

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2451

Title: Easter 2020 Food Drop

Executive Summary:

As part of the COVID-19 emergency response, on 9 and 10 April 2020, the GLA (working in partnership with the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) and Red Cross) organised an emergency food drop to 31 foodbanks across nine London boroughs. These foodbanks were reporting critical food shortages. This meant that some of the most vulnerable Londoners were at risk of not having enough food over the Easter period and following week.

This is a retrospective spend request for £39,350 to cover the total cost of this emergency food drop. City Bridge Trust will provide 50 per cent match funding (£19,675) which will be claimed subsequently.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Communities and Social Policy approves:

1. Retrospective spend of £39,350 to cover the costs of the emergency food drop over Easter 2020.
2. Receipt of £19,675 from City Bridge Trust to cover 50 per cent of the total cost.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

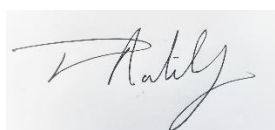
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Tom Rahilly

Position: Assistant Director – CSP

Signature:



Date:

17 June 2020

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. A Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) Food Sub-Group was established on 4 April 2020 in order to take action on food insecurity in London during the COVID-19 crisis. The group has overseen the establishment of Local Authority Community Hubs to support those needing help to access food during the COVID-19 crisis. There is now at least one Community Hub established in all 32 boroughs and the City of London.
- 1.2. There has been a huge increase in demand for food aid due to the COVID-19 crisis. At the same time, many foodbanks have experienced difficulties in securing supplies, particularly in the early weeks of lockdown. Foodbanks also reported a drop in volunteers and support, as well as difficulty in securing non-perishable items and securing online deliveries.
- 1.3. Intelligence was received by the GLA via the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) on 8 April 2020 that foodbanks in six London boroughs were facing critical shortages of food during the COVID-19 crisis. The SCG directed the GLA to ensure that these foodbanks received the supplies they needed before Easter.
- 1.4. Further investigation by the GLA and partners identified 31 foodbanks across nine London boroughs facing critical shortages. Foodbanks reported that many items were expected to run out by 13 April and others by 17 April. There was a significant risk that due to these shortages, some of the most vulnerable Londoners would not be able to access the food they needed over the Easter weekend and the following week.
- 1.5. The GLA identified the critical items needed by the foodbanks. As part of the COVID-19 emergency response the GLA and SCG then worked with the Red Cross who purchased the items directly from a supermarket and distributed them on 9 and 10 April to 31 foodbanks in nine London boroughs.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The overall objective of the emergency food drop was to ensure that the 31 foodbanks reporting critical shortages during the COVID-19 crisis were supplied with enough food to cover their needs over the Easter period.
- 2.2. The outcome was that vulnerable Londoners relying on the 31 foodbanks at this time were able to access enough food to meet their needs over the Easter period. This was part of the GLA's emergency response to COVID-19.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the Mayor of London must have 'due regard' of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. Chapter 5 of Inclusive London references food poverty. The action for which approval is being retrospectively sought will contribute to the delivery of objective 33 (relating to understanding and tackling health inequalities).
- 3.3. During April 2020 research by the Food Foundation reported that certain groups are being disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and its impact on food insecurity, including those on no- or low-income, disabled Londoners, older Londoners, adults with children, rough sleepers and

asylum seekers and migrants with no recourse for public funds, as well as those who may have particular cultural food requirements.

- 3.4. Supplying food to those foodbanks reporting critical shortages over the Easter period contributed to ensuring all Londoners experiencing food insecurity and access issues during the COVID-19 crisis were able to obtain the food they needed at this time.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1. As the intelligence was received at very short notice before the Easter weekend, there was no alternative option other than direct purchase of food and an emergency drop to the foodbanks.
- 4.2. The arrangements needed to be put in place within a day given the critical shortages food banks were experiencing. All of the major supermarkets were approached for support; however, Tesco was the only one who was able to respond in time, in part because of an existing corporate relationship with the Red Cross.
- 4.3. As highlighted above, at that time foodbanks were having difficulties securing additional supplies and are experiencing a drop in donations. It was not possible to secure additional supplies through donations at such short notice.
- 4.4. Doing nothing risked Londoners who were reliant on foodbanks during the COVID-19 crisis not being able to access the food they needed over the Easter weekend and following week.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.5. Food insecurity was identified as a priority issues for the SCG hence the Food Sub Group being established as part of the response to COVID-19. The SCG directed the GLA to carry out the emergency food drop which was part of the GLA's emergency response to COVID-19.
- 4.6. The London Food Strategy aims to ensure all Londoners have access healthy, affordable food regardless of where they live, their personal circumstances or income and specifically addresses food insecurity.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is being sought for expenditure of £39,350 to cover the total cost of this emergency food drop.
- 5.2. Approval is also being sought for income receipt of £19,675 from City Bridge Trust to cover 50 per cent.
- 5.3. The remaining expenditure will be funded from the 2020-21 Communities and Skills Minor programme budget.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Purchase of food to be delivered to 31 food banks across 6 London boroughs	11 April 2020
Delivery of food by the Red Cross to 31 food banks facing critical shortages	13 April 2020

Appendices and supporting papers:

None.

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form –NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Lisa Bennett has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 8 June 2020.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature



Date

15 June 2020