

Committee(s)	Dated:
Finance Committee	21 st February 2023
Subject: Report of (public) Action taken under DA or Urgency procedures since the last meeting of the Committee	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	N/A
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y/N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information
Report author: John Cater, Committee Clerk, Finance Committee	

Summary

This report advises Members of urgent and/or delegated public action taken by the Town Clerk since the publication of the agenda pack of the last meeting of this 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

Subject: Turkey/Syria Earthquake Appeal

Background

The City of London holds a contingency fund in its City's Cash budget, allocated to the International Disasters Fund (IDF) administered by the Finance Committee.

A report on use of this fund was presented to Finance Committee on 19 January 2021 where it was noted:

- a) The strong criteria applied by the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) for the selection and monitoring of UK aid charities;
- b) The ability of the Central Grants Unit (CGU) to provide recommendations of appropriate charities to support, including due diligence reviews;
- c) That donations given as restricted to a specific appeal or purpose are required under charity law to be spent directly on that purpose.

When a DEC appeal is not launched, a donation could be made to an individual charity carrying out humanitarian relief in the area. It is acknowledged that the transparent governance controls applied by the DEC means that Finance Committee can be confident in giving direct to the individual charities that are members of the DEC, should they believe this to be the most appropriate use of the Corporations' emergency donations budget.

The IDF currently has an annual budget of £125,000 annually and has made 2 donations so far in 2022/23 totalling £50,000. A total of £75,000 is left in the budget for this financial year.

Turkey & Syria Earthquake Appeal

A devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck south-eastern Turkey near the border with Syria in the early hours of Monday 6 February 2023. The earthquake was so strong that it was felt hundreds of miles away in Lebanon, Iraq and Israel. Just hours later with rescue efforts underway, a second, 7.7 magnitude earthquake also hit the region.

Reports suggest that over 5000 people have been killed by the Disaster so far, with the death toll increasing by the hour. Over 7000 people have been reported injured and many are still trapped under destroyed buildings. Search and rescue efforts are being hampered by ongoing aftershocks, as well as snow and bad winter storms. With the temperature in some areas below freezing, many people are at risk out in the cold.

The full extent of the damage is not clear. Hundreds of buildings have collapsed, and homes have been destroyed. Right now, the priority is rescuing people from the rubble, but bridges, roads and hospitals have been damaged and power is down, making it difficult to reach those in need. In Syria particularly, years of conflict have already devastated local infrastructure, making it harder to access the machinery and tools needed for rescue efforts.

DEC Appeal

The DEC launched a fundraising campaign on Thursday 9th February 2023 to support all its International Aid Partners working on the ground to coordinate support where it is needed most. DEC Partners are already on the ground supporting with search and rescue efforts, providing basic relief items, including blankets and tents so far. Alongside basic items blood shipments are being organised in anticipation of the need for blood transfusions over the coming days.

RESOLVED – that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee agreed a donation of £50,000 to the Disaster Emergency Committee to support the coordination of Aid Efforts in Turkey and Syria in response to the devastating Earthquake.

Contact:

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