

Report to: Cabinet Committee



22 March 2021

Wards: All

**Department for Education - Holiday Activities and Food Programme  
(HAF) 2021**

**Report of the Director of Children, Young People and Families Services**

1. Purpose of the Report and Summary

1.1 To provide inform Cabinet of the proposed implementation plans and indicative budget for the delivery of the DfE's 'Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)' programme 2021, and to seek approval for the decisions necessary to enable delivery of the programme. The proposals incorporate :

- An overview of the HAF programme and its key criteria and requirements.
- The Council's confirmed funding allocation and proposed financial plan/indicative budget for investment.
- How the programme will be coordinated across the City.
- The governance of the programme.
- Specific implementation plans for Easter Holidays 2021, in light of Covid-19 restrictions

2. Recommendations

2.1 Approve the proposed programme within the funding for Hull's HAF 2021 programme, specifically:

2.1.1 to establish a Public Sector/Voluntary Sector steering group to map and build on existing support available in the city, to enable development of a sustainable model for delivery;

2.1.2 To ensure effective co-ordination of existing and new activity;

- 2.1.3 To provide the governance for the investment of the grant funds in a manner that supports sustainable model for delivery of Holiday Activities and the Food Programme.
- 2.2 To approve the governance, coordination and implementation arrangements for the programme through a Public Sector/Voluntary Sector Steering Group (see appendix 3) encompassing organisations who existing operations in the city are committed to support delivery of a sustainable programme.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families Services in consultation with the Director of Legal Services and Partnerships and the Portfolio Holder for Learning, Skills and Safeguarding Children to authorise entry into the contracts necessary to deliver the HAF programme.

### 3 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The HAF Programme 2021 brings a significant opportunity to provide much needed support for children, young people and families following the challenges they have faced during the pandemic. It will allow the council to lead a coordinated offer of activities and food to our families most in need across Hull.
- 3.2 School holidays can be particular pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced incomes. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap - with children from disadvantaged families less likely to access organised out-of-school activities; more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health and are more likely to experience social isolation.
- 3.3 The programme will support families to re-engage with their local communities after periods of lockdown. It will enable children and young people to re-engage with their friends, wider family and peer groups, supporting improvements to emotional and mental health, social isolation and also physical health.
- 3.4 The proposals provide the basis for development of a sustainable model for delivery on a partnership basis operating across the public sector and voluntary sector partners in the city.
- 3.5 The recommendations put forward follow the DfE guidance, ensuring the Council is compliant and in a position to develop and implement a high quality partnership led offer across all of our most deprived communities and beyond.

### 4 Impact on other Executive Committees (including Area Committees)

- 4.1 The HAF Programme 2021 aims to have a significant offer in all of the city covered by our Area Committees and a briefing paper will be circulated to all Area Committees. A representative from the Area Teams in an integral part of the HAF Steering Group and by working through existing local networks the programme will ensure joint work with all Area Team activity as appropriate.

4.2 The HAF programme will also have a significant impact on the emotional, mental and physical health of children, young people and families. Briefings for the Health and Well Being board have been discussed with the Chair and will be provided as requested.

## 5 Background

5.1 On 8 November 2020, the Government announced that the holiday activities and food programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to a small proportion of disadvantaged children since 2018, will be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. The programme will cover the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021, and Government is making available £220m available to local authorities for the programme. HAF will be available to children in every local authority in England.

5.2 Grant funding is being provided to local authorities and on 18th December the Council received notice of its 'indicative HAF funding allocation', this has since been confirmed in a 'grant determination letter' from DfE, received on 7th February 2021.

|            |            |                             |
|------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| 2020/21 FY | 2021/22 FY | Total indicative allocation |
| £147,730   | £1,321,330 | £1,469,060                  |

5.3 This funding is provided to coordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities for children who receive benefits-related free school meals. It is of course be optional for eligible children to attend this provision if they wish. This gives the Council and its partners a fantastic opportunity to provide a 'summer of fun' for the children, young people and families of Hull after the challenges they have had to deal with due to Covid-19.

5.4 The grant funding will be informed by the numbers of children eligible for free school meals (FSMs) in Hull and the overall levels of participation experienced in the DfE's previous programmes from 2018 to 2020. The overall number of pupils eligible for a free school meal as at October 2020 school census was 11,929 or 28.6%. The funding covers both the provision of the free holiday activities and food programme and the costs of coordination of the programme locally.

5.5 The aim of the programme is to make free places available to children eligible for FSMs for the equivalent of at least four hours a day, four days a week, and six weeks a year. This would cover four weeks in the summer and a week's worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas holidays.

5.6 The DfE have placed each local authority within a regional grouping and Hull is grouped with Humber and South Yorkshire Authorities. The DfE team are planning to hold regular regional meetings, the first of which was delivered on 13 January. These meetings are to facilitate more detailed discussion about the HAF programme, for HAF leads to meet each other, to share any emerging risks, issues and concerns, and to talk about what progress is being made in the run up to Easter. What was clearly evident from this meeting was that Hull

is well placed to deliver a successful programme compared with many other local authorities with little recent experience.

5.7 Hull City Council has a strong history of providing programmes of coordinated summer holiday activities across the public and voluntary/community sector and the over-arching context of this work has always been about supporting families and enabling children to have fun. School holidays can be particular pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced incomes (such as loss of free school meals, reduced working hours etc.). There is a growing body of evidence of a “holiday experience gap”, with children from disadvantaged families less likely to access organised out-of-school activities; more likely to experience ‘unhealthy holidays’ in terms of nutrition and physical health; and more likely to experience social isolation.

5.8 Healthy Holidays Programme, summer 2020:

Hull’s annual “Healthy Holidays” programme of activities and food has been in operation for a number of years now. Across summer 2020, despite the challenges due to Covid-19 the programme reached thousands of children, young people and families and provided over 8,800 healthy packed lunches, through a partnership between Fareshare Hull and the Council’s Hull Catering

Service. A total of 4,184 kg of food was distributed, including:

1,272 kg of fresh fruit, such as melons, oranges and strawberries  
308 kg of meat and fish, including tuna and ham  
158 kg yoghurt  
480 bottles of water (500ml)

5.9 The programme was focused on reaching those most in need:

- Nearly 60% of families engaged were in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM).
- Other families whilst not eligible for FSM still talked about financial concerns impacting on food and nutrition.
- Services felt they had successfully reached families who needed support and those experiencing food poverty.
- By working with Early Help, Family Support teams, the VCS and schools, partners were able to identify families in need of additional support over the summer holidays.
- Some of the barriers experienced included families reluctance to travel, embarrassment at accepting a food parcel, ensuring families were aware of the activities available

5.10 The total cost of delivering the 2020 programme was approx. £120k. This was funded by use of existing CYPFS budgets with the addition of Covid-19 funding. Our city's voluntary and community sector always play a key role in local delivery of activities for children and families, providing local, trusted settings and professionals and this will be even more important for 2021. The funding available from HAF for our VCS partners could play a significant part in supporting the future health of the sector.

## 6 Issues for Consideration

6.1 The size of Hull's funding allocation for HAF 2021 will require the planning and delivery of a programme at a substantially increased scale to previous years. Some further detail relating to the criteria for expenditure has been received with the grant determination letter (appendix one) and there is more to come once the DfE have appointed their 'national support partner' which is currently out to tender. In order to ensure Hull delivers a successful programme the following key issues require consideration:

6.2 Financial Planning - an indicative HAF budget has been developed (for Easter, summer and Christmas 2021) with the Finance Team which can be found at appendix two and includes:

- a) Strategic Grants with key partners/services such as HCaL; Schools; Professional Sports Clubs; Street Games; Hull Catering; CYPFS services; Corporate Events Team;
- b) VCS Small Grants Programme – to support delivery of activities via voluntary and community sector organisations, ensuring we keep this as simple as possible to enable smaller organisations to take part in the delivery;
- c) Investment in the expansion of existing digital app functionality to provide a permanent digital platform to engage young people in exploring the parks across the city;
- d) Core funding for the HAF Coordination role of the Council plus central management costs; and
- e) Other costs as identified, for example communications and marketing, branding and promotional materials.

6.3 Payments will be made by Department for Education at the following milestones:

- a) In March 2021 the 2020-21 allocation (£147,730) will be awarded upon satisfactory receipt of a delivery plan from the Authority by 19 February 2021 setting out the intended scale and reach of their programme for Easter 2021;

- b) In June 2021 (up to 50% of the 2021-22 allocation - £660,665), upon satisfactory receipt of a report by 14 May 2021 detailing the delivery of their programme at Easter 2021 along with a delivery plan for summer 2021;
- c) In November 2021 (up to 30% of the 2021-22 allocation - £396,399), upon satisfactory receipt of a report by 15 October detailing the delivery of the programme at summer 2021 along with a delivery plan for Christmas 2021; and
- d) In February 2022 (up to 20% of the 2021-22 allocation - £264,266), upon satisfactory receipt of a report by 29 January detailing the delivery of the programme at Christmas 2021 along with final report for the whole 2021 programme and a certificate of expenditure/statement of grant usage.

#### 6.4 Governance and Reporting:

A HAF Steering Group with key partners/services has been established which reports into CYPFS SLT and provides reports to CST and key partnership bodies. In addition to the Steering Group it may be necessary to establish locality based coordination groups, task and finish groups for key issues such as SEND provision, Food and nutritional education; communications and marketing and others.

- 6.5 Due to the known expectation of the delivery of a programme for the Easter Holiday period Steering Group meetings have already commenced and have been held on 21 December 2020, 19th January 2021 and a monthly meeting schedule is in place. A Terms of Reference and membership of the group is attached at appendix two.

#### 6.6 Eligibility Criteria:

As with previous years, the primary focus of the DfE programme will be on school-aged children eligible for benefits related Free School Meals, and LAs must ensure that the offer of free holiday club provision is available for all children eligible for free school meals in their Local Authority area. This does not mean they are all required to attend as the provision is voluntary. The free holiday club places must be targeted at children who are eligible for and receiving benefits-related free school meals.

- 6.7 There is also some flexibility relating to other children and families with need. The City's programme is required to demonstrate the following:

- a) We are offering the programme comprehensively across the full geographical area; and
- b) Fully meeting demands from free school meal eligible children in the area.

If the requirements above are in place the Council can seek approval from the Department to use up to 15% of the programme funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for the following children:

- Those who are not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals but who are considered by the local authority as vulnerable or in need of this provision. For example, this may include children assessed as being in need, looked-after children, children with an EHC plan (education, health and care), children assessed as otherwise vulnerable, or children living in areas of high deprivation.

#### 6.8 Central Coordination Team:

Additional capacity within the directorate is required to ensure effective planning and coordination of a programme of this size and scale. In accordance with the programme criteria a HAF Coordination Team is being established (outlined in appendix two) who will work with partners across the City to do the following:

- Mapping holiday provision across the partnership network, identifying gaps in provision and ensuring support for areas in most need.
- Working with local partners to ensure a joined up and efficient approach, building on existing local partnerships and sharing learning.
- Drawing in wider support to enhance the local programme.
- Developing the local delivery plan for Hull with partners.
- Ensuring sufficient and appropriate provision for target groups such as CYP SEND.
- Operation of a small grants programme.
- Quality assurance of activity providers – safeguarding, health and safety, minimum standards as outlined by DfE.
- Food provision and coordination.
- Training and development of staff.
- Engagement of young people in the development and delivery of the programme.

#### 6.9 Stakeholder Engagement & Programme Activity:

Easter 2021 – it is highly likely that the country will still be under a level of restrictions due to Covid-19 as we reach the Easter Holiday period. The best

case scenario is that we could be in a situation similar to that of the 2020 summer holiday period where the 'the 'rule of 6' was in place, with no medium or large scale events taking place. The Steering Group have agreed to focus on self- directed activities for families using a variety of themed Activity Packs (cooking, physical activity, creative arts, history, literacy, food and growing and more) backed up with on-line/virtual presence. Plans are developing to ensure we have a cohesive network in place via schools and other partner organisations to distribute the packs to targeted families and this sits alongside the continued distribution of FSM voucher scheme to eligible families.

- 6.10 Two stakeholder engagement events were held on 2nd February which engaged over 80 different partner organisations across the voluntary and community sector. The briefings provided an overview of the HAF programme and particularly focused partner's attention on planning for the Easter Holidays. There was strong support for this approach and partners have been supporting the development of the activity pack offer. Alongside this there will be a small grants programme on offer via the existing youth networks to support re-mobilisation of local organisations usual, yet adapted offer where necessary.
- 6.11 Should the Covid-19 restrictions enable us to do more (which is unlikely) the network is confident it is sufficiently agile to adapt the offer in a short space of time and facilitate more face to face activities if allowed.
- 6.12 Summer Holidays 2021 – it is hoped by the time we reach the summer holiday period that the delivery environment will be very different and this will enable the city wide network to open up facilities, delivery events and activities face to face and provide more of the 'usual' programme of activities, with a mix of the following:
- Strategic large scale activities and events such as a city centre family cycle ride; a roving Circus Activity Tent; links with the Rugby League World Cup promotion; National Playday 2021 in multiple venues.
  - HCaL will be able to provide activities through our libraries, parks and open spaces, museums and swimming pools, offering free swimming, literacy and learning offer and more.
  - Strategically placed facilities on secondary school sites could be opened up in partnership with local organisations such as our professional sports clubs to delivery summer camps.
  - A strong activity offer across our VCS network and community based facilities such as youth centres and Children's Centres will be available.
  - All activities supported by: a quality food offer via Hull Catering working in partnership with Fareshare Hull and Humber; a robust marketing and communication plan to ensure families and young people are fully aware of what is on offer and how to engage; support for organisations to meet DfE's minimum standards re safeguarding, insurance, health and safety etc.

6.13 Other key areas for consideration include:

- Delivery of a robust Communication and Marketing Plan, ensuring all children, young people and families across Hull have information about what is available in their local area and how to access it.
- Engagement with the DfE's national evaluation programme still to be decided and consideration of any additional local evaluation needs.
- Engagement with the DfE's 'National Support Partner' which is currently out to tender and will provide practical planning and delivery advice from spring 2021.
- Minimum Standards – adherence to the DfE's minimum standards relating to Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Insurance, and 4 x 4 criteria.
- Adherence to reporting requirements outlined in the finance section.

6.14 Next steps:

1. Continue to engage key partners and coordinate planning via both the HAF Steering Group meetings and additional 'stakeholder briefings'.
2. Establish relevant sub-groups to lead on key areas such as SEND provision; food and nutrition; school based offer.
3. Engage the identified strategic partners in discussions regarding their offer and the associated costs and delivery targets.
4. Engagement of school partners via the Hull Association of Primary Heads and Secondary Leaders groups – meetings scheduled for February and March.
5. To finalise recruitment of the HAF Coordination Team.
6. To continue to work with finance and procurement to monitor the indicative budget and adapt as necessary.
7. To provide regular update reports to CYPFS SLT, CST, Cabinet and other partnership boards as required.

## 7 Options and Risk Assessment

7.1 The risks associated with the programme are as follows:

- Non-compliance with the DfE HAF programme criteria resulting in withdrawal of funding allocation totalling £1.47m for the City.

- Absent a partnership approach there will be a reduced offer of activity and food provision for children, young people and families in need of support across the city during Easter, summer and Christmas holiday periods.
- Expectations will be raised and the recurrent delivery of a similar programme is unsustainable.

7.2 The proposed governance arrangements and delegations will provide the framework to ensure that the programme is delivered within the budget and timeframe provided.

7.3 Delivering the scheme in conjunction with VCS and Public Sector partners together with targeted in year permanent investments will provide a greater likelihood of developing an approach which can be sustained in future years.

7.4 Option 1 – approve the recommendations within this report to implement the DfE HAF programme 2021 through partnership between the public sector and the Voluntary Sector with targeted investments in programme elements which offer the opportunity for long term sustainability. This will facilitate sustainable investment to support young people in receipt of free school meals in the city of £1.47m. This option is the preferred option and will result in the delivery of a high quality offer of holiday activities and food for our families in need across Hull.

7.5 Option 2 – cease to engage with the national HAF programme and deliver a local programme as in previous years at a much smaller scale. This will not provide the scale and reach of activities and food required to support our families most in need after the challenges faced throughout the pandemic. This could result in greater family stress and emotional/mental health issues, food insecurity, increased social isolation and non-engagement in community based activity during pressurised holiday periods. Hull would fail to receive a total of £1.47m funding to provide support for families.

## 8 Consultation

8.1 The HAF Steering Group consists of partners from across the public and voluntary sector who have been involved in developing the implementation plans outlined in this paper. In addition to this 2 stakeholder briefings have been delivered which engaged over 80 different organisations. Further stakeholder engagement will be an integral part of the implementation plans as is ensuring the role of children and young people in the shaping of the programme for the summer.

## 9 Comments of the Monitoring Officer (Director of Legal Services and Partnerships)

9.1 The proposals for application of the grant funding referenced within the report set out a framework for entry into a number of small grant agreements and contracts. The overarching grant conditions will require a transparent process for decision making upon the award of small grants and contracts. Appendix 2 indicates that the primary investment is in developing capacity and the grant agreements and contracts are intended to be small in nature to match fund and build on existing commitments. Delegating the responsibility to the Director to authorise entry into the contractual arrangements in conjunction with the Director of Legal Services and Partnerships will provide the framework to ensure that the processes adopted are compliant with grant funding requirements.

10 Comments of the Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance and Transformation)

10.1 This project will benefit the children of the City through holiday activities and the provision of food , the scheme is entirely grant funded and the recommendations can be supported (JM).

11 Comments of Assistant Director of HR & OD and compliance with the Equality Duty

11.1 There are no staffing issues arising, in terms of equality this provides a benefit to young people.

12 Comments of Overview and Scrutiny

12.1 This report will be considered by the Early Support and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting of Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2021. Any comments or recommendations made by the Commission will be tabled alongside the report at Cabinet. Ref: Sc6068 [MK].

13 Comments of Councillor Clark the Portfolio Holder of Learning, Skills and Safeguarding Children

13.1 The HAF programme investment provides the Council with a real opportunity to provide much needed support for families during what can be financially challenging school holiday periods. The plans, whilst in their early stages, will be a key part of how we support families out of lockdown and provide some much needed activities for children and young people. Our voluntary and community sector partners always play a key part in the delivery of holiday activities and we will continue to support them to do so, ensuring they are able to play a full role. I look forward to seeing how the plans progress over the coming months.

**Pauline Turner**  
**Director of Children, Young People and Families Services**

This is a key decision. The matter is in the Forward Plan 20210115 Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Contact Officers: Rachel Roberts, Head of Early Help

Telephone No. : 01482 616200

[Email: Rachel.Roberts@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.Roberts@hullcc.gov.uk)

## Implications Matrix

**This section must be completed and you must ensure that you have fully considered all potential implications**

This matrix provides a simple check list for the things you need to have considered within your report

If there are no implications please state

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| I have informed and sought advice from HR, Legal, Finance, Overview and Scrutiny and the Climate Change Advisor and any other key stakeholders i.e. Portfolio Holder, relevant Ward Members etc prior to submitting this report for official comments | Yes |
| I have considered whether this report requests a decision that is outside the Budget and Policy Framework approved by Council   | Yes |
| Value for money considerations have been accounted for within the report  | Yes |
| The report is approved by the relevant Assistant Director   | Yes |
| I have included any procurement/commercial issues/implications within the report  | Yes |
| I have considered the potential media interest in this report and liaised with the Media Team to ensure that they are briefed to respond to media interest.   | Yes |
| I have included any equalities and diversity implications within the report and where necessary I have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment and the outcomes are included within the report  | Yes |
| Any Health and Safety implications are included within the report   | Yes |
| Any human rights implications are included within the report  | No  |
| I have included any community safety implications and paid regard to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act within the report   | Yes |
| I have liaised with the Climate Change Advisor and any environmental and climate change issues/sustainability implications are included within the report   | No  |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| I have included information about how this report contributes to the City Plan/ Area priorities within the report  | No |
| I have considered the impact on air quality, carried out an appropriate assessment and included any resulting actions or opportunities necessary to improve air quality in the report. | No |