

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 26 November 2020	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet Member for social support and homelessness
<b>Report title:</b>		Conditions of Funding: For the Food hubs and Food bank that support the Southwark Community Support Alliance	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All wards	
<b>From:</b>		Director of Communities	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet Member for social support & homelessness approves the conditions of funding to the fund eight food hubs and one-food bank as detailed in paragraph 16 and 17 for the period October 2020 to March 2021 for a total sum of £199,732.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Southwark Community Hub was set up in response to the pandemic and resulting lockdown to provide support for vulnerable residents, including social support and access to essential food and other essential supplies. Initially a local authority initiative responding to a government directive, in Southwark the Community Hub quickly evolved to become a joint initiative between the council, VCS and health providers.
3. A rapid review group was established in July in order to hear evidence from partners across the sector on the response to date and views on priorities for the future of the Community Hub. The review group identified a number of contingencies and made 16 recommendations for how these areas of work could be aligned with the framework set out for the borough.
4. In October, cabinet agreed to the implementation and timescales of these 16 recommendations for the revised Community hub model / Southwark Community Support Alliance.
5. The cabinet also agreed to instruct officers to test new ways of providing housing, employment, skills, money, social care and immigration support in local communities including testing how support from established public & VCS providers can be made accessible in partnership with local community 'anchor' organisations rooted in each part of the borough.
6. In many ways, food insecurity was the face of the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, as early panic buying and new shielding

arrangements made access to food and essential goods a predominant concern for many residents. In the initial phase this was provided to all who requested it rather than means tested. A wide range of food offers sprung up quickly in

7. response, including among Community Hub partners, local businesses, tenants and residents' associations, faith organisations and mutual aid groups. These offers have often focussed on the provision of emergency food parcels, with various doorstep delivery models supplementing what is otherwise a stripped-back food bank model with fewer opportunities to access wider support services and less choice.
8. Evidence presented to the review group in July made it clear that the pandemic has revealed, rather than caused a food insecurity crisis. According to the Southwark Food Alliance Action (SFAA) Plan London's first ever measure of food insecurity, which took place between 2018 and 2019, found that almost 1 in 4 Southwark residents over age 16 are likely to be food insecure. The survey of Londoners also estimated that 75,000 Southwark residents might be skipping meals due to lack of funds or facing real hunger.
9. The three established food hubs were supporting food access prior to Covid-19 all saw an increase in demand. Pecan food bank had a 394% year on year increase from 23rd March to 9th April and Central Southwark Community hub had an additional 142 families referred since the start of the pandemic lockdown. There has been a four-fold increase in the number of referrals to food banks due to financial insecurity. In the first lockdown, the food hubs received over 6,700 new referrals.
10. In response to this need, the food hubs all stepped forward to offer additional support through the crisis and have developed delivery and collection models to distribute food parcels to local residents. The food hubs received council common purpose grant funding to support the logistics and supply to the local residents and communities.
11. The eight food distribution hubs in the borough that continue to receive referrals directly from the Community Hub also support the non-shielding vulnerable residents. In addition to the eight food hubs, one food bank – St Matthews Church also set their selves up to support the needs and demands from those within the Latin American Community.
12. These eight food hubs are now the main providers and distributors of food for the borough. The Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA) will maintain the support for these food hubs, and the rest of the food community. To get much needed food to the vulnerable in the borough and those self-isolating. The SFAA developed the Fairer Southwark Food Security Action Plan<sup>1</sup> in July 2019 to address food insecurity in the borough. The plan is

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/health-and-wellbeing-in-southwark-jsna/wider-determinants-of-health?chapter=4>

based on a detailed strategic needs assessment on household food insecurity conducted by the Public Health team at Southwark Council<sup>2</sup>.

13. *Recommendation 8 - Aligning plans for emergency food provision.* These established eight food hubs and one food bank, have agreed to work with the SFAA and with the Community hub project team have co-produced a food criteria and food provision pathway.
14. As part of *Recommendation 9 - Developing a common long-term approach to tackling food insecurity*, the Pecan and St George Martyrs have already set up pantries. With a number of plans in place for the other hubs to develop more pantries.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

15. As stated in the both cabinet papers; Community Hub - supporting the needs of the most vulnerable in point 87 dated 8<sup>th</sup> September and Southwark Community Support Alliance Update point 27 dated 20<sup>th</sup> October that funding will be allocated to the VCS food hubs to support with the COVID-19 pandemic response.
16. For the proposed grant funding for October 2020 – March 2021 Officers met with each food hub and food bank to discuss the funding requirements, current demands, future plans and how the food parcels could be incorporated in the grant funding instead, rather than Southwark Council officers purchasing and organising the food parcels to be delivered to each food hub. Research was also conducted to check that there was no duplication with other grants programmes. They also cross referenced with the Neighbourhoods Fund or Cleaner Greener Safer Fund to ensure there would be no duplication of funding with these schemes.
17. The following criteria below was devised to support with the funding decisions on the amounts for each hub and bank. This was made of the following areas:
  - Previous funding received,
  - Number of emergency food parcels receiving per month
  - Number of people they're providing food to
  - Whether they're providing emergency food provisions
  - Providing deliveries
  - Number of referrals come via the Community Hub
  - Usage of the food criteria and airtable
  - Works and supports other hubs.
  - Receives Fareshare provisions

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/health-and-wellbeing-in-southwark-jsna>

18. Based on this criteria, scoring was awarded between 1 – 3 points per section, providing a total of 27 points and it is a proposed a total of £152,500 is awarded in grant funding and a further £47,232 in lieu of food provision based on 50% of current food parcel numbers.

<b>Community Hub: Proposed Grants for October 2020 - March 2021</b>		
Funding proposed for the 6 months (October 2020 - March 2021)	Funding in lieu of Food Parcel provision from December to March	Total Proposed Funding awarded
£152,500	£47,232	£199,732

19. The funding allocations for the period April – September totalled £291,200 and enabled five new food hubs to establish themselves and their services. In addition to this grant funding, each food hub and food bank have been receiving food parcels, costing approximately £150,000 for the same time period, giving a total spend of £441,200. This excludes provisions of additional food supplies and toiletries purchased (and provided to other smaller food banks) during the first lockdown. In comparison for the following six months, the total cost of the proposed grants for October to March (£199,732) and the food already supplied for October and November totals £246,964 a cost reduction of £194,236.
20. The eight food hubs and one food bank have established their services and food provisions, and are currently providing food to over 5,200 resident's per week.
21. Now with the second national lockdown, expecting to last for a four-week period, the food hubs and food bank need to be supported, to enable those that are on Clinically Extremely Vulnerable List that currently stands at 10,820 residents. All of whom have had letters from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to inform them to self-isolate. The Community hub contact team are intending to call all those on this list. We are projecting that over 20% of these residents may require support with food.
22. The proposed funding is shared more equally amongst the food hubs and food bank. Enabling St Matthew's church to receive grant funding this time around, for the six month period compared to no funding in the first lockdown. They are currently providing food and support to a large Latin American community of over 300 families.

### **Monitoring, outcomes and impact**

23. With each Food hub and food bank they will be required to provide the following data each month:
- A summary description of the Funded Activities provided, such as the number of deliveries and food provisions

- Summary information regarding the numbers, both individuals, families and number of households including the types of users that they are serving and providing too
- Summary information regarding the full costs of providing the Funded Activities
- Evidence of the benefits users gain from the Funded Activities, such as case studies or onward support and signposting
- A summary of any problems or issues that they have come across in delivering the Funded Activities

## **Policy implications**

24. The recommended funding is to principally ensure that the eight food hubs and one food bank are supported through to the end of March 2021. Which will allow the Community Support Alliance to build upon the successes and the partnerships built with the food hubs and food bank to provide social support that delivers long-term reductions in inequality.

## **Community impact statement**

25. COVID-19 continues to impact residents and partners across the borough. As has been previously noted by cabinet the issues raised demonstrate, the full impact of COVID-19 on the borough cannot yet be known. This will become clearer in the months ahead. Some impacts may not be clear for some years.
26. The disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable people and in particular on BAME groups. One such area of inequality is access to food. The Southwark Community Support Alliance is working closely with the Southwark Food Alliance to take forward a programme of work that responds to food insecurity that has been further exposed by COVID-19.
27. The wider social, environmental and economic impact on residents and the borough are significant. In considering, planning ahead for and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on our borough the council, working with partners, will undertake the necessary work to more fully understand any specific implications on a particular group or groups of individuals in our community.
28. The Public Sector Equality Duty will be taken into account as we deliver services and respond to the continuing impact of COVID-19 on our borough as well as plan any changes to policy and operations arising from that impact. This will include more detailed identification of any vulnerable groups and individuals who may be in particular need of targeted support through the ongoing community support alliance.
29. There is an agreed food criteria and pathway for those in need and accessing food via the central community hub and the food hubs and food bank. This will be done via the usage of airtable. We are also insisting that all food hubs and food bank collect data and report on those accessing

their services, from those requiring food as stated in point 21. This will be shared with Community Hub officers on a monthly basis, to enable officers to review and analyse the impact that these grants are having on food poverty.

### **Resource and Financial implications**

30. The estimated cost to the council in the October Cabinet paper for the work on the Community Hub was £1.45m (without another lockdown). To date, £1.05m has been spent and these grants are in line with the original estimate to March of £1.45m despite another lockdown.
31. This continues to be a call on the emergency funding from central government. It should be noted that funding of £158,000 has been allocated to Southwark to help protect Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals for the current four week lockdown. Although this funding has yet to be allocated, it will help reduce the financial burden on the council.

### **Consultation**

32. The review of the community hub has involved extensive consultation with partners in the VCS and health sectors and with residents impacted by Covid-19. It has also involved consultation with officers across the council. Moving forward co-design with partners and residents is a key principle of the approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable residents

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Director of Law and Democracy**

33. The Localism Act 2011 gives councils a general power of competence with power to do anything that individuals generally may do. The establishment and ongoing development of the Community Hub as described in this paper is an exercise of those powers.
34. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in making this decision the Cabinet must comply with its public sector equality duty which requires it to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
35. The community impact statement set out in the report identifies relevant matters to be taken into account in discharging that duty and confirms that there will be ongoing consideration of this duty in the continued operation of the Community Hub.

36. The ongoing development of the community hub is an executive function reserved to Cabinet that includes the “approval of policy and procedures governing the Council’s relationship with the voluntary sector”.
37. Officers from legal services will be available to provide advice and assistance in the development of the various strands identified in the report including on data sharing and governance issues.

**Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (H&M020/102)**

38. This report sets out the further grant funding of the eight food hubs and one food bank and replaces the food parcel provision currently supplied with funding.
39. As noted within the resource implications, the estimated cost of the Community hub continues to be £1.45m to the end of March 2021. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance in consultation with the Cabinet member for Finance and Resources will determine the most appropriate allocation of Covid-19 emergency funding to council priorities.
40. Notwithstanding the government funding that has been made available to the council to mitigate the exceptional costs arising from Covid-19, it will be insufficient to meet the full financial impact on the council.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet paper 20 <sup>th</sup> October: Southwark Community Support Alliance Update	Communities Division, Environment & Leisure 160 Tooley Street	Stephen Douglass 0207 525 0886
<a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&amp;MId=6663&amp;Ver=4">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&amp;MId=6663&amp;Ver=4</a>		
Cabinet paper 8 <sup>th</sup> September: Community Hub - supporting the needs of the most vulnerable	Communities Division, Environment & Leisure 160 Tooley Street	Stephen Douglass 0207 525 0886
<a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&amp;MId=6662&amp;Ver=4">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&amp;MId=6662&amp;Ver=4</a>		
Papers of the review working group	Communities Division, Environment & Leisure 160 Tooley Street	Stephen Douglass 0207 525 0886
<a href="https://www.communitysouthwark.org/southwark-community-hub-one-stop-support-during-the-covid-19-coronavirus-crisis">https://www.communitysouthwark.org/southwark-community-hub-one-stop-support-during-the-covid-19-coronavirus-crisis</a>		
Fairer Southwark Food Plan	Communities Division, Environment & Leisure 160 Tooley Street	Stephen Douglass 0207 525 0886
<a href="https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/for-professionals?chapter=4">https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/for-professionals?chapter=4</a>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	



## AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities		
Report Author	Daniel Hooper, Community Hub Project Manager Isabelle Pearce, Community Hub Project Manager		
Version	Final		
Dated	24 November 2020		
Key Decision?	Yes		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy		Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance		Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member		Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			26 November 2020