



<b>Subject:</b>	Social Supermarket Fund - Update
<b>Date:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	David Sales, Director Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager, CNS Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer, CNS

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
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1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the operation of the Social Supermarket Fund and seek members approval to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 24/25 as outlined in the report.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	Members are asked to note the contents of the report and to grant approval to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 24/25 as outlined in the report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Overview</u> <b>Background</b></p> <p>In September 23, Council approved the approach to allocate Social Supermarket funding for 23/24. During discussions, elected members expressed a desire that going forward, this funding programme should be administered through an open call. Officers in City &amp; Neighbourhood Services have since engaged with the Central Grants Unit (CGU) in Place &amp; Economy who have advised that an open call process for 24/25 can be facilitated.</p>
3.2	For council to operate an open call for 24/25, the application period would run from early December 2023 until end of January 24 and applications would be open to any constituted group delivering eligible projects. CGU support would ensure that applications are administered within a recognised independent process that allows for separation of duties between project delivery and administration staff.
3.3	Members will be aware that Social Supermarket Funding is provided 100% by Department for Communities (DfC) through the Community Support Programme Letter of Offer. The availability of funds for 24/25 is dependent upon the allocation received from DfC.
3.4	The operation of an open call process requires a lead in period of approximately 4 months and in order to ensure readiness, council would need to operate the call in advance of confirmation of the level of funding in 24/25 from DfC. If an open call was not agreed until confirmation of funding levels was received, it would not allow for the practical delivery of activity. Members will note that in 23/24, the funding for social supermarkets was not confirmed by DfC until in July 23. Had an open call process been implemented only on confirmation of funding, support would not have been available to organisations until January 24.
3.5	DfC officials have advised that Social Supermarket funding is delivered through a ringfenced welfare reform mitigations budget which is agreed in principle until March 25 and that it is likely that the starting budgetary position would be the same as 23/24, ie; approximately £415,000 for Belfast City Council. In the unlikely event that no funding is made available from DfC, Council will be under no obligation to make awards to organisations who have applied.
3.6	<p>It is suggested that the following parameters for an open call be applied;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible projects will be those that can demonstrate that they provide food/food support to individuals impacted by poverty and provide wraparound support through their own services and/or a referral network</li> </ul>

<p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery time frame will be 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025</li> <li>• Maximum level of award will be £50,000. (This is the maximum level of award available through the capacity grant, which is the largest Community Provision grant and is a reasonable limit given the likely level of Social Supermarket funding from DfC in 24/25 will be approximately £415,000.)</li> <li>• Allocation of funding to projects will be based on a quality score.</li> </ul> <p>If the maximum award is agreed as £50,000, this is above the threshold for delegated authority and a full list of applications, scores and suggested allocations will have to be brought to members in March 24 for their consideration and approval.</p> <p><b>Support for new projects 23/24</b></p> <p>An element of 23/24 funding (10%) was directed towards the development of new projects. The closing date for receipt of these applications was 24<sup>th</sup> October 23. By this date, officers had received the following requests for support; Hanwood Trust, Upper Springfield Development Trust and People’s Kitchen Belfast. Greater Shankill Community Council will take on the funding allocated to Greater Shankill Partnership who are unable to deliver the project this year.</p> <p>Officers have reviewed the detail provided in these applications and are content that they meet the objectives of the programme and provide value for money. Members had agreed that these allocations would be approved under delegated authority and Letters of Offer will have been issued by the time of the Committee meeting.</p> <p>At the SP&amp;R meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October, members recommended that £150,000 of Hardship Funding be made available to support social supermarkets. Officers will contact all organisations who have received an allocation for 23/24 and make a pro rata allocation of the additional funds, dependent on the organisations’ ability to spend by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>All resources required to support the 23/24 approach are currently in place. No funding for 24/25 has yet been confirmed by the Department for Communities as the Social Supermarket Fund is 100% funded by DfC. However, DfC officials have indicated that the budget is likely to be in the region of the 23/24 budget of £414,000.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None identified at present. Equality Screening of the 24/25 grant application process will be completed.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p><b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b></p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>N/A</p>