

## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Food Poverty
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the summer of 2018, we have been busy tackling food poverty and food insecurities in Flintshire. The food poverty strategy has been adopted by the Public Service Board and Flintshire are the regional lead and chair of North Wales Food Poverty Alliance.

This year has raised some significant challenges, however rather than constrain progress they have created opportunities and enabled us to make a positive impact and allowed us to bring some of our future ambitions for delivery and business transformation forward.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet note and welcome the progress made to tackling food poverty and food insecurity in Flintshire.
2	Support the ongoing work and the delivery plan for the next 12 months.
3	Support the development of a "Right to Food" policy for Flintshire.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE FOOD POVERTY WORK</b>
1.01	<p>Since the summer of 2018, we have been busy tackling food poverty and food insecurities in Flintshire. The food poverty strategy has been adopted by the Public Service Board and Flintshire are the regional lead and chair of North Wales Food Poverty Alliance.</p>
1.02	<p><b>School Holiday Support</b></p> <p>There have been two highly successful summer holiday “Share your Lunch” food programmes (2018 and 2019) each one has provided thousands of meals to children during these holiday periods. Following the success of these programmes and the obvious need for support when there is not a school meal available, additional programmes were further developed to meet this gap in provision for all of the school holidays.</p> <p>In February 2020, 180 hot meals to children and their families attending the Holway, Kicks for Kids play scheme were provided. This provided to be a great success and the feedback received was that the children and the families enjoyed attending the play scheme, having their lunch together and interacting as a community.</p> <p>In other school holidays we have delivered hundreds of meals directly to the door of some of our most vulnerable families.</p>
1.03	<p><b>Slow Cooker Programme</b></p> <p>In March 2020 a four week slow cooker programme was designed and planned to be delivered at two sites, one in Mold Town Centre and the other in Queensferry Primary School.</p> <p>The aim of the slow cooker pilot was to meet and work with the families, understand their relationship with food and any insecurities they may have around food.</p> <p>Each participant was provided with a slow cooker and two slow cooker food bags, complete with instructions on how to prepare and cook the food within the bags.</p> <p>Alongside the slow cooker and slow cooker bags, each participant is given a voucher which could then be used to choose and purchase from Well-Fed’s range of fresh products inclusive of individual meals or slow cooker bags.</p> <p>Each participant keeps the slow cooker they received to continue to cook with it using the skills they have developed during the programme to create new, fresh recipes for themselves and their families.</p>

	<p>Due to Covid-19 the slow cooker programmes have been suspended and will recommence when the current situation has improved..</p>
1.04	<p><b>Free School Meals – Alternative delivery</b></p> <p><u>Packed Lunch Delivery</u>  As schools across Flintshire closed 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 a team of officers from Flintshire and Newydd Catering and Cleaning worked together to deliver over 136,000 packed lunches over a 7 week period to the doorsteps of all pupils in receipt of free school meals.</p> <p>Taxi drivers who would usually drive the children to school, carried out the daily deliveries. The lunches were well received by children.</p> <p><u>Direct Payments</u>  On the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020, doorstep deliveries ended and Flintshire moved to a direct payment system whereby £19.50 per week, per child was paid direct into the parent’s bank account. The direct payment provided the means to purchase the food as an alternative to free school meals and to mitigate the risk to children and families whilst they are unable to attend school and receive a meal.</p> <p>Direct payments remained in place during the six weeks school holidays and into the first two weeks as the phased return to school ran from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020.</p> <p>During the Autumn Term once the children had returned to school full time there was a need to develop a system to mitigate the risk to families where a child was required to isolate from school. In order to meet this need, the direct payment process was adjusted to provide one payment of £39.00 per child (£19.50 per child per week) to cover the two week period of self-isolation. The criteria applied to this scheme is that the child had to be instructed to self-isolate for 14 days by Public Health Wales, Test Trace and Protect or by a Medical professional (ie. GP or specialist Dr)  As we moved into tighter restrictions the direct payment process has been reinstated for all the children entitled to Free School Meals and this will remain in place until schools re-open again.</p> <p>Since March 2020 when the schools closed initially we have seen a significant increase in the number of applications for free school meals. The direct payment scheme has been a resounding success and we have successfully achieved around a 90% take up rate for those eligible.</p>
1.05	<p><b>Shielding and vulnerable residents food support  14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 to 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020</b></p> <p>Due to the current pandemic, a number of our residents who were “medically vulnerable” were initially advised by the Welsh Government to shield themselves for 12 weeks, this was then extended for a further 6 weeks. Due to this residents were unable to leave their home to purchase food etc. and many did not have family or friends close by to help them out.</p>

	<p>The response to this was to provide emergency food support to those that were shielding by enhancing (adding to) the food parcel provided by the Welsh Government with fresh meals and provisions such as eggs, cheese, ham and butter. This support scheme was also delivered to other vulnerable households who were facing difficulties either accessing or affording food supplies.</p> <p>Over the 18 weeks shielding period a small team of staff and volunteers supported over 500 residents per week, providing over 46,000 meals. 27 volunteers delivered food parcels direct to residents each week. Volunteers came from Flintshire's Housing Services and Revenue services; ClwydAlyn Housing, 4X4 Mountain Rescue and local individual volunteers.</p>
1.06	<p><b>Shielding and vulnerable residents food support 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020</b></p> <p>As the Welsh Government shielding scheme was paused with effect from 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020, the emergency food support has also come to an end. Although residents who had been shielding were now able to leave their homes, FCC called all residents to ask them for their feedback on the meals Well-Fed had provided, what meals they enjoyed the most and whether they now had a plan in place for them to be able to purchase food.</p> <p>We identified 105 residents who still required our support as they felt apprehensive about going out to the shops and were struggling to purchase healthy food.</p> <p>To ensure the residents continued to eat well, from the feedback provided Well- Fed created their own free food boxes containing a five day fresh meal provision, individual nutritious meals, slow cooker bags and recipe cards along with the ingredients to give families the opportunity to cook a meal themselves and eat well together. The box also included fresh provisions such as milk, bread, eggs, cheese and dried produce, cereal, crisps, biscuits, tinned soup etc.</p> <p>Some of the residents may have also been receiving food donations from other charities to support them during this time. Unfortunately food donations are not always reliable or as healthy and they do not give the resident a choice as to what food they eat. The free Well-Fed food box gave the resident the choice of what meals they would like to be included in the box and they knew they were able to rely on the food box being delivered weekly direct to their door.</p> <p>We continued to use County Hall's bistro as the food distribution centre, the small food team and volunteers continued, picked, packed and prepared the boxes, local volunteers delivered the food boxes directly to the resident's homes each week on a Tuesday.</p> <p>Over the six weeks marketing campaign, the food team called each resident weekly to check they were enjoying the food box and what their thoughts were so any necessary changes could be made as we wanted</p>

	<p>the start to sell the food box at a reduced cost with effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020.</p>
1.07	<p><b>Well- Fed food box at a reduced cost - 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020</b></p> <p>Carrying out call backs over the last three weeks of the marketing campaign, we identified 30 residents were eager to continue to receive the Well-Fed food box and purchase it paying only 30% of the cost for another six week period.</p> <p>We took on board the feedback provided during the marketing campaign and have made any relevant adjustments, such as the inclusion of fresh fruit for the reduced cost box.</p> <p>The food team call the residents weekly to take their order, it is then paid for over the phone. We are continuing to use County Hall's bistro to pick, pack and prepare the food boxes and a volunteer is delivering direct to their door.</p> <p>The subsidy to fund the boxes was raised from applications to charitable trusts.</p>
1.08	<p><b>Christmas food boxes</b></p> <p>Elected Members were asked to provide nominations for residents in their Ward to receive Christmas dinner in a box.</p> <p>Christmas 2020 also provided an opportunity to work in collaboration with children's social services and Theatre Clwyd's shoes box donation campaign where over 150 gifts and 120 shoe boxes were donated.</p> <p>The Christmas dinner boxes (containing soup, Christmas dinner, pudding, cakes and selection boxes) were delivered as well as the gifts for the children to 126 Flintshire households on Christmas Eve.</p> <p>As well as providing Christmas dinner boxes to families/individuals, we also provided 96 Meals as well as gifts to 32 care leavers in Flintshire.</p> <p>We also received a donation of over 500 selection boxes which we were able to give to each member of the household.</p> <p>Volunteer drivers delivered the boxes around Flintshire.</p> <p>The costs of providing the Christmas boxes was covered via grant secured from charitable trusts.</p>
1.09	<p><b>Self-isolating and shielding residents</b></p> <p>On 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020 the Government announced the shielding programme was being reintroduced.</p>

	<p>As agencies such as The Food Banks where closed over the Christmas period, this highlighted a risk as the Test, Track and Protect team had nowhere to refer residents to if they were experiencing problems with food and have no friends/family close by to support them.</p> <p>Although at present Well-Fed do not provided emergency food support, we wanted to address this issue by creating healthier dried food boxes including staples such as cheese and eggs. The box also contained a recipe card to show the resident how to cook the meals.</p> <p>The boxes where stored in the Ewloe hub and accommodation support officers where available to carry out the door step delivery 24 hours on weekends/bank holidays and while ‘on-call’ during the Christmas week.</p> <p>This provided another level of food security to any Flintshire resident who required support with food if instructed to self-isolate over the Christmas period. This approach meant we were able to support households with a dried food meal box until they were able to get a supermarket delivery slot or a pre-order from ‘Well-Fed at Home’ food delivery post-Christmas.</p>
1.10	<p><b>Work Plan Research</b></p> <p>Over the past 10 months we have been able to obtain information with regards to Flintshire residents in relation to their food habits and particular challenges. This information is vital to inform our continued understanding of how best to respond to the dietary needs of households across the County.</p> <p>Throughout 2021, we are going to carry out further research as well as developing the service as we move through the winter months.</p>
1.11	<p><b>Well-Fed at Home: Meal box scheme – reimagining ‘Meals on Wheels’</b></p> <p>In 2019, The Good Food Flintshire Plan set out a route map to provide a good food service that could respond to the wider food requirements of the Flintshire community. An original aspiration was to reimagine how a ‘meals on wheels’ service could be introduced across the County the Well-Fed at Home meal box scheme is positive step in the right direction. The initial roll out of the scheme is described earlier in this report, detailing our response to COVID and those households who were shielding. The next steps, are to engage with a much wider public customer base – this will include a <i>meal ordering app</i> and a <i>meal ordering website</i>. Both the app and the website will be funded by grant secured from the Welsh Government ‘Circular Economy Fund’.</p> <p>The App: The app will assist all households to order meal boxes direct from Well-Fed to their homes. The app is being designed to be easy to use and available across all mobile platforms and will be ready for use in February 2021.</p>

	<p>The website: A Well-Fed at Home website is to be designed, ready for launch in March 2021. The website will allow all households who prefer this method of ordering to order home delivery meals using a secure website facility.</p> <p>We will continue to introduce methods of household engagement that will allow as many households as possible (rural and urban) to access the food they need. Our focus is to ensure Flintshire residents have the opportunity to purchase healthy, nutritious affordable food, giving them a choice of what meals they eat and also to be able to prepare and cook some meals.</p>
1.12	<p><b>Good Food Hubs – Emergency food support</b></p> <p>As noted earlier, we have created the emergency food support boxes containing a three-day meal provision which was made available over the Christmas period. For the remaining winter months, we want to be able to continue to provide this emergency support to residents across Flintshire whether they are experiencing food poverty, shielding or self-isolating. We are currently creating a process for this support to understand the logistics, storage space, resource, and vehicles required.</p> <p>We can purchase food in bulk as well as there being the possibility of matched food donations from suppliers. This route will enable us to respond to and feed hundreds of families during the winter months. The project will be called the ‘Good Food Hub’ so not to be confused with the provision of food banks.</p> <p>The aim of the above service development is, to slow down the issuing of Food Bank vouchers and provide a Well-Fed emergency food box to be delivered direct to the resident’s door instead. We believe this service is more aligned to people’s health and dignity.</p> <p>Once established, all Flintshire County Council departments will be made aware of this emergency food service and advised to direct any household in crisis to Well-Fed.</p> <p>Residents who receive an emergency food parcel will have the opportunity to purchase a Well-Fed at home food box as an affordable and sustainable food option, receiving weekly deliveries going forward. The Well-Fed at home food boxes are available at full price to those households who can afford and subsidised to those households struggling with their income. The subsidy will be provided for a limited period of time and to support each household to move on we will refer them to the Welfare Reform team and provide them with additional support.</p>
1.13	<p><b>Hospital to Home – Well-Fed safety box</b></p> <p>It has been recognised some patients discharged from hospital are going home to empty cupboards. In some instances nurses are purchasing food for them to take home with them.</p>

	<p>We are in the process of securing funding to be able to provide a Well-Fed Safety Box containing a three day meal provision plus essentials such as milk, bread and cheese to discharged patients who have no friends or family close by to help them to purchase food when they arrive back home.</p> <p>The food box will help them with their home recovery and enable them to eat well and reduce the risk of a hospital re-admission.</p>
1.14	<p><b>Future projects:</b></p> <p><b>Opening a shop</b></p> <p>Well-Fed's aim is to open a shop in a busy high street where we will be able to sell ready meals to all passing public. The shop would be set up as a healthier-faster-food outlet, allowing customers to purchase, warm and eat (on the premises) or take home meals of their choice.</p> <p>Part of the revenue generated from the meals purchased from the shop, will go back into the subsidy set aside to help feed vulnerable households.</p>
1.15	<p><b>Slow cooker pilots - reimagined</b></p> <p>Well-Fed are working on new ways to carry out a slow cooker programme over the winter months. We will provide a free slow cooker as well as meals while offering support to the resident during the programme, addressing their food insecurities and increase their confidence to be able to continue to cook meals themselves at home.</p>
1.16	<p><b>Free Fruit for High Schools</b></p> <p>It was identified pupils were using some of their free school meal allowance when they arrived at school to buy breakfast, meaning they did not have enough allowance left to buy a proper meal at lunchtime or they were arriving at school late and missing breakfast club due to taking the bus or because of a chaotic lifestyle.</p> <p>The free fruit initiative was piloted in one high school in April 2019, providing free fruit available to all students as a mid-morning snack, it was a great successes.</p> <p>We have secured funding to be able to roll this initiative out across all High Schools in Flintshire.</p> <p>Once schools have re-opened we will work with the Healthy Schools Coordinators to promote this initiative in their school.</p>
1.17	<p><b>Conference</b></p> <p>We are hoping to host a conference (Covid permitting) in late 2021. The conference will disseminate Flintshire's Good Food story and discuss our models and experiences so far.</p>

1.18	<p><b>Community capacity building - Next steps:</b></p> <p>The whole of the Well-Fed model is set within a community development model – our aim is to improve the service capacity offered across Flintshire and improve the capacity of every household to cope if in food crisis.</p> <p>We are establishing the necessary foundations to be able to reach all households who do or will need access to food and other support services and are designing services which will be able to reach households both during Covid restrictions and more so, once the Covid restrictions are lifted.</p> <p>We are also eager to expand the Well-Fed at Home box scheme, open the Good Food Hub, start Slow Cooker programmes/cookery classes and if possible, open the good-faster-food-store.</p> <p>We will continue to look for new funding streams to help establish these next steps and look to secure new partnership arrangements with entities from the community, public and private sectors who are able to support our aim to feed our community good food.</p>
1.19	<p><b>“A Right to Good Food”</b></p> <p>As part of our research into how our community can best be protected and how the diet and wellbeing of our residents can be supported in the longer term, we propose to look into the formation of a local 'Right to Good Food' policy.</p> <p>The right to food is not about charity, but about ensuring that all people have the capacity to feed themselves in dignity.</p> <p>The policy would follow that good food should be;</p> <p><b>Available</b> to all - Food should be available from natural sources such as local farms and local providers as far as this can be arranged. Availability also means local people being able to access good food wherever they choose to shop or in these times of food poverty, whenever they require food aid.</p> <p><b>Accessible</b> to all - Economic and physical access to good food to be prioritised. Economic accessibility means that food must be affordable to all. Physical accessibility means that food should be accessible to all, including the vulnerable, such as children, the sick, people with disabilities or the elderly. Access to good food must also be guaranteed to people in rural areas.</p> <p>In <b>Adequate</b> supply Food must satisfy the dietary needs of all age groups. Food safety should be of paramount importance and food is to be free adverse/artificial additives. Adequate food should also be culturally acceptable.</p>

	<p><b>Sustainable</b> when supplied to feed to all parts of our community. Local food systems should safeguard good food provision for both present and future generations and look to protect the local/natural environment.</p> <p>In developing the parameters any future policy, we would look to draw upon existing approaches both nationally and internationally and in doing so, incorporate all relevant local considerations and conditions as they apply.</p> <p>Flintshire would be the first Local Authority in Wales to develop and adopt such a policy of this nature.</p>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Funding Bids</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circular Economy Capital Fund (Welsh Government) – Grant value £300,000</li> </ul> <p>Well-Fed is a classic circular economy model as it is set up to recycle/re-purpose tons of farm produced vegetables into fresh nutritious meals. Circular economy models are favoured by Governments because they provide solutions to prominent waste problems – recycling/re-purposing food waste or surplus from farms is one such problem Governments want to tackle. Our circular model will take surplus vegetables directly from farms to create meals ready to supply to households across the County. The circle of supply we will create, will take produce directly from the farm fields, through our production kitchen and onto the dining tables of homes across Flintshire. With our focus on feeding the whole community, we believe this to be a first of its kind approach. Once launched, the model will generate new job opportunities and become a prominent feature in the move to support a lower carbon economy.</p> <p>The full model will be ready for launch in May 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustain Food Power (UK Charity) – Grant value £29,000</li> </ul> <p>This grant is being used as the subsidy funding for the Well-Fed at Home meal box scheme described earlier. This funding will be used as a subsidy/catalyst and initially support the diet of up to 200 families per month.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p>Under the five delivery principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act the Welfare Reform Team can have the following impacts:</p>

Long-term	Positive impact in relation to developing sustainable solutions
Prevention	Positive impact supporting residents to access good food
Integration	Positive impact working with other organisations and partners to effect change
Collaboration	Positive impact collaboration of organisations and people from wide ranging areas across all sectors
Involvement	Positive impact working to involve and include residents in the shape and scope of the impacts and work now and in the future
Well-being Goals Impact	
Prosperous Wales	Positive impact – support residents to address food poverty poverty and improve life chances.
Resilient Wales	Positive in relation to the circular economy work and the “farm to fork” concept
Healthier Wales	Positive – supporting residents to eat well which brings improvements in health and wellbeing.
More equal Wales	Positive - By supporting residents to move out of poverty this also contributes to enabling residents to fulfil their potential no matter what their background.
Cohesive Wales	Positive – working and supporting people in all communities to come together around food to start conversations and make connections
Vibrant Wales	No impact
Globally responsible Wales	No impact

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	None.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None.

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer: Jen Griffiths</b>  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 – 702929  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Jen.Griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk">Jen.Griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Medically vulnerable</b> - people who have serious underlying health conditions who are extremely vulnerable from COVID-19.</p> <p><b>Shielding</b> - protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable from coronavirus (COVID-19).</p>