



Subject:	Social Supermarket Fund 24/25
Date:	9 th April 2024
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer Community Provision

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"/>

Is this report eligible for call in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise members on the outcome of the recent open call for applications to the Social Supermarket Fund. Members are asked to note; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome of the recent open call process for 24/25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there is no current budget available to support applications to the Social Supermarket Fund as this is funded 100% from the Department for Communities. • Grant delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to issue Letters of Offer on the basis of quality scores as budget becomes available through the Community Support Programme or other sources. • Note that a paper on the outcome of the open call process 24/25 will also be provided to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee so that it can be considered by the Cost Of Living working group should any underspends/ additional funding for the Hardship Programme be identified in year.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>It is recommended that Committee;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the outcome of the recent open call process. • Note that there is no current budget available to support any applications as the Social Supermarket Fund is 100% funded by the Department for Communities. • Grant delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to issue Letters of Offer on the basis of quality scores as budget becomes available through the Community Support Programme or other sources. • Note that a paper on the outcome of the open call process 24/25 will also be provided to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee so that it can be considered by the Cost Of Living working group should any underspends/ additional funding for Hardship programme be identified in year.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	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. Following positive evaluation of the Social Supermarket Pilot Programme, funding was made available through the CSP in 20/21 to expand the concept to all council areas.
3.2	<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. The overriding aim should be to support and work towards holistic, flexible and sustainable social supermarket type approaches to food insecurity/food poverty addressing both the underlying cause and the immediate need. 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> <p>The key principles that models should take account of are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support ‘beyond food’, such as, access to wraparound support services which transition people out of food poverty and respect the dignity of clients. • Maximising existing structures, services, and partnerships to provide wraparound support.
3.3	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Previously, Council has worked with identified partners to develop models for delivery. The People and Communities Committee granted approval on 9 November 2023 to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 2024/25. Members were</p>

	<p>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.</p> <p>3.4 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. 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.</p> <p>3.5 The Social Supermarket Support Fund was opened on 5 December 2023 for applications and council launched a campaign to advertise and promote the fund. Advertisements were placed in local and regional newspapers and were also promoted across Belfast City Council website and social media. During December 2023 and January 2024, three online information sessions were held to advise potential applicants on the process. This was administered through the Central Grants Unit.</p> <p>3.6 The 2024/25 Social Supermarket Support Fund received 28 applications totalling £946,619.70 by the closing date of 12 noon on Friday 26 January 2024.</p> <p>When an application is submitted, the following process is followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt and log of applications • Eligibility check of applications (allowing a 5 day response for omitted information) • Prepare and supply applications that have met eligibility criteria to Unit Officers to score against agreed set criteria • Score each eligible application against the set criteria as outlined in the guidance notes • Moderate applications between scoring officers to ensure fairness and consistency in scoring • An independent assessment panel to review a sample of applications. The role of the independent assessment panel is 'to ensure that the scoring of applications has been undertaken in an appropriate fashion and to provide verification or validation of sampled applications and the overall process' (Williamson Consulting, 2012). <p>3.7 The independent assessment panels were satisfied with the scoring and application of the criteria for the grants and agreed to recommend the unit's recommendations for awards as shown in Appendix 1.</p> <p>3.8 Funding for Social Supermarkets is primarily drawn from the DfC Community Support Programme (CSP) Letter of Offer, which includes a 100% DfC funded funding stream for this work. At March committee, members were advised that council has not yet received a Letter of Offer for 24/25 and that Council does not have any budget to support activity that is 100% funded through the CSP. Council wrote to the Department at the end of February requesting an update but at the time of writing, no further information has been received.</p> <p>3.9 In order to enable payments to organisations as quickly as possible, members are asked to grant delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to issue Letters of Offer on the basis of quality scores as budget becomes available from CSP or other sources. If the budget from the DFC is released on a 25% basis, officers will calculate the 100% allocation and issue indicative Letters of Offer and 25% payment to those projects which can be funded through the indicative total allocation.</p>
--	--

3.10	<p>Social Supermarkets also received an allocation of £150,000 from the Hardship Programme in 23/24 through the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee. A paper advising of the outcome of the open call applications will be brought to April SP&R so that the potential to make an allocation for 24/25 can be considered by the Cost of Living Working group in the context of the Hardship Programme 24/25.</p>
3.11	<p>Members may wish to note that six organisations funded during 23/24 did not apply for the 24/25 funding, namely: Storehouse NI, Cara-Friend, The Parent Rooms, Greater Shankill Community Council, People’s Kitchen and Foodstock. Of the 21 organisations recommended for funding, four are working with communities in north Belfast, four in south, three in east and six in west as well as four organisations working with specific communities of interest across the city.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Financial implications</u></p> <p>Grants to the value of £785,744.70 are recommended should a budget be available. Current projections suggest that there will be available funding from DfC to fund the highest scoring 12/13 projects, which would require £460,508/£490,508.70.</p> <p>Council does not have a budget for this work at present, the 23/24 DfC award for Social Supermarket Fund was £418,744.00, this was an increase of £190,000 on the previous year (22/23).</p> <p>DfC have advised that they will include the balance of their funding to Footprints Women’s Centre (funded directly through the DfC pilot) in the CSP contract. This is likely to be in the region of £50,000, which will create a potential contribution from DfC of £468,744, although this is not confirmed.</p>
3.14	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The 24/25 Social Supermarket Fund open call has been screened for Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications.</p>
4.0	Appendices
4.1	Appendix 1: Application List, Scores & Recommended Awards