

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting:	Cabinet for Housing and Preventing Homelessness
Subject:	Donations to Foodbanks, Food Larders, and Food Pantries from council owned vacated properties
Date of meeting:	8 th December 2022
Report by:	James Hill - Director for Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services
Author:	Steve Groves (Head of Building Maintenance) and Mark Fitch (Head of Local Authority Housing)
Wards affected:	All Wards

1. Requested by

- 1.1 The report was requested by Councillor Darren Sanders, Cabinet member and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Preventing Homelessness.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the Council approach to non-perishable food left in council owned properties when a tenant vacates a property, also known as void properties.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the Cabinet notes the plan within the report for non-perishable food within void properties

4. Background

- 4.1 The HIVE has recently completed a survey with local food support providers (foodbanks, soup kitchens and larders/pantries), to find out what, if any, issues they are facing with demand and supply. They estimate demand for foodbanks has increased and usual suppliers of food have reduced.

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- 4.2 The Council are working closely with HIVE, who are leading on engaging with these suppliers, to identify how we can improve the supply of food and ensure local food support providers have the resources they need to assist people locally.
- 4.2 Portsmouth City Council retains approximately 14,700 number of Council owned social housing dwellings located within Portsmouth and Havant. Each year there are approximately 850 number of voids created when tenants vacate the property.
- 4.3 The Council have managed a 'pilot' with Comserv, our 'Off Island' contractor, who informed the area office when food was left in voids. This experiment identified that in most circumstances properties are cleared completely, but in a small number we could utilise what is left in a better way. Whilst there is minimal non-perishable food left in void properties there have been some examples of non-perishable food left that can be used at a local foodbank.
- 4.4 Though the pilot found minimal non-perishable food items left in the property it is recognised that every item counts and should be donated to the local foodbank to enable redistribution to those accessing the food banks. Following discussion with the Repairs and Maintenance contractors, Mountjoy and Comserv, both agreed to support the plan as shown below. Each contractor agreed to facilitate the plan with no additional cost and as part of their demonstration of the social value they provide as part of the contract.

5. Plan for Non-Perishable Food within Voids

- 5.1 Housing Officers as part of the void process will continue to explain that the property needs to be cleared and cleaned before it is handed back to Housing. Customers need to be aware of their responsibilities so that we avoid the high cost incurred of clearing properties.
- 5.2 When a resident, or an executor in the instance of a death, gives notice the Housing Officer can provide advice explaining to residents where local foodbanks, larders and pantries are located so that they can donate any non-perishable food directly.
- 5.3 At the Contractor Core Group Meeting on 23 September 2022, the service providers all agreed to collect and redirect non-perishable food left in voids to a local foodbank, larder or pantry. It is expected that this will only arise in a small number of voids, as the pilot demonstrated, but it is accepted that every and all donations to food support services is helpful.
- 5.2 The local foodbanks, larders and pantries that are available include:
- Portsmouth Foodbank, Kings Church Hall, Fraser Road, PO5 4QA
 - Portsea Foodbank, Harbour Church, St. George's Square, PO1 3AT

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- Portsea Pantry, John Pounds Centre, 23 Queen St, Portsea, PO1 3HN
- St Mag's Pantry, St Margaret's Community Church, Highland Road, PO4 9DD
- Salvation Army Foodbank, Haven Community Centre, Lake Road, PO1 4HA
- Landport Larder, Landport Community Centre, Charles Street, PO1 1JD
- North End Pantry, North End Baptist Church, 195 Powerscourt Road, PO2 7JH
- Paulsgrove Foodbank, Paulsgrove Baptist Church, Woofferton Road, PO6 4DW
- Cosham Community Larder, Cosham Park, 15 Northern Road, Cosham, PO6 2SJ
- Waterlooville Foodbank, Wecock Church, Kite Close, Wecock Farm PO8 9UJ
- Foodbank PO9, St Francis Church and St Clare's Church, Leigh Park
- Beacon Foodbank, Beacon Church Havant, 69-73 Meriden Centre, Havant, PO9 1UN

6. Director of Finance's Comments

6.1 There is no additional cost to the Council as a result of the plan outlined in the report for non-perishable food within void properties.

The Repairs and Maintenance contractors, Mountjoy and Comserv, have agreed to facilitate the plan without charge.

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Signed by James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location