

Date: 18th December 2020

Subject: 'No Child Should Go Hungry'

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Portfolio Lead for Reform

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report outlines proposals for the 'No Child Should Go Hungry' campaign over Christmas 2020 which is aimed at responding to gaps in national provision and supporting the ongoing humanitarian response being led locally in our districts. The report seeks to raise awareness of the immediate intentions of this campaign as well as signal the longer-term ambitions of future work to tackle poverty across the city-region.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

GMCA is requested to:

1. Note and support the immediate intentions of the No Child Should Go Hungry campaign over Winter, to fill gaps in national provision and provide further support to work being led locally.
2. Note that whilst there is a crisis response element to this campaign it is intended that a more upstream approach to fulfilling the pledge 'No Child Should Go Hungry' in Greater Manchester will be developed over coming months building on learning through this phase.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

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Equalities Implications:

The activities highlighted in this report seek to respond to socio-economic inequalities in Greater Manchester, particularly in relation to children and young people. The activities respond to the issues of deprivation and access to services. A broad offer is purposely provided that should respond

to food requirements of specific ethnic groups and this will be reviewed following the period outlined.

Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures

N/A

Risk Management:

N/A

Legal Considerations:

N/A

Financial Consequences – Revenue:

The activities outline here will be delivered using existing staff resources

Financial Consequences – Capital:

Funding is providing from the Mayor’s charity there is no financial request of GMCA

Number of attachments to the report: None

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Not Required, paper is for information

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

N/A

TRACKING/PROCESS		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution		No
EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN		
Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?		N/A
GM Transport Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
N/A	N/A	

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Ensuring every child has a good start in life and providing equal opportunities for all are at the heart of our GM system. Access to good food, 365 days a year, is a fundamental human right for children and young people, to nourish both physical and mental health.

Over recent months families that have children eligible for free school meals have experienced considerable uncertainty as to the level of support that would be provided to them from central government in the face of heightened hardship caused by COVID. The October school half-term saw no direct support for these families nationally, however the response to the issue from across Greater Manchester was remarkable. Local leadership in our districts stepped forward to plug gaps in the national response and this was supported by the distribution of 1,000 emergency food cards for young people across GM.

The feedback from front line workers on these cards was extremely positive with many commenting that they could have used the cards twice over, hailing the cards as 'lifeline' for some young people, especially in the evenings and weekends. The basic criteria for issuing the card empowered front line workers and provided freedom and flexibility to make decisions on how best to use the cards when presented with a young person in crisis.

Whilst the welcomed announcement of the DWP COVID Winter Grant Scheme available from early December will provide financial support for families experiencing food insecurity, there is concern that the eligibility criteria associated with this scheme will still exclude certain families, examples include:

- Low income families above the threshold of benefit entitlement but still struggling financially.
- Those recently unemployed and still waiting for benefits to be processed.
- Families and individuals self-isolating who do not meet the criteria of the Test and Trace Support payment.
- Those with no recourse to public funds.

In response to these continuing gaps and rising levels of child poverty during COVID, the Mayor is calling on leaders to support a Greater Manchester wide campaign which will build on the strengths of existing local partnerships. The immediate intention of the campaign is to provide a 'safety platform' to ensure that *No Child Should Go Hungry* in Greater Manchester. This will also provide a launchpad for more upstream and broader ambitions to tackle poverty across GM going forward as well as provide focus for future holiday periods, in particular Easter.

NO CHILD SHOULD GO HUNGRY - WINTER CAMPAIGN

The purpose of the No Child Should Go Hungry campaign in December will be to provide a safety platform to support:

- Young People who need immediate access to food and are otherwise unable to access this.
- Families who are in financial hardship but fall outside government eligibility criteria or are unable to access the DWP Winter Grant Scheme.

Discussions are underway with GM Mayor's Charity (GMMC) about their continued engagement with and support of the cause. A grant of has been committed by GMMC towards the Winter Programme, to support the following:

- A. Emergency Food Cards for Children and Young People** – Building on the success of the Young Person's Emergency Food Card Pilot that was launched over the October Half Term, when over 700 cards were distributed to Young People in need across GM. The feedback from front line workers and the recipients was extremely positive with many hailing the cards a 'lifeline' especially outside normal working in the evenings and weekends. The basic criteria for issuing the card empowered front line workers and provided freedom and flexibility to make decisions on how best to use the cards. The proposal for December is a considerable increase, with 300 pre-paid cards to be provided to each locality for use in a range of supermarkets/outlets. Each card will be charged with credit to enable young people in need to access a 'meal-deal' type offer. There is an over-arching requirement that this provision sits alongside a wider offer of support from the frontline worker issuing the card and in accordance with safeguarding. It is proposed that funds from the Mayor's Charity will be used to procure the cards and it is anticipated that there will be some form of match-funding element from the providers.
- B. Targeted Support for Families** – An amount of funds already available through the GM Mayor's Charity will be distributed across each of the 10 localities via local VCSE infrastructure organisations. Through local intelligence and discretion this resource can be used to provide support to families in need that are not eligible for other types of support. Examples of support could include:
- Provision of family Christmas Hampers prepared by local businesses.
 - Vouchers that can be used in local businesses or food clubs.
 - Supporting the running of food banks during Winter.
 - Supporting local welfare assistance schemes.
 - Cash grants to families where appropriate.
 - Support for community grocers to increase their members to enable choice, support local business and reduce stigma.
- C. Helping People Help Each Other** – In addition to the funding support element it is also proposed that the 'Co-operate' digital platform maintained by the Co-operative Group is promoted as part of No Child Should Go Hungry. The Co-operate platform is a means of connecting people in their communities with direct offers of support and opportunities for

them to make a difference where they live. Groups and individuals will be encouraged to use the platform to see how they can support the cause of No Child Should Go Hungry in their local community.

DEVELOPING LONGER TERM AMBITIONS

The crisis response elements to this campaign for December should be viewed alongside the ongoing humanitarian assistance response being led locally in our districts. There are identified gaps to fill in nationally directed provision, as highlighted above with regards to the DWP Winter Grant Scheme. However, the need to get upstream of the issue of child food poverty and indeed poverty itself is a priority. Longer term objectives and activity will be developed to underpin the pledge that No Child Should Go Hungry in Greater Manchester. This will see the development of a dedicated programme of work that will include, but not be limited to:

- Focusing on the root causes of child poverty and taking forward action to fundamentally tackle inequality across the city-region.
- Developing a strategy that focusses on a rights-based approach to tackling poverty, that enables everyone to participate in society rather than simply providing access to food.
- Moving from high profile one-off fundraising initiatives to more sustainable relationships with local businesses and the private sector to support this cause.
- Mobilising the public around the issue and looking at opportunities such as the ability for online restaurant customers to pay forward and for supermarket shoppers to donate to the cause at the point of purchase.
- Creating a recognisable brand for this cause.
- Working with the VCSE sector across GM and being directed by local intelligence to understand where help is needed most.