

Report of:	Andy Preston - The Mayor and Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Adult Social Care and Public Protection Mark Adams - Director of Public Health Councillor Mieka Smiles - Executive Member for Culture and Communities Rob Brown - Director of Education, Prevention and Partnerships
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Submitted to:	Executive - 15 June 2021
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Subject:	Update on the Holiday Activities Fund 2021
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)
Not applicable, the report is for information only.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?
Executive	N/A	N/A	N/A

Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
<p>Promote the welfare of our children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm, abuse and neglect.</p> <p>Work with communities to improve local health and wellbeing, working with local providers to increase educational and vocational attainment for children</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable

Ward(s) affected
All

What is the purpose of this report?

1. The report provides an update on the Holiday Activities Fund 2021 including Easter delivery and the plans for Summer 2021.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. The original decision (March 2021) was required as the grant is over £150,000 and affects more than two wards. Executive and LMT requested an update to be presented in June 2021.

Report Background

3. School holidays can be pressure points for some families because of increased costs and reduced incomes – some children from lower-income families are more likely to experience ‘unhealthy holidays’ in terms of nutrition and physical health and are less likely to access fun activities. Parents from food insecure households report greater stress levels during the school holidays, impacting on mental wellbeing.
4. There is also evidence for greater learning loss during the school holidays (particularly summer) in children from lower-income families, particularly around spelling.
5. Over recent years, the Government has piloted a range of approaches to delivering school holiday activities with the aim of providing free healthy meals and fun activities to disadvantaged children. In November 2020, they announced that Local Authorities would be allocated a share of £220 million to expand the Holiday Activities Fund (HAF) programme in 2021 so that it is available for every child and young person eligible for free school meals (FSM).
6. The grant made available to Middlesbrough Council is listed below, alongside the other Teesside Local Authorities.

Local authority name	2020/21 FY	2021/22 FY	Total indicative allocation
Hartlepool	£63,000	£563,500	£626,500
Middlesbrough	£105,340	£942,130	£1,047,470
Redcar and Cleveland	£69,990	£625,960	£695,950
Stockton-on-Tees	£91,500	£818,350	£909,850

7. Broadly, the requirements of the HAF programme 2021 are:
 - Healthy (hot) meals to School Food Standards
 - Enrichment activities
 - Physical activity and nutrition education
 - Signposting and referrals to services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families (e.g. Housing Support Officers, Affordable Warmth Advisors)
 - Inclusive and accessible provision
 - At least 4 hours for 4 days a week – for 4 weeks in the summer, and for a week in Easter and Christmas
 - Ofsted registered providers where appropriate
8. The free holiday club places must be targeted at children and young people who are eligible for and receiving benefits-related free school meals (8,871 in Middlesbrough in the Spring 2021 school census).
9. If the Local Authority can demonstrate that (1) we are offering the programme comprehensively across the full geographical area; and (2) fully meeting demand from free school meal eligible children and young people in the area, then approval can be sought from the DfE to use up to 15% of the programme funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children 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. This permission

has been sought from DfE in advance of the summer provision to give local flexibility in provision; however, demand for places from children and young people who are eligible for and receiving benefits-related free school meals needs to be secured and delivery on first and foremost.

Update

Easter 2021 delivery

10. The HAF grant was formally accepted by Executive in March 2021 and plans were immediately operationalised for delivery at Easter. This included:

- i. A grants programme whereby providers could ask for up to £1,500 to deliver activities to the relevant HAF and COVID secure standards – a total of 22 grants were issued to partners to deliver activities ranging from football to running clubs to outdoor education to arts and crafts. This programme also provided additional support for voluntary and community groups in Middlesbrough to utilise staff and resources as part of their own recovery from the pandemic (the groups and the activities that they delivered are listed in appendix one).
- ii. Activity directly commissioned by Middlesbrough Council Education and Prevention colleagues – for example, Park End Primary School were funded to deliver five days of activity.
- iii. A collaboration between nine of the North East Local Authorities to pool budgets to place enrichment content on Teesside TV and Made in Tyne & Wear (channel seven on Freeview) as a means of avoiding digital exclusion issues. This ran for 10 hours over four days of the Easter Holidays, with programming aimed at different age groups (e.g. morning for young children, lunchtime for older children and evenings for teenagers). All of the content was recorded in the North East including a piece on dinosaurs filmed at Teessaurus Park (available at <https://youtu.be/Ehj5IFPUeqo>).



11. These plans provided options for all children and young people to access HAF related enrichment activities, albeit not to the full HAF requirements (which were waived by DfE given time pressures). Not all providers could mobilise in the timeframe and hence there was an underspend at Easter which is carried forward to summer and Christmas (see section 10).

12. Combined, the first two programmes were attended by 937 children and young people, with 816 eligible for free school meal related benefits. This provides a strong basis to develop and deliver the summer and Christmas programmes.

13. The third element on Teesside TV was viewed (3 minute reach) by an average audience of 10,252 people across their broadcast area.

Management and Co-ordination

14. Given the scale and priority of the programme, the Department for Education have confirmed that 10% of the local grant can be allocated to the management and co-ordination of the HAF programme.

15. A quotation process was undertaken to select a local provider/consortium to deliver this function on behalf of Middlesbrough Council and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council.

Three bids were submitted and competitively scored, with The Junction selected as the winning provider. Specifically, they will:

- Support the two Councils to commission safe, appropriate HAF provision in place that delivers on the DfE requirements
- Maximise the uptake from those with the most to gain, including representing the voice of the child and young person and putting in place a co-produced marketing and branding strategy
- Co-ordinate a centralised booking system and data return for the Councils to submit to DfE
- Quality assure all provision including checking qualifications and undertaking assurance visits

16. Internal capacity is also being funded from the HAF grant including:

- Advanced Public Health Practitioner (0.1wte) as the overall lead for the HAF
- Health Improvement Specialist (up to 0.3wte) to provide support to the Advanced Public Health Practitioner
- Support from the Obesity and Nutrition Team on advice for providers around the School Food Standards and training on nutritional education (key requirements of the HAF programme).
- Commissioning Officer support.

Summer 2021 delivery

17. As a holiday programme at this scale has never been delivered locally, the HAF pilots in 2019 and 2020 from elsewhere have been reviewed and good practice identified to inform our local approach.

18. Initially it was proposed that the HAF for Primary School age children would be school based. However, following discussions with Head Teachers, only a handful of schools volunteered as delivery sites making this approach infeasible. Hence the proposals for providing the HAF for this age group are:

- To work with the schools that have volunteered as delivery sites and map these to understand gaps in provision.
- To work with community partners (e.g. those who provided HAF programmes at Easter) to commission provision to fill these gaps.

19. The timetable for progressing this element of the work is:

- Follow up meeting with Head Teachers expressing an interest: by 28th May 2021
- Mapping of Primary School provision to identify gaps to be filled: by 4th June 2021
- Commissioning activity to fill the gaps to commence: w/c 7th June 2021

20. Proposals for providing the HAF for Secondary School age young people include:

- Targeted outreach for those aged 12 and over delivered alongside other partner activity (e.g. diversionary activities commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner) to achieve other outcomes (e.g. delivered at times to reduce antisocial behaviour which peaks during the school holidays).

- In practice, it is expected that this will mirror detached youth work provision – delivered from 17:00 to 21:00 to maximise attendance from the target age group and deliver on other outcomes (e.g. diverting young people from antisocial behaviour).
- Colleagues from across the Council and other partners are supporting the development of plans for this age group to maximise the wider outcomes.

21. The timetable for progressing this element of the work is:

- A final proposed delivery method to be created: by 28th May 2021 (in conjunction with colleagues such as those in Children’s Services)
- Commissioning activity to commence: w/c 7th June 2021

22. Proposals for providing the HAF for children and young people with a disability are:

- The HAF programme requires that provision is fully inclusive.
- There is an opportunity to maximise the HAF opportunity for children and young people with a disability by combining budgets with other relevant provision (e.g. short breaks provision).
- Where possible, children and young people with a disability will be included in mainstream provision; where there is a requirement for more specialist provision, clarity has been sought from DfE about aligning this with short breaks providers already commissioned to deliver programmes during the summer holidays by Middlesbrough Council.

23. The timetable for progressing this element of the work is:

- Officers meet with internal colleagues delivering/commissioning other support for children and young people with a disability during the summer holidays and consider joint plans/funding: 20th May 2021 (complete)
- Clarity sought from DfE about aligning HAF provision with short breaks providers: 17th May 2021 (email sent)
- A final proposed delivery method to be created: by 28th May 2021

24. Given the lack of facilities in some of these settings to cook large volumes of food (e.g. detached youth work), this element will be commissioned separately from an appropriate provider (e.g. School Meals providers, Middlesbrough Football Club) and transported to where the HAF is being delivered.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

25. Not applicable, the report is for information only.

Why is this being recommended?

26. Not applicable, the report is for information only.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

27. Not applicable, the report is for information only.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

28. Not applicable, the report is for information only.

Equality and Diversity

29. Not applicable, the report is for information only.

Legal

30. Relevant procurement and legal requirements will need to be met.

Financial

31. The Holiday Activities Fund grant for Middlesbrough is £1,047,470 from which we are allowed to utilise 10% for management and co-ordination, leaving £942,723 for front line delivery. If this is broken down into the six weeks of activity, it equates to £157,120 per week on average. The DfE state that:

“We are not specifying a minimum reach or expectation. We know that reaching a very high percentage of FSM children is not realistic. We want to allow LAs the flexibility to build a high-quality programme that reaches as many children as they are able to.”

32. It is difficult to predict what the level of demand will be, however, local projections suggest that the grant will support an uptake of approximately 40% (3,548 children and young people). Additionally, Officers will work to increase capacity through:

- Negotiating the lowest cost per day with providers without impacting on quality
- Exploring other options for funding for the programme to extend the provision to more children and young people such as:
 - Could an appropriate commercial sponsor be secured – potentially via links in other parts of the Local Authority (e.g. links and relationships that Regeneration have with local businesses)
 - There are opportunities to align the HAF provision with other local activity (e.g. short breaks for children and young people with a disability), which is actively being explored with relevant Officers
 - The DfE are expected to announce a small uplift in the grant shortly following the increase in FSM eligible numbers

33. These projections take account of an underspend at Easter of £93,042 (budget of £157,120).

34. If extra funding was secured, for every £17,387 the level of supply could be increased by an additional 1% (based on the above assumptions).

Policy Framework

35. Not applicable, the report is for information only.

Equality and Diversity

36. Equality Impact Assessments may be required to ensure that the provision is accessible to all relevant communities.

Risk

37. The relevant risks this decision would influence are cited below, with an explanation as to why they are relevant and how it would affect each risk.

Risk No	Risk Description	
O9-015	Failure to address the impacts of Covid on Middlesbrough's pupils because of deprivation and digital access issues may lead to the loss of learning due to limited access to digital media and limited access to food for those on low incomes resulting in an increased financial hardship being placed on families and the children may not reach their full potential due to the loss of education.	The holiday enrichment activity programme will ensure that deprived children in the area will have access to food and activities which will support families and therefore it will have a positive impact on this risk.
O4-015	If attainment at all key stages fails to narrow with national benchmarks the council could be perceived as not having a focus on education.	Evidence states that there is a greater loss of learning during school holidays in particular around lower income families so a holiday enrichment programme can have education learning built in an act as an intervention within this time which will support the schools in the area. This will have a positive impact on this risk.
O8-091	Failure to achieve full reimbursement from government for costs incurred responding to COVID-19 to date and risks of further costs being incurred as a result of local outbreaks.	The costs for the holiday enrichment activity programme has been extended due to the impacts of Covid-19 and the government have provided the additional funding. This will have a positive impact on this risk.
O8-059	If incorrect assumptions are made in the MTFP this will result in a funding gap requiring further savings to be made.	The funding received from government for the holiday enrichment activity programme will be factored into the MTFP and will ensure that there is no funding gaps for this area of delivery and therefore it will have a positive impact on this risk.
O8-008	If effective partnership working is not achieved, then this will reduce the Council's ability to deliver strategic priorities and key services, resulting in reduced outcomes for local communities.	Working with adjacent local authority and working with community partners to identify and commission provision on the services required will deliver better outcomes for local communities so will have a positive impact on this risk.
O8-097	If corporate procurement policies are not adhered to this may lead to the Council not achieving best value for money resulting in the potential for legal challenge, fines, setting aside of contracts which will have an impact	Services are being commissioned for the holiday enrichment activity programme will follow a procurement process to ensure that best value services and best price are secured

	on budgets and damaged the Council's reputation.	which will have a positive impact on this risk.
O2-038	The Community safety Partnership relies on effective partnership working with policing at a strategic level and neighbourhood level. Current pressures on policing have meant that there has been no neighbourhood policing presence. This has affected community confidence and crime levels. The Chief Constable has also publicly highlighted failings of the police in other areas such as response to Domestic Abuse etc.	By providing the holiday enrichment activity programme for those aged 12 and over alongside partners such as the police this will hopefully have an impact on anti-social behaviour by diverting young people into other activities and will provide a more cohesive approach across partners to maximise the wider outcomes. This will have a positive impact on this risk at a neighbourhood level.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

38. Progress on implementation of the HAF programme will be provided on a regular basis to Children's Services and Public Health DMTs.

Background papers

39. Executive paper 20/124 (16th March 2021) – Acceptance of the Holiday Activities Fund 2021 Grant

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Appendix One – Providers of Holiday Activity Fund Easter 2021 programmes in Middlesbrough

- Rewilding Adventure (two grants totalling £3,000) – who provided outdoor education adventures for children and young people from Thorntree ward at their established woodland site at Dunsdale in Redcar & Cleveland
- Pip Disabled Mum (three grants totalling £2,415) – who provided activity packs for children and families in households where parents were shielding, specifically:
 - Craft and activity packs
 - Fruit exploration packs
 - Sport and sensory packs
- Harbour Support Services (one grant totalling £1,500) – who provided activity sessions over two weeks for families who have experienced domestic abuse
- Lisa McGee Education (one grant totalling £1,500) – who provided fun enrichment activities centred around nutrition and improving mental health and delivered through STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) activities and art activities
- Pennyman Primary Academy (one grant totalling £1,500) – who provided four days of holiday clubs covering a range of activities such as physical activities, art, crafts and music
- Kids Kabin (one grant totalling £1,280) – who provided four days of holiday clubs covering a range of activities such as cookery, physical activities, art, crafts and music
- Boro Soccer Schools (one grant totalling £1,500) – who provided a three day football coaching camp
- Linx Youth Project (one grant totalling £1,500) – who provided a range of activities including sport and cookery
- Tees Valley Sport (one grant totalling £1,500) – who provided a four day multisport/physical activity, arts, music and nature programme at Albert Park
- Youth Focus North East (four grants totalling £3,907) – who provided a range of activities for young people on evenings in Park End, Pallister Park and North Ormesby
- Park End Primary School (one grant totalling £1,500) – who provided a week long holiday camp for their pupils
- Community Ventures Ltd (one grant totalling £720.50) – who started a kids holiday running club
- Active Tees Valley (one grant totalling £1,500) – who provided football camps for primary school children

Additional activity was commissioned by Middlesbrough Council Education Colleagues via Park End Primary School, Captain Cook Primary School and Council staff.