now run by a partnership between Foundations Stockport and Church Action on Poverty. Food is sourced primarily through Fareshare, a national network of charitable food redistributors, made up of 18 independent organisations and each Pantry also has its own local suppliers.

13. Officers will shortly be meeting with a pantry that has been established in Peckham, to understand how it works in practice.

14. Factors that need to be considered in relation to the development of a food pantry in the City of London include:

- Which organisation (most likely to be a community of voluntary sector organisation) would be interested in developing this franchise in the City of London.
- How the organisation will be able to evidence the need for this provision and how they might adopt any innovative approach – for example working across borough boundaries. However, this will need to consider existing provision in these areas.
- How any funding requirements will be met. This is most likely to be in the form of grants or usual fundraising activities by the organisation concerned. The City of London Corporation could support the organisation with information about grants that may be available.

15. Officers will continue these explorations and bring a more detailed paper back to Members shortly with an update.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

16. This piece of work aligns with and will support the following outcomes of the Corporate Plan:

Contribute to a flourishing society

- 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing
- 3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential
- 4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need

Financial implications

17. None

Resource implications

18. None

Legal implications

19. None

Risk implications

20. None

Equalities implications

21. A food pantry would help to reduce health inequality in the City of London by offering a variety of nutritious food at a price affordable to residents in need of support.

Climate implications

22. None

Security implications

23. None

Conclusion

24. Members are asked to note the report.

Appendices

- None

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