

From: Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Subject Holiday Activity and Food Programme 2023-25

Decision number: 23/00009

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary: The Government funded Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) will continue to be funded through 2023/24 and 2024/25. This programme provides access to free holiday provision for children who ordinarily received income related free school meals, together with a free meal. In March 2021 Cabinet agreed this programme would be included within and delivered by the Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme, which finishes 31 March 2023. This report makes a recommendation to accept this grant funding and on the future delivery of the HAF Programme.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree to the decision to:

- I. Confirm acceptance of 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.

1. Reasons for Urgency

- 1.1 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.

2. Background

- 2.1 Since 2021-22 the Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) has operated in Kent. The objectives of this Government funded programme is to enable all children (Reception to Year 11) in receipt of benefits related free school meals to access healthy food, enriching activities, physical activity and nutritional education during the holiday periods.
- 2.2 The holiday club places should normally be available for the equivalent of at least 4 hours a day, 4 days a week, 6 weeks a year. This covers four weeks in the summer, plus a week's worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas holidays. Local authorities have flexibility about how they spend this grant and deliver this provision to best serve the needs of the children and families in their areas, but provision should remain in line with the framework of standards set out in our programme guidance.
- 2.3 The Education People have, for 2021-23 been commissioned to manage the HAF programme on behalf of the County Council. During this time, the programme has become more established. The certainty of funding until 2025 has enabled providers to invest in their businesses to facilitate regular delivery. Families have become aware of the offer and have increasingly been utilising it, as the table below demonstrates:

Holiday Period	Places Offered	Take-up
Easter 2021	2262	1861
Summer 2021	4748	4577
Christmas 2021	3236	2836
Easter 2022	5886	5175
Summer 2022*	7401	7107

*awaiting final monitoring figures

- 2.4 The programme has provided exciting opportunities and activities to children and young people, including water sports, horse riding, team sports, day trips to organised events, skateboarding, dance, arts and crafts and forming a rock band. Opportunities have also been taken to incorporate other activities through Reconnect, for example in summer 2022 CREST awards (science, technology, engineering and maths based) were available to Kent families to access. Through HAF programmes 1961 children participated in this opportunity.

- 2.5 Family activities have included recipe ideas to support cooking on a budget with ingredients included, family cooking sessions, outdoor pizza making, family BBQ's, family breakfasts and many more inspiring ideas.
- 2.6 Some programmes have also benefitted from funding or resources from supermarkets and other organisations and have used these to support families and enrich their programmes.
- 2.7 Whilst the focus of HAF is on provision for eligible children who currently receive benefits related free school meals, up to 15% of the funding can be used to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for other children who are considered by the local authority as vulnerable or in need of this provision. The County Council has used this provision to enable children open to Early Help or with a social worker to access free provision. The Department for Education also encourages holiday clubs be available to any children who can pay to attend.
- 2.8 On 20 December 2022 the Department for Education issued the Grant Determination letters to local Authorities. This confirmed Kent's allocation of £5.56m for 2023-24. The Department requires confirmation for the County Council by 16 January 2023 that it was accepting this allocation and the associated terms and conditions. The Department for Education has been contacted to advise that the County Council will need to make a formal decision to accept the grant and approve expenditure.

3. Proposed Future Delivery

- 3.1 It is proposed that the responsibility to manage and delivery HAF be delegated to the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education.
- 3.2 Up to 10% of the funding allocation can be used to cover the management and administration costs of delivering the programme. In 2021-23 this funding element was used to commission The Education People (TEP) to deliver the programme on the County Council's behalf. It is proposed to continue to commission TEP to deliver HAF, with the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education being delegated authority to enter into the necessary contractual arrangements.

4. Alternatives Considered

- 4.1 The option of not taking up the HAF grant has been considered and discounted. This would be detrimental to the Kent community.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 In order to grow the market from a standing start in Easter 2021, the County Council adopted a process whereby it agreed the number of places to be delivered by a provider, and a set rate per place paid. Where bookings for places exceed 80%, the full funding is provided for the agreed number of places. This approach recognises that attendance is voluntary, and provisions have “no shows” for booked places. It also sought to de-risk finance for providers, who were looking to enter a new market, during Covid, supporting families who do not ordinarily use holiday club provision. Where bookings do not reach the 80% threshold the actual costs to the providers are met, but the remaining funding withheld. As demand for places increases this approach needs to change. A consultation has been run with providers to move to a payment structure based on both bookings and attendance levels. The current arrangement incentivises providers to secure bookings, the proposed arrangement seeks to maximise attendance. As the funding available will not support every eligible child to receive the full 6 weeks of provision, it is important the County Council ensures the funding supports as many children as possible. The proposed arrangement is the next step towards only funding places attended.
- 5.3 As demand increases further the risk is it exceeds the funding envelope available. This will be managed by only commissioning the number of places that can be afforded. At some point, this will mean eligible families cannot access provision, or at least not the full 6 weeks.
- 5.4 The current commissioning arrangement is a form of grant process. Work is underway to move to a different commissioning model, based on a mix of contracts and grant agreements dependent upon value. This is being undertaken in conjunction with Strategic Commissioning and will apply for 2024-25 to allow for procurement and consultation timescales.
- 5.5 A risk register is in place for the programme. This has recently been reviewed and updated with support from Internal Audit.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The County Council will commission TEP to deliver HAF on its behalf. This will be done through the agreed “additional works request” process.
- 6.2 On the County Council's behalf TEP enters into contractual arrangements with providers for delivery. This arrangement sets out the delivery requirements.

6.3 The County Council has procured the services of Wonde Ltd to enable the use of its HAF platform. This enables schools, on behalf of the County Council, to issue eligibility vouchers to families, for providers to upload details of their programmes, and for families to book places. The costs of delivering the HAF elements are funded by the grant.

6.4 Data protection is covered in both the contract with Wonde Ltd and TEP. Privacy notices are in place. Information sharing arrangements enable the County Council to meet its reporting requirements to the DfE.

7. Equalities Implications

7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has completed. This indicates there are positives for all eligible children in delivering a HAF programme, and these outweigh any negative impacts on any particular group.

7.2 The area of continued development is ensuring access to suitable provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Providers are able to access additional funding to enable them to meet the needs of children who receive additional support in school funded by High Needs Funding. Many providers are very inclusive, as is witnessed by positive parental feedback, but it is challenging supporting those young people whose support staff need high level training.

7.3 It is recognised nationally that HAF provision has had a greater take up amongst primary aged pupils. This is partly due to parental views about the need for childcare for older children, but also the offer available. Again, this is an area of development in Kent.

8. Other Corporate Implications

8.1 HAF needs to play a role in improving the local offer for children with SEND. It is also important in providing opportunities for vulnerable children to keep them in sight of the children's workforce.

9. Governance

9.1 This will be a Key Decision, taken in accordance with the Council's Constitution, and it will provide clear and appropriate delegation to officers to take the actions needed to implement it.

10. Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree to the decision to:

- I. Confirm acceptance of 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.

11. Background Documents (plus links to document)

11.1 None

11. Contact details

Report Author	Relevant Director:
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Appendix A:

Develop contributions directed towards Sir Roger Manwood's Grammar School as of November 2022.

Phase	Planning Number	Contributions agreed
Phase 1	DOV/01/01167	£249,621.12
	DOV/14/00842	£182,124.42
	DOV/16/01049	£212,382.00
	DOV/19/00243	£500,899.74
	DOV/19/01362	£45,265.00
	DOV/19/01462	£312,739.98
	DOV/21/01604	£11,350.00
Phase 2	DOV/17/01114	£205,750.00
Phase 3	DOV/16/01247	£83,075.12
	DOV/16/01476	£159,918.03
	DOV/17/00487	£191,143.80
Total		£2,154,269.21