



Subject:	Social Supermarket Fund 25/26
Date:	10 th September 24
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan , Director Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	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?

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

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek members approval to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 25/26 as outlined in the report.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are asked to consider the contents of the report and to grant approval to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 25/26 as outlined in the report.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>In response to recommendations in the Welfare Reform Mitigations report, the Department for Communities (DfC) has operated a Social Supermarket Pilot programme since October 2017. Funding was made available through the Community Support Programme (CSP) in 20/21 to expand the concept to all council areas.</p> <p>The aim of a social supermarket is to offer a sustainable response to food insecurity by seeking to help address the root causes of poverty rather than simply provide food. This is achieved by providing, in addition to food support, a referral network for wraparound support. Food supply should ideally come from donations, surplus, or purchased at a discount, however, funding can also be used towards the purchase of food vouchers.</p>
3.2	<p>In the years 21-24, Council worked with identified partners to develop models for delivery. Committee granted approval on 9 November 2023 to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 2024/25.</p>
3.3	<p>Members were advised at this point that because activity is 100% funded by DfC, there was a risk that funding to support successful applications might not be in place from April 24. However, on balance, it was agreed that it was preferable to undertake the application process so that funding could be issued as soon as it became available from the department.</p>
3.4	<p>Members agreed that funding of up to £50,000 would be available for each individual project; this in line with other large grant funding programmes. The Social Supermarket Support Fund was opened on 5 December 2023 and received 28 applications totalling £946,619.70 by the closing date of 12 noon on Friday 26 January 2024.</p>
3.5	<p>In the absence of a Letter of Offer from DfC to fund this area of work, in April 24 SP&R agreed to provide £122,627 to fund 21 Social Supermarket Projects. This allocation was made from the 24/25 Hardship Programme.</p>
3.6	<p>Council received the CSP 2024/25 Letter of Offer from DfC on 3 July 2024. It contained an allocation of £672,650, an increase of £253,906 on the 23/24 allocation. SP&R agreed to make an additional contribution to provide a total budget of £785,744 to support 21 projects.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the 25/26 Social Supermarket fund would operate on the same parameters as in 24/25 for delivery between 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026. These are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications would be open to any constituted group delivering eligible projects.

<p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Maximum level of award will be £50,000. (This is the maximum level of award that was available in 24/15 and is a reasonable limit given that the level of Social Supermarket funding from DfC in 24/25 was £672,650.) • Allocation of funding to projects will be based on a quality score. <p>Open calls for grant funding are administered through the Council’s Central Grants Unit in Place & Economy. In order to ensure that Funding Agreements can be issued to successful applicants from April 25, approval for successful applicants has to be brought to committee in January/February 25. In order to ensure sufficient time for applications to be made, eligibility checked and assessed, it is recommended that applications open from mid October – end November. 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.</p> <p>At the time of writing, there is no confirmation of a budget from DfC for the Social Supermarket Fund in 25/26. Social Supermarket funding is delivered through a ringfenced welfare reform mitigations budget which is agreed in principle until March 25, there is no confirmation at present beyond that date. Officers have sought an updated position from DfC but no further information has been provided at this stage. In 23/24 and 24/25 an element of funds was drawn from Belfast City Council Hardship Funding but again, there is no confirmed budget for this in 25/26.</p> <p>Members should note that in the event that no funding is made available from DfC, Council will be under no obligation to make awards to organisations who have applied, although this would have to be balanced against the work required from applicants to make applications.</p> <p>Members should also consider that if an open call was not agreed until confirmation of funding levels was received, it would not allow for the practical delivery of activity in 25/26. In 23/24 and 24/25 the funding for social supermarkets was not confirmed by DFC until July. Had an open call process been implemented only on confirmation of funding, support would not have been available to organisations until February.</p> <p>Members are asked to consider the issues listed above and if content, approve that council operates an open call for applications for the Social Supermarket Fund in 25/26.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> All human resources required to support the 25/26 approach are currently in place. No funding for 25/26 is yet in place.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None identified at present. Equality Screening of the 25/26 grant application process will be completed.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices - Documents Attached</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>N/A</p>

