

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Communities) (Introduced by Executive Member (Early Intervention))	Executive Cabinet	24 February 2022

## Holiday Activity and Food Programme 2022/23

Is this report confidential?	<b>No</b>
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Is this decision key?	<b>Yes</b>
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<b>Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000</b>	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
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### Purpose of the Report

1. To give an update on delivery of Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF) 2021 over the Summer and Christmas school holiday periods.
2. To provide details of Holiday Activity Programme for 2022/23 and proposed delivery
3. To gain approvals to undertake the delivery of HAF 2022/23, progress with identified delivery model and work with selected partners

### Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

4. To approve that Chorley Council, take on lead responsibility for the delivery of the Holiday Activity Food programme for 2022/23 within Chorley and receive all funding associated with the programme from LCC.
5. To approve that we commission the delivery of HAF 2022/23 to Chorley Inspire Youth Zone and Chorley School Sports partnership with a Chorley Council Officer within Communities Team whom will work closely alongside partners to oversee the programme, ensuring all expected delivery is on track and all intended monitoring is achieved.

### Reasons for recommendations

6. Lancashire County Council are keen to follow the same model of delivery as last year and work with Chorley Council to deliver the programme locally. The relationship between Chorley Council and LCC worked well for HAF 2021 and ensures we have a level of control over delivery locally, can monitor provision and identify need across the borough.
7. Strong links have been created with Chorley Inspire Youth Zone and Chorley School Sports Partnership (CSSP). These partners were key to the successful delivery of

the 2021 programme and we would recommend we continue with their commission for 2022. Both partners are a local service provider, have excellent relationships with targeted schools and many families and have a vast knowledge of the subject area. Further reasons for recommendation can be found in paragraphs 69-81

### Other options considered and rejected

8. To reject LCC's preferred model of delivery within Lancashire and not take on lead responsibility for local delivery across Chorley. LCC will therefore carry out procurement of the service. This will result in Chorley Council having no control over ensuring delivery meets the needs of local families, that local partners are engaged to support delivery and that known vulnerable families are targeted with the opportunity. Easter provision will be extremely difficult to deliver with timescales available if an outside provider was awarded the contract. For these reasons, this option has been rejected.

### Executive Summary

9. LCC have approached Chorley Council to deliver the HAF 2022/23 programme following the successful completion of delivery of HAF 2021. The delivery for 2022/23 would follow a similar model as last year and utilise our key local delivery partners within Chorley. Lessons learned will be implemented to build on the successes of 2021.
10. Chorley has 2591 children aged 4-16 receiving free school meals. The programme will help address child food poverty during the school holidays and help support many families who struggle during this time.

### Corporate priorities

11. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	A strong local economy
<b>Clean, safe and healthy communities</b>	<b>An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area</b>

### Background to the report

12. In 2021, Lancashire County Council (LCC) received £4.2m in funding from central government (DofE) to deliver the HAF Programme for 2021.
13. The objective of the programme is to deliver a range of school holiday activities for children between the ages of 4 and 16 who are eligible for free school meals.
14. The programme will help address child food poverty during the school holidays and help support many families who struggle during this time.
15. In line with national HAF requirements, delivery of activities is targeted at the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. The funding will cover a minimum of four

hours of activity each day, for four days a week during these periods. However, bespoke delivery can be utilised where required, for instance for engaging with 13-16-year olds.

16. Food is to be provided for the children and young people who participate.
17. Intended outcomes for the Lancashire HAF activities are for children who attend the provision to:
  - Eat more healthily over the school holidays
  - Be more 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 socially isolated
  - Have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition
  - Be more engaged with school and other local services
18. Chorley has 2591 children aged 4-16 years receiving free school meals. The programme will help address child food poverty during the school holidays and help support many families who struggle during this time.
19. The target for the programme was to support one third (30%) of the borough's 2,591 children on benefits-related, free school meals (FSM), 777 in total
20. Chorley Council have delivered the HAF 2021 programme successfully which will officially finish on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.
21. Additional funding has been approved nationally to extend the programme for a further three years

## **2021 HAF Delivery and Implementation**

22. Following a review into the capacity of the Communities team, it was acknowledged that it would not be possible to deliver the programme inhouse, therefore it was agreed to seek external partners who could fulfil this role.
23. Chorley Inspire Youth Zone and Chorley School Sports Partnership were selected to deliver the HAF programme on behalf of Chorley Council. These organisations are the most experienced locally in working with children and young people and provide high quality services. It is considered that they have the infrastructure, knowledge, and partnerships to deliver the programme effectively.
24. A Chorley Council Officer has worked closely alongside both organisations to oversee the programme, ensuring all expected delivery is on track and all intended monitoring is achieved.
25. Area mapping was undertaken, and broad targets allocated at school and travel level. The plan was to have a delivery hub based in key areas across the borough, organised to support clusters of schools and areas of high deprivation.
26. Practically we had problems securing school venues to support delivery due to the impact of the pandemic. Private providers working at school venues were not as supportive as they might have been due to the very late notice they were given to

engage with the project, and recruiting enough staff for either Inspire or CSSP to deliver directly in multiple areas was problematic.

27. Delivery focussed on key cluster areas, namely, Clayton Le Woods (2 providers), Chorley East (2 providers), Chorley Central (3 providers), Chorley South (1) Coppull (1), Croston (1), Other (3) with some providers coming on board mid project.
28. Due to providers pulling out Inspire did deliver more than anticipated which would have been incredibly difficult from a staffing perspective, however, they were able to move staff around to meet the needs in each area.
29. The programme was able to cover a wide geographically area across the borough providing activity for children within their localities. Venues and locations utilised included:
  - Balshaw Lane Primary – Euxton
  - Westway Sports Facility
  - Coppull Primary
  - Heskin Pemberton Primary
  - St Joseph's primary
  - Astley Park School
  - Clayton Green Sports Centre
  - All Seasons Leisure Centre
  - St Georges Primary
  - Croston Tennis Club
  - Chorley Football Club
  - Homestart
  - Equwise
  - Chorley Inspire Youth Zone
30. In addition to the daytime provision, HAF also funded a programme of detached youth work which was delivered 3 times per week in 6 of the most deprived areas of the borough including
  - Clayton Brook – Community Church and Village Hall area
  - Coppull – Springfield Leisure Centre
  - Buttermere Community Centre
  - Harpers Lane Community Centre
  - Adlington – Jubilee Recreation ground
  - Duke Street – Rangletts Recreation ground
31. This element was particularly successful in engaging not only young people, but families in great need of support, particularly around food.
32. To help ensure we was able to engage with those in need, the targeting of provision was facilitated by schools who promoted the provision and circulated a booking weblink to the relevant eligible families.
33. Inspire led on due diligence, ensuring that all risk assessments, insurances and CoVid assessments were in place in advance of provision commencing. Inspire led on safeguarding support for the whole partnership.

## Budget

34. Chorley Council originally received £242k to deliver the programme. £9,600 was ring fenced towards co-ordination costs. It was agreed to split co-ordination equally between Inspire and CSSP (£4,800)
35. Once mapping and delivery plan was created the remaining budget was allocated accordingly based on responsibility for activity delivery and transferred to Inspire and CSSP. This approach worked well, especially within such short timescales. The £242k was split as follows
  - Inspire- £187,705
  - CSSP £54,800
36. Additional monies were made available at Christmas as LCC had an underspend centrally. Chorley Council received an extra £34,740 which was used to provide extra food parcel provision over Christmas to accompany activity, equipment, and extra staffing to work closer with targeted families to ensure best possible engagement on the programme.
37. In January 2022, LCC was able to provide additional monies of £3,900 to fund co-ordination time between Feb 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. This is since 2022 funding will not commence till April 1<sup>st</sup>, which would give no realistic time to be able to co-ordinate any provision for Easter.
38. The programme, funded by the Department for Education (DFE), paid an average of £14 per child, based on a 4x4x4 model, 4 hours per day, 4 days per week 4 weeks (over summer) and had to include high quality activities and a healthy (ideally hot) meal. An indicative cost of £2.60 per child, per day for food provision was given as a benchmark
39. To simplify the delivery model, in essence the project purchased 'places' from each provider, requiring each provider to ensure they were adequately resourced to accommodate the number of children allocated to them with bookings confirmed no later than the week before delivery commenced.

### **Christmas provision – changes to delivery for this period**

40. Christmas provision overall followed the same model of implementation although delivery had to be adapted for this period
41. It was understood by DofE nationally from feedback provided by districts that there would be significant difficulties in sourcing delivery partners, venues, and attendees over this period. Many external partners do not traditionally deliver over the Christmas period and schools, whom were a key venue over summer were unfortunately not available over this period.
42. Unlike during the summer, targeted provision for SEN was created working with partners at Astley Park, Equwise, Lancashire TAAG along with provision at Inspire Youth Zone
43. Homestart and Chorley Buddies were introduced as new delivery partners for Christmas to help support families with younger children along with school aged children and targeted food provision within Chorley Town west area

44. There was more flexibility to include food parcel provision this time. The programme utilised community emergency food partners to deliver non-activity element of the programme and co-ordinate collection points for food only.
45. Livingwaters Foodbank was used to produce 600 food parcels which accompanied activity delivery. Parcels contained ingredients to prepare two healthy family meals and a range of other essential food cupboard staples. Within the parcels was also recipe ideas to help the parent.
46. Each provider was able to make direct referrals to into our existing Emergency food network partners to support any families that were experiencing financial hardship and needing extra food support.

#### **47. HAF figures – Summary of summer provision**

- Total Places available – 11,856
- Inspire 9,700 places (8,284 direct, 1,416 via partners)
- 5791 confirmed attendances
- CSSP 2,156 places
- CSSP 1,055 confirmed attendances
- 1,160 different young people took part over summer programme
- Overall reach - 45% of all FSM young people (target was 30% from 2591 total FSM)
- 228 (20%) of all attendees were (pre diagnosed) SEND children
- Average number of days attended by young person over summer programme  
Primary Age – 8 days / Secondary Age – 6 days

#### **48. HAF figures – Summary of Christmas provision**

- Total Places available – 1,905
- Inspire Youth Zone – 1,725 places (1,340 direct, 385 via partners)
- Chorley School Sports Partnership (CSSP) - 180 places
- 1083 different young people took part over Christmas programme
- Overall reach - 38% of all FSM young people (target was 30% from 2,591 total FSM)
- 114 (10%) of all attendees were (pre diagnosed) SEND children
- 649 (60%) of these were primary school aged children
- 434 (40%) of these was secondary school aged children
- Average number of days attended by young person over Christmas programme  
Primary Age – 3 days / Secondary Age – 2 days

#### **49. Lancashire Wide Figures**

Lancashire figures for Christmas are still being calculated by LCC. Below are figures for summer provision only:

- The overall reach for the summer was 34%
- The span of reach across districts was from 15% to 51%
- The total number of HAF funded attendees was 12,317 (1,185 were supported remotely)
- 74% of these were primary school aged children
- 8.5% of those HAF funded attendees were SEND Children and young people
- The average number of days attended was 8.2 days for primary aged children and 5.5 for secondary aged children

## **Areas of success**

50. The delivery partnership worked well with all partners being open to support and feedback. They were flexible and accommodating to late referrals and genuinely went above and beyond to get the programme up and running.
51. On average, attendance was around 60%, which was higher than anticipated given the client group and the speed at which the programme was implemented (offering no time to confirm attendance prior to delivery nor reallocate spaces once non-attendance was confirmed). This was also raised by neighbouring boroughs.
52. Reach was significantly higher than anticipated during both holiday periods against a target of 777, with over 200 with pre-diagnosed additional needs.
53. Provision itself was broad and of high quality, though there is room for improvement. Feedback across the board was excellent which is especially gratifying given that some providers were completely new to delivering a programme of this nature and in this format.
54. Food partners were engaged across the programme to help, as most delivery partners (other than Inspire) did not have access to kitchens. Though there were initial teething problems, all providers were both flexible and accommodating given that the demands of the programme required the delivery of over 700 meals a day across 14 venues in summer.
55. Though attendance rates were lower than we would have liked, food consumption did not reduce in most venues giving some indication of just how hungry some of these children were. With an indicative cost of £2.60 per child, per day, in some areas consumption was effectively double this amount.
56. Unused food was dropped off at Inspire each day and redistributed to local voluntary organisations to support the wider community. Hot food and unused food allocations from partners was converted to meals, frozen and redistributed to Chorley Help the Homeless, further reducing waste and widening the impact of the project across the town.
57. The programme has enabled engagement with hard to reach families and work with young people who would not necessarily access similar activity. Relationships have been created with these families and wider support can be accessed outside of HAF
58. Links have been created with other activity providers and more joint working has been established. This will enable for more activity to be made available and wider promotion of opportunities for young people

## **Areas for Improvement**

59. More planning lead in time to allow for better support of partners would allow them to further improve their provision, grow in confidence and allow us to bring more partners on board.
60. The recruitment and training of staff could be improved, and we would hopefully be able to secure a wider offer in more areas across the borough resulting in less pressure on Inspire and CSSP. A wider partnership network with more choice would also be more attractive to families.

61. Targeted marketing through schools worked well in some schools and not in others. Success tended to depend on the strength of existing partnerships, however it is important to note that the pandemic did cause disruption and some messages were missed by schools.
62. Better engagement at strategic level will support this going forward and we have already met with key Primary School Head Teacher groups covering most of the borough and taken recommendations from Head Teachers for future programmes. Head Teachers are very supportive of a collaborative approach where they can share information (with parental consent) with Inspire to allow for better targeting of provision and better follow up to ensure the most vulnerable children are encouraged to attend the provision of their choice.
63. The booking system needs to be reviewed going forward. Much of the confusion arose from multiple bookings and multiple sites.
64. We need a better understanding of how the administration and reporting of the programme will operate in the future from DofE. The requirements were still being changed even after the programme had finished.
65. While provision for children under 12 was very good, provision for 12–16-year-olds, other than at Inspire, was poor. We need to do much better and be much more creative in securing engaging provision for this group
66. Feedback from SEND parents has prompted us to undertake a review of all the SEND provision in Chorley and that we hope to be able to build on what is currently available. A wider partnership, with staff able to best meet the support needs of this group is essential. Appendix 1 details a working paper that gives an initial insight into this review.
67. Although this was identified, the reach with SEND children was much higher than anticipated at 216 individuals, most of the senior provision (108 young people) were 12–14-year-olds. Future thoughts are that there is a need to better engage with parents to communicate the parameters of the programme (i.e. indicate this is not respite provision)
68. There needs to be a much better appreciation of the level and scale of administration and co-ordination required to implement and deliver a project of this scale, especially from a standing start. Project admin allowances were wholly inadequate which has been fed back to both LCC and the DfE.

### **Delivery of HAF 2022 and Recommendations**

69. The HAF programme will be extended for a further 3 years. The spending review announced over £200 million a year for the continuation, providing enriching activities and healthy meals for disadvantaged children during school holidays.
70. Lancashire County Council are keen to follow the same model of delivery as last year and work with Chorley Council to deliver the programme locally. The relationship between Chorley Council and LCC worked well for HAF 2021 and it would be recommended to continue this model going forward. This ensures we have a level of control over delivery locally, can monitor provision and identify need across the borough.

71. Strong links have been created with Chorley Inspire Youth Zone and Chorley School Sports Partnership. These partners are key to the successful delivery of the programme going forward and we would recommend that we continue with this partnership approach again for 2022. They have excellent relationships with targeted schools and have vast delivery experience to families across Chorley for many years. They have delivered similar programmes, knowledge on the subject area and provide existing provision that can add more value to the programme.
72. In researching other possible providers who can deliver HAF, we have established that these are the only two organisations locally who can deliver the required outcomes and have the relevant subject knowledge and resources. Therefore, Inspire and CSSP is the recommended approach.
73. Both partners are a local service provider. They have excellent relationships with targeted schools and many families and are experienced in delivery having delivered similar programmes previously. They also have a vast knowledge of the subject area and provide existing provision that can add more value to the programme.
74. There are short timescales to deliver the programme and both partners have the capacity to start delivery quickly and are already have delivered the programme the HAF 2021 programme successfully. They have relationships with wider local organisations to benefit signposting and wider support around the families
75. Confidence in these partners to deliver is further strengthened as each partner is also delivering other existing programmes and work closely with Chorley Council. Inspire Youth Zone are delivering the employment Youth Hub project and CSSP are delivering both child and adult weight management programmes. This also adds greater benefit to the HAF programme as wider support can be given to families beyond food and activity delivery.
76. Grant agreements will be created between Chorley Council and each partner which details all expectations and monitoring. An officer will monitor the programme, have regular dialogue to ensure all aspects of delivery are maintained. It is planned to create a local performance indicator to aid progress.
77. LCC are finalising the funding amount which will be allocated to Chorley to deliver the programme. It is anticipated to be similar to last year but will be increased as it will include Easter provision for HAF 2022 which was not part of HAF 2021. Approximately in the region of £320,000.
78. If Chorley Council are to deliver HAF 2022, the contract will commence on April 1<sup>st</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Although funding has been confirmed for 3 years, they have advised that the funding will be administered each year with new agreements
79. All delivery outcomes for the programme are unchanged. It is anticipated that a 30% reach of free school meal children will be the attendance target again
80. To help provide increased activity provision across the borough it is recommended an Expression of Interest process is created to enable us to seek out more providers which will allow for greater range of opportunity and deliver in more venues, covering a greater geographically area, limiting need for travel for families.

81. It is recommended where possible to create blended activity provision which caters for children on free school meals through the HAF funding, but also make places available which non free school meal children can access at a cost.

### **Climate change and air quality**

82. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

### **Equality and diversity**

83. HAF is a government initiative by Department of Education with delivery aimed at a pre-defined cohort of school aged children who receive benefits-related free school meals.
84. However, where feasibly possible, the programme will attempt to identify activity provision for children not receiving free school meals, who can pay to attend. This may be through gathering provision across the borough to easily communicate with families or providing a mixed arrangement of FSM places and paid for places depending on the local supply and demand for provision.
85. The programme will develop high-quality provision for children with SEND or additional needs who are in receipt of Free School Meals. This may be through making sure that activity providers plan how they will accommodate children with SEND or additional needs or making sure that those with more complex needs are able to access suitable provision, for example, by working with Special Schools.

### **Risk**

86. Below are some of the risks that are associated with the programme. However, as we have delivered the programme successfully in 2021 and delivery is planned to follow in a similar model, the likelihood of these risks occurring has been decreased. Risks would be:

- Ability to deliver Easter programme if all approvals, contracts, and agreements do not stay within planned timescales
- Key partners which we propose to work with to deliver are unable to fulfil agreement due to unforeseen circumstances within their organisations
- Poor uptake on the programme from FSM children
- Difficulties securing activity partners/staffing to fulfil required places to be made available
- Programme will provide activity provision for approx. 30% of FSM children – additional support may be required depending on uptake and need (although we do have very strong support networks in place in relation to emergency food provision)

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

87. The continuation of HAF funding was announced in the Spending Review as per point 72. The funding is received by the Council as a grant via LCC and distributed as detailed with a small amount retained for co-ordination. While the amount is not as yet confirmed for 22/23 onward it is reasonable to estimate this will be in the region of £320k as per point 75. The proposal here is to continue to distribute funds in the model which has proven to be successful in the current year. As such there should be no net impact upon Council budgets.

## Comments of the Monitoring Officer

88. It is apparent from the content of the report that whilst this programme maybe estimated as running for 3 years it is limited to 1-year periods and as such it is appropriate to consider each contract separately. The contracts for delivery of the HAF programme are to be awarded as per the report and members can see from the delivery that this is capable of demonstrating best value due to the local delivery and services provided.

## Background documents

Executive Cabinet report – Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme 2021

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