

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Rory Love,

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

23/00009

For publication [Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or
- b) be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:
 - the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;
 - significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Holiday Activity and Food Programme

Reason for Urgency

The DfE wrote to the LA on 20 December 2023, with the grant determination letter. KCC are being asked to accept the grant and terms and conditions by 16th January. The next HAF delivery period is Easter 2023, which starts 3 April. The work to ensure provision is in place and enable parents to book in good time is already underway. KCC will need to begin making financial commitments using funds from the 2023-24 allocation in February. The LA have contacted the DfE to request an extension to the deadline to accept the grant term and conditions to allow for the governance procedures.

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to:

- i) Authorise the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to accept the Holiday Activity and Food Grant for 2023-24 (£5.56m) in full for use in accordance with the grant determination letter issued by the Department for Education and the relevant terms and conditions.
- ii) Authorise the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to accept future allocations of Holiday Activity and Food Grant in full for use in accordance with the grant determination letter which will be issued by the Department for Education and the relevant terms and conditions, provided these remain substantially the same as the current.
- iii) Delegate authority to Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to manage and deploy the accepted Holiday Activity and Food Grant in accordance with the grant conditions and arrangements detailed in this report, including entering into contracts, grant agreements and any other legal agreements, and be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) has been successfully delivered in Kent for the

past two years, under the wider Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme. It has been growing in popularity with eligible families, and has provided an invaluable form of support during school holidays to children and young people who ordinarily receive benefits related free school meals.

The grant determination letter was received from the Department for Education on 20 December 2023, setting out the Authority's funding allocation and the grant terms and conditions. The grant needs to be accepted swiftly and authority delegated to enable the necessary arrangements to be made to deliver HAF provision during the Easter holidays, which commence 3 April 2023.

Preferred option

The preferred option is to accept the grant and to continue to delegate authority to the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to deploy the funding and manage arrangements in order to delivery Kent's HAF programme. The Education People are currently commissioned to manage the programme on behalf of the County Council and this arrangement will continue in the immediacy.

Consultation (if any)

The Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services has been consulted and supports acceptance of the grant and future service delivery.

Equalities Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment has completed. This indicates there are positive impacts in delivering a HAF programme, and these outweigh any negative impacts for any particular group.

Financial Implications

The HAF grant, £5.56m in 2023-24 and similar in 2024-25, can only be used for the stated purposes – delivery of HAF provision. Up to 10% can be spent on management and administration, and up to 2% on capital items. Expenditure is audited by the DfE to ensure it is compliant with the grant conditions. The S151 Officer has to sign off the County Council's expenditure return to the DfE. Unspent funding has to be returned to the DfE.

As demand for HAF places increases further the risk of exceeding the funding envelope available materialises. This will be managed by only commissioning the number of places that can be afforded.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

It is planned to take this decision to the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on the 8 March 2023 in accordance with the County Council's decision making process.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The option to reject the grant has been discounted as this is not in the interests of Kent's residents.

The option of delivering in house has been considered. This has been rejected. The Early Years and Childcare team within TEP have strong links with the existing out of school holiday scheme providers, have the advisory staff who can monitor the quality of provision and support improvement, and have built the systems and networks to increase the level of provision.

The option of commissioning a different delivery partner has been considered. The next HAF delivery period is Easter 2023. The work to ensure places are available for children and young people to access is already underway. It is not feasible to change delivery partner at this point and ensure programme delivery in 2023-24. Options for the future are being explored with Strategic Commissioning.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None



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signed

1 February 2023.....
date