
Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	4 February 2025
Report By:	Corporate Director, Education, Communities and OD	Report No:	PR/04/25/RB/TM
Contact Officer:	Tony McEwan	Contact No:	Tel 01475 712828
Subject:	Inverclyde Zero Waste Food Pantries		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy and Resources Committee on the funding positions of the Inverclyde Zero Waste Pantries situated at Grieve Road, Greenock and John Wood Street, Port Glasgow. Both pantries are operated by the Inverclyde Community Development Trust (ICDT).
- 1.3 Council funding for the Grieve Road Pantry, made via the Anti-poverty fund, ended on 31 December 2024 and this report is recommending the Policy and Resources Committee extends this funding from the Anti-poverty fund until March 2026. The pantry at Port Glasgow is funded through the National Lottery and ICDT has submitted another application to extend its funding.
- 1.4 This report also provides background on the pantries' operations, including the arrangements for sourcing food, volunteer engagement, future funding opportunities and potential partnerships.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Policy and Resources Committee:
- notes the update on Inverclyde's Zero Waste Pantries;
 - agrees further funding of up to £40k from the Council's anti-poverty fund to support the Grieve Road Pantry until March 2026;
 - note that ICDT has applied for external funding to support the Port Glasgow pantry beyond April 2025; and
 - notes officers' intention to undertake work during 2025 to map Inverclyde's current position in relation to alleviating food poverty and specifically to consider the future Food Pantry provision within Inverclyde.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The first Inverclyde Zero Waste Food Pantry opened in early December 2020 in Grieve Road, with £30,000 allocated from Inverclyde Council Anti-Poverty Funding, initially for a two-year period. This was then further extended for an additional two-year period to December 2024. Furthermore, Anti-poverty funding pays for two Fare Share memberships to facilitate the provisions of food to the pantries. This funding continues.
- 3.2 This £30k funding was supplemented by £57,306 which The Trust has received from Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) via the Community Recovery Fund for the Inverclyde Zero Waste Pantry based at Grieve Road Greenock.
- 3.3 Inverclyde Community Development Trust secured £149,456 from the National Lottery to leverage match funding to open a 2nd pantry in Port Glasgow which ends in March 2025.
- 3.4 Both Inverclyde Pantry projects aim to provide affordable access to healthy food while minimising food waste. Both Inverclyde Pantry projects have experienced significant growth since opening with a strong membership base at both John Wood Street (JWS) and Grieve Road locations. JWS has 885 members, while Grieve Road has 1,221 members. This growth indicates the value the Pantry provides to the community, becoming valued services for an increasingly large number of individuals facing hardship across Inverclyde.
- 3.5 The Pantry supports a diverse range of families across various postcodes within Inverclyde. The Pantry provides a service to families considered a priority within the Child Poverty Act with 3 or more children (JWS - 213, Grieve Road - 440) and supports families with English as a Second Language (JWS - 223, Grieve Road - 80) and to families with young babies and young mothers (JWS - 16, Grieve Road - 30). Furthermore, the Pantry extends its reach to other community groups, including those being supported by the Salvation Army, I.FIT, Thrive Under 5, HSCP, and Oak Tree Housing Association.
- 3.6 In addition to accessing of affordable and healthy food in the community, the Pantries can provide a sense of community and belonging for their members. Importantly, the Pantries also connects their members with valuable support services, including monthly drop-in sessions with Financial Fitness to check member's eligibility for various benefits and pension credit. The Trust's Employability Team have staff available monthly to offer support and advice for any members looking to improve their employment prospects via training, CV writing, interview skills and much more. Members are offered support on mental health and counselling through referrals to Mind Mosaic.
- 3.7 However, with the funding for the Grieve Road Pantry from the Council's anti-poverty fund ending in December 2024 and the outcome of future funding for the Port Glasgow pantry beyond 31 March 2025 yet to be confirmed, the Committee is being asked to consider extending support for the Grieve Road Pantry to March 2026.

4.0 Current challenges

- 4.1 One of the key objectives of the Pantry was to become community led within 3 years of opening. However, it is not felt that the volunteers have sufficient capacity to take this step at this time. Furthermore, there have been a variety of other challenges that have prevented the ICDDT achieving the community ownership and sustainability within the timeframe provided. These challenges include:

- A continued increase in membership and the resultant expectations and demands for a variety of surplus food types. This has resulted in the Trust having to top-up the Fare Share deliveries;
- Increases in emergency provisions for an increasing number of residents who are facing significant financial hardship and food insecurity;
- The funding streams from DTAS funding and lottery funding, external funding opportunities' have all reduced; and
- Increasing overhead costs for both Pantries.

5.0 ICDT work to date

5.1 ICDT is now exploring the transition of The Pantry towards a standalone charitable social enterprise model. This transition is expected to take 18-20 months and will allow the Pantry to pursue crowdfunding, public donations, and direct fundraising. It is projected that this shift will generate approximately 25% of the Pantry's overhead costs. The ICDT expects to achieve this by 31st March 2026.

5.2 In the meantime, ICDT is working on several other developments:

- Working closely with Community Links Scotland and the local registered social landlords to strengthen partnerships with local housing associations and identify future funding opportunities. However, this approach is expected to take 8-10 months to fully develop into viable funding strategies. Cloch Housing Association has also expressed an interest in collaborating on a Greenock Central location pantry model to support their tenants;
- ICDT has recently secured funding from the Acorns to Trees charitable trust to support fundraising efforts, including the creation of a full-time media and marketing role. This role will help raise awareness and generate financial support for The Pantry. The total value of the funded post is £21,500 until March 2025;
- Seeking funding for a Business Development Role to enhance The Pantry's ability to secure reduced-cost food supplies through bulk buying and direct donations. The role will also focus on building relationships with local housing associations to increase support and funding for the Pantry. This initiative is expected to take around 18 months to implement;
- Collaboration with the Scottish Pantry Network to introduce the Prepmate Project, which will provide pantries across Scotland with meal kits to ensure a reliable supply of nutritious food. This initiative is vital in ensuring the sustainability of The Pantry and meeting the growing demand for affordable, healthy food;
- successfully integrating additional services, such as an advocacy service for adults and affordable after-school and holiday childcare. ICDT is seeking funding to expand these services, supporting parents and families with employability skills, community engagement, and additional pathways to support;
- building pathways with local and national food suppliers to secure more reliable and cost-effective sources of food. These partnerships will help alleviate costs and improve the variety of food available to Pantry members; and
- exploring the option of increasing the membership fee to £3 per year and the cost of shopping from £2.50 to £3.50 per visit. This adjustment will help cover rising operational costs and ensure continued access to affordable food for those in need

5.3 A new application has been submitted to the National Lottery to secure funding for the next financial year, ensuring the continuity of The Pantry service in Port Glasgow beyond its current funding period, which ends in March 2025.

6.0 PROPOSALS

- 6.1 It is proposed to extend the funding for the Grieve Road Pantry until March 2026 from the Council's Anti-poverty funding. This extension would provide ICDT with more time to develop and implement a comprehensive external funding strategy to secure sustainable long-term support for the pantries. ICDT will actively pursue funding from various sources, including Scottish Government, the National Lottery, and other relevant external funders, while also exploring avenues for direct fundraising and donations and collaborating with housing associations. This continued support will also be facilitating a smooth transition towards a more sustainable, externally funded model.
- 6.2 Officers recognise that there is a significant amount of activity across Inverclyde in relation to projects and initiatives aimed at alleviating food poverty. As such the Communities Service intends to map this work in 2025 after which time will be in a position to advise the Committee on the range of services available and bring forward proposals in relation to Pantry provision in Inverclyde.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial	x	
Legal/Risk		x
Human Resources		x
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	x	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		x
Environmental & Sustainability	x	
Data Protection		x

7.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Anti Poverty Fund EMR	Pantries	1.1.25-31.3.26	Up to £40k		

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

7.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal implications from this report. There is a risk that the Trust may not be able to attract external funding.

7.4 Human Resources

There are no HR issues for the council arising from this report.

7.5 Strategic

This report delivers on the strategic priorities from the partnership and council plan.

7.6 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

The zero waste food pantries are good for the environment by minimising food waste.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

7.7 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 The CMT support the proposals in this report.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.