

Title of Report:	DfC Social Supermarket Support Fund
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure and Development
Date of Meeting:	18th March 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Information
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Healthy, Active & Engaged Communities
Outcome	The Borough comprises cohesive and stable communities which work collaboratively with a range of stakeholders to address issues and deliver on opportunities
Lead Officer	Head of Community & Culture; Community Development Manager

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	n/a 100% external funding
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	<u>Yes/No</u>	Date:06/11/23
	EQIA Required and Completed:	<u>Yes/No</u>	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	<u>Yes/No</u>	Date: 10/11/23
	RNA Required and Completed:	<u>Yes/No</u>	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	<u>Yes/No</u>	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	<u>Yes/No</u>	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the next stage of delivery of the Social Supermarket Support Fund (SSMSF) received from the Department for Communities (DfC), in relation to The Glens and Ballymoney DEA's.

2.0 Background

- 2.1** Council receives annual funding from the Department for Communities through a Social Supermarket Support Fund with the purpose of offering a longer term and sustainable response to food insecurity by seeking to help address the root causes of poverty rather than short term crisis interventions.
- 2.2** The current provision in Causeway Coast and Glens is varied, with 2 well established social supermarket models, including one of the original DfC pilots, providing a service across a significant part of the borough.
- 2.3** In September 2023 Council agreed to invite expressions of interest from organisations that might be interested in exploring and setting up a social supermarket model to cover the areas of the Borough where there wasn't a social supermarket service operating, i.e. in The Glens DEA and lower Ballymoney DEA.

3.0 Current Situation

- 3.1** An Expression of Interest (EOI) exercise took place in November 2023 for the set up phase and three EOI's were received for The Glens DEA - Glenariff Conference Society of Saint Vincent De Paul (covering Glenariff, Cushendall & Cushendun), Ballycastle Community Hub and Ballycastle Foodbank (operated by Ballycastle Church Action). No EOIs were received from organisations interested in setting up the service in Ballymoney.
- 3.2** Council Officers provided support to test and set up a social supermarket model based in Cushendall, and external mentor support was provided. In September 2024 Council approved the award of £10,642 to Saint Vincent De Paul to deliver the social supermarket in Cushendall, covering Glenariff, Cushendall & Cushendun.
- 3.3** Council also agreed in September 2024 to hold a further amount of £10,642 for the Ballycastle area pending the outcome of conversations between the 2 organisations that expressed an interest. The Expression of Interest from Ballycastle Church Action has since been withdrawn. The other organisation in Ballycastle that submitted the EOI has undergone a period of transformation and a new entity, Ballycastle Community Group CIC, has since established and is operating the pilot social supermarket.
- 3.4** Before the contract for the Glenariff, Cushendall, and Cushendun areas was issued, a new organisation, Glens Social Supermarket Ltd was established to deliver the service as a stand-alone project. At its meeting on 21st January 2025, the Leisure & Development Committee recommended awarding the £10,642 DfC Social Supermarket Support Programme contract to Glens Social Supermarket Ltd. However, the report was withdrawn before the full council meeting. Due to procedural

considerations, a new Expression of Interest (EOI) exercise will be conducted. The organisation now seeking to deliver the project is a separate legal entity from the one that originally submitted the EOI, and 16 months have passed since the initial process. As a result, the contract has not yet been issued. To ensure fairness and due diligence, a fresh EOI process will take place.

3.5 Of note, the initial EOI in November 2023 aimed to test and establish a social supermarket service. The new EOI will focus on the delivery of this service in The Glens DEA, as the support phase has now concluded. The Glens Social Supermarket has been informed of the revised process.

3.6 The EOI exercise will be repeated in Ballymoney to assess current interest from organisations that may now wish to trial a social supermarket.

A further report will be presented to the committee upon completion of this process.