

Report for: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting:	18 March 2021
Subject:	Department for Education (DfE) funded Holiday Activities and Food Programme
Key Decision:	Yes The decision will result in the Council incurring expenditure in excess of £0.5m revenue expenditure and affects two or more wards of the Borough.
Responsible Officer:	Paul Hewitt - Corporate Director People Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Christine Robson - Portfolio Holder for Young People and Schools
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Annexe A: Grants to fund local coordination of free holiday activities and healthy food for disadvantaged children during 2021 Guidance for local authorities February 2021 Annexe B: Young Harrow Foundation Delivery Plan

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the Council's approach to coordinating and delivering the Department for Education (DfE) funded Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) for children who receive benefits-related free school meals.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director People Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Children, Schools and Young People and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources to issue a direct award to Young Harrow Foundation (YHF) to coordinate the delivery and evaluation of the DfE funded Holiday Activities and Food Programme on behalf of the Council.

The direct award value to YHF is £616,240 (£60,200 programme coordination and evaluation costs and the remaining £556,040 will be allocated to the sub-contracted providers delivering the activities) from the DfE grant.

Reason:

To fulfil the requirements for Local Authorities to provide holiday activities and food programme in line with the aims and objectives set out the DfE HAF 2021 Guidance for Local Authorities February 2021.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

1. This report sets out the Council's approach to delivering the holiday activities and food programme covering Easter, Summer and Christmas holiday periods during the 2021 funding allocation.
2. In November 2020, the DfE announced grant funding for local authorities to co-ordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities, for children who receive benefits-related free school meals.
3. Local authorities have the option to coordinate the programme themselves, and/or to work with another organisation to coordinate the provision on their behalf.
4. Harrow Council recognises and values the important role of the local community and voluntary sector and the preferred approach is to partner with Young Harrow Foundation, who will work with a wide range of partners and co-ordinate the delivery of this programme.

5. The decision to agree this approach will contribute to the Council's corporate priorities by tackling poverty and inequality and addressing health and social care inequality whilst stimulating our local economy.

Options considered

6. The following options have been considered:
 - Option 1. Commission Young Harrow Foundation to co-ordinate the delivery of the programme in partnership with the Council.
 - Option 2. The Council to co-ordinate the delivery of the programme.
 - Option 3. Do not accept funding from DfE to provide Holiday Activities and Food Programme for vulnerable children and young people in Harrow.
7. The Council is unable to co-ordinate the delivery of the programme at this time and maintain its covid response. Option 3 is not acceptable given the importance of this programme for disadvantaged children and young people in Harrow.
8. Option 1 is the preferred option as YHF is the only organisation that does not deliver activities to 0-25 year olds directly, thus eliminating a risk of challenge to the council and can maintaining impartiality. Young Harrow Foundation have the skills, experience and track record of coordinating holiday provision and have over 200 local organisations registered that already provide good quality activities, education and parent support to residents in Harrow. This is in line with the DfE options for the delivery of the programme.

Background

9. **The Government's Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAFF)**
The Government's pilot programme initially began in 2018 and was expanded to include all local authorities from 2021. The focus of the programme is to ensure that there is holiday club provision available for all children eligible for benefits-related free school meals in the area.
10. The holiday club provision is required to meet the DfE's core aims and objectives listed as follows:
 - **Healthy meals:** holiday clubs must provide at least one healthy meal a day and must meet the School Food Standards throughout the day.
 - **Enriching activities:** holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop or consolidate skills or knowledge, to consolidate existing skills and

knowledge. Clubs must also provide physical activities which meet the Physical Activity Guidelines on a daily basis.

- **Nutritional education:** holiday clubs must improve children’s knowledge and awareness of healthy eating and offer advice and training to parents on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.
 - **Signposting and referrals:** clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families.
 - **Policies and procedures:** clubs must be able to demonstrate and explain their safeguarding arrangements and have relevant and appropriate policies and procedures in place in relation to: safeguarding, health and safety, insurance, accessibility and inclusiveness. Where appropriate, clubs must also be compliant with the Ofsted requirements for working with children.
11. The programme will provide free places to eligible children for the equivalent of at least four hours a day, four days a week, six weeks a year. This covers four weeks in the summer and a week’s worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas holidays.
12. Local authorities and their providers have flexibility about how they deliver this level of provision. For example:
- Christmas and Easter holidays – spreading a week’s worth of provision across a two-week period.
 - Summer - spreading the equivalent number of hours over a longer period
 - How to best deliver the programme for older children
 - How to make the holiday clubs available to any children not eligible for free school meals, who can pay to attend.

Funding and Resources

13. The Council will receive grant funding to deliver this provision. The funding received is to cover the provision of free holiday places (minimum of 6 weeks’ worth of provision over the 3 holidays) and the coordination of the programme locally. The funding will be released to the Council during the financial years as below:

2020/21	2021/22	Total
£61,970	£554,270	£616,240

14. Details of the funding and Government’s scheme are provided at Annex A.

Harrow’s Delivery Model

15. Harrow's preferred delivery model is to work with the VCS and partners to plan and deliver the programme and at the early stages of receiving information about the programme, officers worked with YHF to consider the most effective approach to planning and delivering the plan.
16. Young Harrow Foundation (YHF) is a membership organisation supporting the local voluntary sector to build capacity, increase fundraising opportunities and to facilitate partnership working in the community. YHF has been operating for over five years and has worked closely with the Council on a variety of initiatives. YHF operates as a delivery partner working with and across all sectors to ensure the best opportunities for children, young people and their families in Harrow.
17. Over the last five years YHF has raised, facilitated and distributed over £4 million in funding, administering small grant programmes and, holiday schemes. Importantly for this programme, YHF have over 200 member organisations registered, delivering local provision and specialist support to children and young people and their families.
18. YHF were invited to submit a proposal to work with the Council to plan and deliver the programme in accordance with the DfE's requirements. Young Harrow Foundation have detailed their delivery plan with financial information in accordance with the DfE guidance. This is provided at Annexe B.
19. It is proposed that YHF deliver the Government's Holiday Programme in Harrow. This is based on the following reasons:
 - As a VCS partner organisation there is a robust and positive relationship with the Council.
 - The YHF membership includes providers across Harrow that are actively providing services and opportunities for children and young people across Harrow.
 - YHF has a map of provision across Harrow – providing a strong foundation on which to plan the Holiday offer.
 - The lead in time for the Easter Holiday programme is limited and YHF are well placed to plan and commission the delivery of the programme within the timescale.
 - YHF are able to extend the offer to those pupils not eligible for FSM and have identified additional resources for this.
 - The approach proposed will engage with a range of VCS organisations functioning in Harrow which will contribute to engaging with hard to reach communities
 - YHF will plan the programme and sub-contract with other VCS organisations to deliver. There will not be any financial interest for YHF other than the costs of administering the programme as the funding will be passported to the VCS.

20. In addition, Young Harrow Foundation will raise a further £20,000 to support the additional vulnerable families with meals through the services included in the programme.

Governance

21. The performance of Young Harrow Foundation to fulfil the programme aims and objects will be monitored and evaluated through an established governance arrangement with the Council.
22. The governance structure consists of the HAF Strategic Group comprising Senior Officers within the Council. This group will approve the plan for each holiday period, the appointment of the VCS organisations to deliver activities, financial expenditure, monitor performance against the YHF Plan and data returns to DfE. This Group is chaired by Divisional Director Children and Families Division.
23. The HAF Steering Group consists of stakeholders and operational managers. The role of this group is to implement the plan agreed by the Strategy Group and design the delivery of the programme including the selection of providers.
24. Together with Young Harrow Foundation, the Council will monitor and evaluate the impact, equalities and access to the provision in line with the DfE requirements.

Performance Issues

25. Of Harrow's school's pupils, 34,709 are of compulsory school age pupils (Reception to Year 11), and 4,979 pupils (14%) are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) as at the October 2020 school census.
26. Of the eligible pupils 4,233 pupils are residents of Harrow, with the majority residing in the Wealdstone, Roxbourne, Marlborough and Harrow Weald wards, and the lowest number residing in the Headstone North ward. A majority of Harrow's school's FSM pupil's resident in Harrow are of the following ethnic origins - Asian Other (21.7%), Black African (11.2%), Any other ethnic group (10.1%), White British (10.0%) and White Other (9.9%).
27. The planning and delivery of the HAF programme will seek to meet the widest reach of the FSM cohort and this will be monitored and reported to the Strategic Group.

Environmental Implications

28. There are no environmental factors identified from this report.

Data Protection Implications

29. Young Harrow Foundation have in place an active signed data protection agreement with the Council. If required YHF will sign another agreement in relation to FSM data and requirements from the DfE.
30. All providers commissioned by YHF will be asked to submit their GDPR policy and data protection agreement.

Risk Management Implications

31. Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **Yes**
32. Separate risk register in place? **No**
33. The relevant risks contained in the register are summarised below and these key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
<p>Young Harrow Foundation (YHF) fail to deliver the programme and comply with the grant conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The performance will be monitored and evaluated through an established governance arrangement with the Council ▪ The strategic group, chaired by a Divisional Director in People Services, will approve the plan for each holiday period, the VCS organisations delivering activities, financial expenditure, and monitoring performance against the YHF Plan and data returns to DfE. ▪ Payment will only be released to the Council by the DfE after each monitoring report submitted ▪ The Programme is delivered over 3 school holidays, can recover and amend delivery plan if required ▪ The planning and delivery of the HAF programme will seek to meet the widest reach of the FSM cohort and will be 	<p>Green</p>

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
	monitored and reported to the Strategic Group.	
Challenge from other Providers regarding direct award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YHF is independent and does not deliver services directly, thus eliminating a conflict of interest of provider/commissioner ▪ YHF will advertise and welcome interest from potential providers ▪ YHF sits on a board with two other voluntary sector consortiums (HCA and VAR) both have been communicated with regarding this opportunity. 	Green

Procurement Implications

34. The Council can make a compliant direct award to the Young Harrow Foundation (YHF) under the Public Contract Regulations (amended) Light Touch Regime. The recommendation requires under our Contract Procedure Rules approval via the Cabinet process.
35. Whilst the Council is making a direct award to the YHF, 10% the total contract value will be allocated to YHF and the remaining 90% (allocated through YHF sub-contracting) directly to the providers delivering the activities. The YHF will be co-ordinating the programme of activities and will be responsible for arranging service level agreements (SLA) with a number of VCS organisations to deliver this programme. YHF will comply with the conditions of the grant and will be monitored through the governance arrangements as set out within this report.

Legal Implications

36. Legal notes Procurement's clearance of this award under the Light Touch Regime and would add that both the grant amount and the smaller sums which will be disbursed by the Young Harrow Foundation to the VCS organisations will be below the Light Touch Regime threshold.
37. Table 1 of the Authorisation and Acceptance Thresholds of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) state that for contract awards with a value of £500,000 and above and all key decisions, approval to award is by means of a Cabinet decision.

38. The contract for the delivery of the HAF between the Council and YHF will be finalised by Legal in collaboration with the responsible Council Officers.

Financial Implications

39. The purpose of the grant is for local authorities to make free places at holiday clubs available in the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays 2021 to children in their local authority who receive benefits-related free school meals.

40. Funding for Harrow Council has been confirmed as:

2020/21 - £61,970

2021/22 - £554,270

Total programme funding - £616,240

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

- In March 2021 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;
- In June 2021 (up to 50% of the 2021-22 allocation), 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;
- In November 2021 (up to 30% of the 2021-22 allocation), 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;
- In February 2022 (up to 20% of the 2021-22 allocation), 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.

42. DfE have confirmed 10% of the total grant can be used to pay for co-ordination of the programme and the remaining 90% must be allocated to the delivery of the HAF provision (Annexe A). The local authority will release these payments once received, to Young Harrow Foundation upon agreed invoices.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

43. An initial inequalities impact assessment has been undertaken as part of the 'Mapping' requirement for the DfE. The summary outcome is that

there is positive impact on the community as the provision aims to target social, financial and health deprivation.

44. The Council will provide data on families accessing free school meals, childhood obesity and other protected characteristic groups required by the DfE in order to promote the programme and deliver the provision in areas in most need. Monitoring and evaluation will be integral to the development and take up of the project allowing future planning of holiday activities.

Council Priorities

45. The HAF Programme and the approach with YHF will support the Council's priorities as follows:
 - **Tackling poverty and inequality** – Young Harrow Foundation work with over 200 local charities that will be invited to express an interest in delivering the outcomes of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme. The programme is primarily aimed at offering holiday provision and nutritious food to children and young people on benefit related free school meals.
 - **Addressing health and social care inequality** – through working with the Council's public health and social care teams, Young Harrow Foundation will partner with local charities to fulfil the DfE programme objectives in relation to promoting the provision to the most vulnerable families.
 - **Thriving economy** – local providers registered on Young Harrow Foundation database will be encouraged to apply to deliver the activities, thus stimulating the economy.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Jo Frost

Signed on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 2 March 2021

Statutory Officer: Sanura Lambert

Signed on behalf of by the Monitoring Officer

Date: 2 March 2021

Chief Officer: Paul Hewitt

Signed off by the Corporate Director

Date: 02 March 2021

Head of Procurement: Lisa Taylor

Signed on behalf of the Head of Procurement

Date: 3 March 2021

Head of Internal Audit: Susan Dixon

Signed by the Head of Internal Audit

Date: 01 March 2021

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO as it impacts on all Wards

EqlA carried out: No

An initial equalities assessment has been carried to determine geographical areas of need. This programme is aimed at offering provision for families accessing benefit related services.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Priya Ganatra, Strategic Commissioning Manager,
Priya.ganatra@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

NO