

Council to take coordinating action on foodbanks



Following a decision made earlier today, the council will now look at adopting a coordinating role on the development of foodbanks here in Edinburgh.

Councillor Alex Lunn the vice-convenor of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee raised the matter at a committee meeting held earlier today. We had believed that his motion was amended to remove reference to the UK government's austerity cuts, but this was not in fact the case.

It is clear that the council now believes it is time to take action to ensure that help is given to those organising foodbanks. This is in an effort to avoid 'reinventing the wheel' and to make sure that the initiatives get to work as quickly and efficiently as possible to deal with the ever growing need.

The council will make enquiries about any funding available from the Scottish Government's Emergency Food Fund and will find ways of linking all of those groups involved in this growing area across the city to develop integrated ways of working.

The agreed motion read as follows:

"Committee asks that we acknowledge the continuing worsening situation for a large proportion of the public and highlights the growing need for foodbanks due to the austerity policies implemented by the current Westminster Government and applauds the work by Edinburgh organisations.

"Committee seeks a report back to Communities and

Neighbourhoods in two cycles with recommendations on how to liaise with the organisations currently delivering foodbanks to coordinate activity through the City; the report to also include details of what information/advice is made available at foodbanks to support users.

“Committee instructs officers to investigate possible sources of innovative funding such as the Scottish Government’s Emergency Food Fund and to report back on ways in which the Council could engage with the newly appointed Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners’ Rights to address issues around foodbanks.”

Councillor Lunn has shared with The Edinburgh Reporter his working list of sources of free and cheap food in Edinburgh and that is reproduced below. If you are involved in any projects like this and they are not included on his list then he would be glad to hear from you. You can access his full contact details by clicking [here](#).

The Trussell Trust which runs many foodbanks across the UK announced last week that the primary trigger leading to someone needing to rely on a foodbank is not unemployment, but low pay, but when Holyrood’s Welfare Reform Committee investigated the rise in demand for food banks earlier in the year, they concluded that welfare reform is a significant cause of this. Watch The Scottish Parliament’s video report [here](#):

The Trussell Trust presented evidence to the committee during which they explained that there was only one foodbank in Scotland in 2011 but that the number had grown to 43 by March 2014. They also stated that in Scotland the number of foodbanks grew faster than in any other area of the UK.

<http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/>

[11/Getting-Free_Cheap-Food-in-Edinburgh.pdf](#)