



Democratic Services

Location: Phase II
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**To: COUNCILLOR IAN EDWARDS
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

c.c. All Members of the Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee
c.c. Kat Wyatt - Head of Service ~ Youth Justice, AXIS, Adolescent Development and Youth Services
c.c. All Ward Councillors
c.c. Conservative and Labour Group Offices (inspection copy)

Date: 27 April 2022

Non-Key Decision request

Form D

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME 2022/25

Dear Cabinet Member

Attached is a report requesting that a decision be made by you as an individual Cabinet Member. Democratic Services confirm that this is not a key decision, as such the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 notice period does not apply.

You should take a decision **on or after Friday 06 May 2022** in order to meet Constitutional requirements about publication of decisions that are to be made. You may wish to discuss the report with the Corporate Director before it is made. Please indicate your decision on the duplicate memo supplied, and return it to me when you have made your decision. I will then arrange for the formal notice of decision to be published.

Neil Fraser
Democratic Services Officer

Title of Report: HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME 2022/25

Decision made:

Reasons for your decision: (e.g. as stated in report)

Alternatives considered and rejected: (e.g. as stated in report)

Signed Date
Leader of the Council

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME 2022/25

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Ian Edwards
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Leader of the Council
Officer Contact(s)	Kat Wyatt - Head of Service ~ Youth Justice, AXIS, Adolescent Development and Youth Services
Papers with report	None

HEADLINES

Summary	To seek Cabinet Member approval for the process to take forward the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) for 2022/23 via a bespoke procurement pathway. This will create a more efficient approval process and ensure effective and timely service delivery to residents within the constraints of the programme. In 2023/24 and 2024/25 Hillingdon are likely to receive further HAF grants.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the following Council objectives of: <i>Our People</i> ; <i>The provision of the HAF programme sits within the national Levelling Up agenda. A local framework for delivery is being developed. In addition, addressing inequalities is a core function of the local authorities Public Health agenda and aligns with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.</i>
Financial Cost	The Department for Education (DfE) funding will be confirmed annually and for 2022-23 Hillingdon has been allocated £1,061,920. It is likely the funding will be at a minimum of this limit for the following two years.
Relevant Select Committee	Families, Health and Wellbeing.
Wards	All.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Leader of the Council:

1. Accept the Government grant for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme of £1,061,920 for FY 22/23; noting that in 2023/24 and 2024/25 Hillingdon are likely to receive the HAF grant in addition.

- 2. Agrees that delivery of this Programme is managed via a bespoke procurement pathway, as set out in the report);**
- 3. Authorises the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Families, Education & Wellbeing where appropriate, to award contracts to suitable providers following an open process to bid.**
- 4. Notes that operational oversight of this programme will be via a multi-department strategic HAF board.**

Reasons for recommendations

The above recommendations are to ensure effective service delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme.

There could be circa 24 agreements per annum for the programmes. This report seeks to provide an efficient procurement framework and process in order to successfully deliver the programme over the holiday seasons, including time to market the programme to families.

The Tender process will occur three times a year prior to Easter, Summer and Christmas requirements. Officers intend to tender before the Summer 2022 programme.

Hillingdon has received the HAF grant since 2021. Initially, this has been delivered through a small number of large providers subcontracting as required. This report represents a change in approach which better meets the requirements of the grant to ensure flexibility and increased use of local provision.

A multi-department Strategic HAF Board meets every 4 weeks which will include officers from children's social care and from SEND which will discuss the procurement for the programme and the recommendations for expenditure.

The grant spend will be reported by Finance to cabinet via budget monitoring to complete oversight reporting.

Alternative options considered / risk management

- 1) A single provider to deliver all requirements, either direct or through sub-contracting. A single provider could not provide enough spaces nor the flexibility to adapt the programme offer throughout the year in response to the changing needs of children and young people in Hillingdon. Furthermore, DfE guidance expressed a preference for Council's to utilise local provision.
- 2) Continue to pursue the traditional method of approval – This would be resource intensive for all and not provide the flexibility required to deliver the timeliness of services.

Democratic compliance / previous authority

Cabinet conventionally accepts grants received as part of its monthly budget monitoring, however, the Leader of the Council may accept such grants in the absence of a Cabinet meeting. Any

individual procurement decisions in respect of the grant, are expected to be under the value threshold for Cabinet decision-making, and hence the recommendation is that this is delegated to the relevant Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. The HAF programme seeks to provide children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals with free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities. Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from low-income households being:
 - 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.
2. The HAF programme's objectives are to be responsive to these issues, with evidence showing that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people, and that they work best when they:
 - provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities;
 - cover more than just breakfast or lunch;
 - use local partnerships and connections, particularly with the voluntary and community organisation sector.
3. This holiday provision is for school aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who receive benefits-related free school meals. Local authorities have discretion to use up to 15% of their funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children who are not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals but who the local authority believe could benefit from HAF provision. This may include, for example:
 - children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable;
 - young carers;
 - looked-after children or previously looked after children;
 - children with an EHC (education, health and care) plan;

- children living in areas of high deprivation or from low-income households who are not in receipt of free school meals;

4. The core aims of the programme are for children who attend this provision to eat healthily and be active during the school holidays, take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment, be safe and not to be socially isolated, gain a greater knowledge of health and nutrition and be more engaged with school and other local services. Hillingdon also want to ensure that the families who participate in this programme develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting and are signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment, and education.

5. Overall, local authorities are expected to offer the equivalent of 6 weeks' holiday provision to eligible children. A week consists of a minimum of 4 hours per day for four days. Local authorities are tasked to deliver a minimum of one week at Easter, four weeks during the Summer and one week at Christmas.

6. Following the successful roll out of the programme across England in 2021. The government announced a further investment of over £200 million per year over the next 3 financial years for HAF. For 2022-23 Hillingdon has been allocated £1,061,920.

7. The DfE works with the organisations Mott MacDonald and Hempsall's, jointly known as Childcare Works, to provide support, advisory and performance monitoring services to assist local authorities with HAF provision. Feedback from Childcare Works and Local Authorities on their delivery during 2021-22 has identified that 'best practice' is to use local and smaller providers to deliver HAF programming as this allows for a more localised delivery offer better meeting the needs of residents.

8. Hillingdon will notify all potential providers of our requirements through a formal tender process three times a year Easter, Summer and Christmas. This process will be divided over five lots:

LOT 1 Primary age group: those in reception to year 7 (aged 4/5 to 11/12 years),

- LOT 2 Secondary age group: those in year 6 to year 11 (aged 11/12 – 16 years),
- LOT 3 Young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) up to age 18 years,
- LOT 4 Parents/Guardians: support, information, advice and signposting around food and nutrition, programmes that engage parents with their children such as cookery classes,
- LOT 5 Vulnerable children and families who are not in receipt of benefits-related FSM but would benefit from HAF. This may include children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable, young carers, looked-after children or previously looked after children, children with an EHC (education, health and care) plan.

9. There will be pass / fail criteria to capture essential criteria such as ability to demonstrate the organisation's experience and track record of providing similar provision and that they are able to provide food that complies with regulations on food preparation. There will be scored criteria for important criteria such as for programme content which includes a scoring of the physical activity or enrichment activity programme and the food element which will be ideally a hot meal.

10. There will be an evaluation of the demonstration of value for money, and how many children and young people they can provide for. Awards will be made to the most effective proposal against the weighted criteria.
11. Although the process will be open to all potential suppliers, Officers will ensure that comprehensive market engagement takes place to ensure local providers, including charity and voluntary sector organisations that currently deliver work for children and young adults or specialised targeted work are aware of the opportunities. Example organisations' in Hillingdon that may apply for the funding are HACS (Hillingdon Autistic Care Support), Young Carers Project, US Project (Somali community), DASH (children with disabilities), P3. Additionally sports based programming such as Trailfinders, cycling programmes, Sport England.
12. Officers will also engage with local schools and Academy groups so they are aware of the opportunities explore Hillingdon internal services to offer some of the services.
13. The individual agreements depending on the bids could range from £10K to £150K. The bid evaluation will be presented to the HAF Strategic Board along with the scorings. As part of the evaluation process officers will engage with the Finance Team along with reviewing a credit report to assess the providers financial viability.
14. Previously Hillingdon utilised internal departments and GLL who sub-contracted out to other organisations however the new strategy provides a greater amount flexibility and will provide more spaces for children, young people and support more families.

Financial Implications

Following the successful roll out of the HAF programme in 2021/22 to local authorities, the Government has announced a further £200m investment in the programme over the next 3 financial years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. The allocation for Hillingdon for 2022/23 is up to a maximum allocation of £1,061,920. The allocations for future years have not yet been determined but is likely to be at a similar level.

A tender process will be followed to determine the providers of this programme's activities during the year ensuring value for money, and correct procurement guidance is followed.

The monitoring of the grant will be through the budget monitoring process throughout 2022/23. This will ensure the grant is maximised to the full potential and minimise financial risk to the authority.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

Using the proposed bespoke procurement pathway to manage expenditure of the holiday activities and food programme (HAF) programme will allow us to avoid delays and ensure effective service delivery. It will allow us to provide a comprehensive tailored programme offer to

eligible children and families in Hillingdon within the brief time frames between programmes across the year. As we will have the flexibility to select and commission providers to deliver provision that best serve the needs of children and families in our borough.

This process will allow us to engage with local providers including charity and voluntary sector organisations that deliver work for children and young adults or specialised targeted work on key themes/issues of concern. The Government HAF guidance issued references evidence showing that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people, and that they work best when they use local partnerships and connections, particularly with the voluntary and community organisation sector. The use of local and smaller providers to deliver HAF programming will give a more localised delivery offer better meeting the needs of residents and enable us to be able to offer a broader and flexible range of programming that meets their needs. Local providers often have existing relationships with vulnerable families and can support their needs and encourage their engagement.

This procurement pathway will provide a greater amount flexibility and allow us to adapt the HAF programme offer throughout the year on a programme-by-programme basis, allowing us to adjust the offer to reflect the feedback from children and families. This process will enable us to adjust the offer quickly, and utilise the appropriate providers, to meet changing needs as detailed in a range of data available. For example, currently most FSM eligible children live in wards in the South of the Borough so programmes will be focused here to maximise attendance levels. Health data shows some prominent levels of childhood obesity in wards in the North of the Borough that can be targeted with specific provision. The ages of eligible children will also change throughout the period of HAF funding and thus an adjustment in the programmes and places available to primary age, secondary age or SEND children may need to change from one programme to the next. To be able to be needs responsive, to provide the right programmes in the right locations at the right times, meet the needs and demands of residents, a quicker more flexible process for allocating HAF funding is needed.

Consultation carried out or required

Feedback from a recent survey of FSM eligible families indicated that the programme offer should be varied and include, sports-based activities, enrichment activities, STEM learning and programmes that develop life skills. Families that responded also indicated a need for the programmes to be delivered locally to them as not all are able to travel across the Borough to access provision. The survey responses also indicated a need for programme offer at a range of various times which differs by location in the borough and may change across the funding period. Effective mapping of existing provision, alongside building an understanding of the sorts of enriching activities that children of different ages want to engage in will support an effective commissioning strategy and the proposed procurement pathway will provide us the flexibility needed to commission a range of different providers for each programme offered across the year based on what we know about local supply and demand.

Officers reviewed the DfE Independent report for the Evaluation of the 2021 holiday activities and food programme which was published online in March 2022.

Officers will review the feedback from families for Easter in May and data from last year's delivery.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications set out above, noting the recommendation to accept the DfE grant for Holiday Activities and Food Programme in 2022/23. Corporate Finance further notes the bespoke procurement pathway for delivery, with market engagement with local providers, voluntary organisations, charities and Hillingdon's strategic partners, which should ensure quality and value for money through efficient procurement.

Legal

The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no legal implications arising from this report or to agree to the recommendations which include full procurement exercises and that the approval of the recommendations will facilitate the Council to ensure effective service delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme for eligible children and families within the Borough. Any Contract entered into must comply with the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.