



## Report to Policy Committee

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**Report of:** *Director of Public Health and Integrated Commissioning*

**Report to:** *Finance Committee*

**Date of Decision:** *13<sup>th</sup> June 2023*

**Subject:** *Sustainable Food Provision*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 2118				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i>				

### Purpose of Report:

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority are making £150,000 available to Sheffield City Council with the requirement that it must be spent directly on sustainable food provision.

It is proposed that the SYMCA funding is used to accelerate the implementation of the Food Access Plan. Specifically, it will be used to develop sustainable local food sourcing infrastructure by

1. Investing in S6 food bank to give them capacity to purchase food at scale on behalf of other food banks and food initiatives in the city. This will benefit the food projects who take part by reducing the cost of the food they require and reducing the time they must spend sourcing food. In turn this will increase the resilience of the emergency food relief system.

- Investing in Food Works to enable them to scale up their surplus food sourcing and develop a pantry model. Food Works pantries will be rolled out in multiple locations across the city in partnership with community organisations. This will increase the number of people in our most disadvantaged communities that are able to access affordable nutritious food.

### Recommendations:

That Finance Committee agrees the proposed funding allocations set out in paragraph 1.16 of this report.

### Background Papers:

[Food Access Plan decision](#)

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Anna Beeby</i>
		Legal: <i>Rahana Khalid</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>Ed Sexton</i>
		Climate: <i>Kathryn Warrington</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>	<i>Greg Fell</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>	<i>Zahira Naz</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Jessica Wilson</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Health Improvement Principal</i>
	<b>Date:</b> 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2023	

## 1. PROPOSAL

### 1.1 Issue

1.2 South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority are making £150,000 available to Sheffield City Council with the requirement that it must be spent directly on sustainable food provision. This reports sets out proposals for how that funding will be allocated

### 1.3 Context

1.4 There are a variety of organisations, such as food banks, food pantries and social eating spaces that provide access to food for those in financial hardship [Sheffield Food Provision Map - Voluntary Action Sheffield \(vas.org.uk\)](https://www.vas.org.uk)

1.5 In recent months food banks and projects have been struggling to access sufficient food to meet demand. The following factors are contributing to this:

1.5.1 There are numerous food banks and projects all sourcing their own food, this leads to duplication of effort and in some cases competition for the same food supply. Smaller food banks may need to buy food from multiple suppliers and transport food from multiple places in order to access the food they need

1.5.2 Many large supermarket chains have now formed exclusive agreements with Trussell Trust meaning that only Trussell Trust food banks have access to food donated by customers at these supermarkets. This has made it difficult for independent food banks and projects that provide food but are not a “food bank” to access sufficient donated food to meet demand.

1.5.3 Bulk buying can bring discounts but individual food banks are not purchasing at great enough scale to unlock these, many lack the funds, and/or storage space to buy at scale

1.5.4 Food banks often supplement the food they buy or have donated to them with surplus food from organisations such as FareShare or through relationships they have with local food businesses. The quantity of surplus food available through these sources is declining and there is competition for it. It can also take time to collect and process food of this nature

1.6 Sheffield City Council approved a Food Access Plan in July 2022 that set out how the council will:

1.6.1 Ensure food is available to those in acute financial crisis

- 1.6.2 Respond to the underlying causes of food poverty
- 1.6.3 Enable the development of a diverse range of community food support
- 1.7 The challenges described in 1.4 and 1.5 are slowing the rate of progress. The difficulties food banks face when sourcing food means that there is a risk of there being insufficient food support for those in crisis. A council funded food store has been established at S6 food bank and can be accessed by all food banks. This has been welcomed by food banks but is not financially sustainable in the long term.
- 1.8 The lack of readily accessible surplus food places strain on food banks and also means that it is difficult to establish other forms of food support such as affordable food clubs (sometimes called community pantries) as the model is reliant on surplus food in order to ensure financial sustainability/
- 1.9 **Proposed approach**
- 1.10 It is proposed that the SYMCA funding for sustainable food supply is used to develop 2 initiatives. The focus is on developing local infrastructure, capacity and capability for the benefit of all food projects within Sheffield. This will improve the resilience of emergency food relief provision.
- 1.11 **Collaborative purchasing:** S6 Food Bank is the largest in the city and bulk purchases food very effectively due to their knowledge of food logistics and top their warehousing and transportation infrastructure. S6 has purchased and distributed food on behalf of other food banks since Oct 2022 using funds donated by the council via the Food Access Plan. S6 are willing to purchase food on behalf of other food projects. This would work by a food bank placing their food order via S6 rather than with a supermarket. S6 food bank are open to taking on this responsibility but will require some infrastructure costs to be met to allow them to scale up their operations accordingly. Food banks give out food for free to those in financial hardship and thus are not competing on the market.
- 1.12 **Food Works pantries:** A community organisation that wants to develop an affordable food club, community pantry or social eating initiative will generally require access to surplus food in order to make this a financially sustainable operation. Food Works are the only organisation in Sheffield that intercept and redistribute surplus food at scale and specific expertise and infrastructure are required in order to do this. The food intercepted by Food Works is currently made available at low cost in their food store in Handsworth, in their cafes and via their frozen “Just Meals” that are sold on a pay what you can basis (min £1) at partner hub locations across the city. Food Works intercept and redistribute surplus food. This is food that for various reasons is not able to be sold through the usual retail route therefore Food Works are not a competition to the

market.

- 1.13 Food Works will scale up their food sourcing operation in order to establish affordable food clubs/pantries in partnership with local community organisations in multiple locations (estimated 6 locations initially, prioritising areas where there are high levels of poverty). The model can be developed collaboratively with community partners to ensure it meets the need of community partners and the people they serve.
- 1.14 **Collaborative food sourcing model:** Our long term vision is for a high level of collaboration resulting in shared infrastructure such as software, transportation and warehousing. Ultimately this would enable any community organisation wishing to deliver food based activities to have a reliable, environmentally sustainable and cost effective source of food.
- 1.15 Although 2 separate initiatives Food Works and S6 will collaborate at a strategic level to allow food projects to receive both purchased and surplus food as required and to increase efficiency by sharing distribution networks and other capabilities where possible. This will create structures and processes that have the potential to become integrated as the projects develops further.
- 1.16 Funding will be allocated as follows:

Activity	Organisation	Allocation
Development of food purchasing infrastructure and capacity on behalf of food banks and food providers in the city	S6 Food Bank	Up to £48,000
Development of surplus food sourcing capacity and infrastructure. Development of Food Works pantry model in collaboration with community partners and implementation initially in 6 locations across the city	Food Works	£102,000

- 1.17 Exact funding split between S6 Food Bank and Food Works may vary depending on exact requirements as the project develops. Funding allocation to S6 is based on volumes of food accessed by food banks via the council funded food store than has been in place since Oct 2022. Work is underway to understand the number of food banks this wish to

participate in collaborative food purchasing and their exact requirements. The figure of £48k is therefore likely to be the maximum required. Should the funding requirement be lower any underspend will be added to the Food Works allocation and will increase the speed and scale of the establishment of new food markets.

- 1.18 S6 and Food Works may also seek to bring in match funding in order to increase the speed and scale of the work. Some of the funding allocated to Food Works may be passed on to community providers if required to enable them to implement a Food Works pantry for their community.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

- 2.1 The Food Access Plan forms part of the Cost of Living crisis response. Using this additional funding to accelerate it's implementation will help those experiencing financial hardship and will meet public health objectives such as improving access to affordable nutritious food.
- 2.2 The initiative will have a positive impact on climate change by reducing the amount of food waste going to landfill. Food Works and S6 Food Bank will also develop shared distribution networks to improve efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. Food Works use electric vehicles.
- 2.3 Additional pantries will be located in areas with high levels of poverty and Food Works will proactively seek to work with community partners who represent seldom heard groups to help ensure the model that is developed is inclusive and accessible.

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 There has been consultation with food relief initiatives in the city on the most appropriate use of these additional funds via the Food Ladders Network and Food Bank Network. These proposals were developed via a collaborative process and in response to the challenges being reported to us by food projects:
- 3.1.1 sustained high levels of need for food banks
  - 3.1.2 increasing challenges with food purchasing and bureaucratic burden
  - 3.1.3 reduced availability of surplus food and logistical difficulties encountered when accessing this
- 3.2 The proposed initiatives are intended to respond to these challenges in a way that creates infrastructure for the long term. This is important from a financial perspective, sustainable food supply is also a requirement of the SYMCA funding.

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **4.1 Equality Implications**

4.1.1 These initiatives will positively impact those experiencing poverty and financial hardship. Financial hardship is more prevalent in marginalised groups including minority ethnic communities, refugees and asylum seekers, those living with physical or learning disability, households with dependant children, carers and the elderly.

4.1.2 Initiatives will need to develop in a way that can respond to the unique needs of the groups and individuals experiencing poverty. Where community pantries are established, these will be done so in collaboration with community partner organisations. We will encourage food works to consider working with organisations that represent marginalised communities in addition to locating provision based on area deprivation.

4.1.3 An Initial Impact Assessment has been undertaken to inform the request to approve receipt of the funding. As and when approval is granted, this will be developed into a Full Impact Assessment to help identify ways to maximise the reach of the scheme to different groups of people.

### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

4.2.1 South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority are making £150,000 available to Sheffield City Council with the requirement that it must be spent directly on sustainable food provision. This is a one-off contribution. There are no claw-back provisions. There is no time limit set regarding when the funding must be fully spent and therefore Sheffield City Council are able to carry this funding forward into subsequent financial years if required.

4.2.2 Funding will be distributed via one-off grants going out to the 2 providers with no expectation of further funding. Grants will be made in up to 4 instalments over the course of 12 months. The 2 recipients will be required to submit quarterly progress reports against agreed objectives before each funding instalment is released and will participate in regular collaborative food sourcing project meetings.

4.2.3 The subsidy control regime test has been applied to each of the projects being funded. Neither is likely to be considered a subsidy.

### **4.3 Legal Implications**

4.3.1 The limited requirements of the grant are set out in section 4.2 of this report and there is no formal grant terms and conditions being entered by the Council with South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. There are no claw-back provisions and provided the Council directly spends the full

grant on sustainable food provisions there are no other outputs or milestones to be met.

- 4.3.2 The subsidy control regime test has been applied to both the proposed grants set out in section 1.9 of this report (in respect of the two recipients) and neither is likely to be considered a subsidy based on the information provided in the report.

#### 4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 An initial Climate Impact Assessment of this decision has been undertaken, which considered the following positive impacts;
- 4.4.2 Transport – as Food Works and S6 Food Bank will also develop shared distribution networks, there will be a reduction in mileage and carbon emissions. Food Works use electric vehicles and this funding will also support the investment into an additional electric van.
- 4.4.3 Economy – this direct investment into Food Works will help to further their work on actively reducing the carbon impact of the food system
- 4.4.4 Resource Use – this initiative will enable more efficient food purchasing and distribution by food banks, leading to fewer deliveries and journeys made
- 4.4.5 Waste – this project will reduce the amount of food waste that ends up being disposed of and help reduce food related social injustice
- 4.4.6 Influence – this project presents increased opportunities to raise awareness of the climate impacts of the food system and highlight food injustices

### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 Provide funding to The Bread and Butter Thing to implement 5 mobile pantries across Sheffield. Whilst it was noted that the initiative has many positive attributes and would bring benefits to communities it was felt that investing in local infrastructure and developing models of support that respond to the needs of local food relief initiatives would bring greater long term benefit.
- 5.2 Continue the emergency food store that is currently being hosted by S6 food bank on behalf of Sheffield City Council. This would not meet the SYMCA requirement for the development of sustainable food provision as it would mean purchasing food on a one off basis rather than investing in capability and infrastructure.

Divide the funding amongst existing food banks This would not meet the SYMCA requirement for the development of sustainable food provision



as would likely be utilised for food and ongoing running costs. There will be other grants schemes in the near future that could be used in this way and we will ensure food banks are supported to submit applications.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Supporting food purchasing in bulk will build the resilience of the emergency food system in Sheffield saving food banks time and money.
- 6.2 The expansion of Food Works pantries allows us to deliver on the commitments of the Food Access Plan to stimulate a more diverse range of food provision and support. Delivery of food pantries via Food Works rather than a national operator means that we are investing in local infrastructure and resilience. It also means that the model can be developed responsively and collaboratively, taking into account the needs of the community partner organisations who will host the pantries.

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