

Cabinet

12 March 2024

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – Councillor Dr K Sandhu

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Partnerships and Performance

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2024: Acceptance of Grant

Is this a key decision?

Yes - the proposals involve financial implications in excess of £1m per annum and are likely to have a significant impact on residents or businesses in two or more electoral wards in the City.

Executive Summary:

The Government's Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF) is an enrichment programme for disadvantaged children which includes the provision of healthy food. The programme is primarily for pupils of statutory school age, who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. Initially the programme was funded for the 2021/22 financial year only; and operated through the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. The delivery details were set out in the Cabinet report of 9 March 2021, the Council report of 16 March 2021 and the Cabinet reports of 15 March 2022 and 14 March 2023.

The Government have made a commitment for this next phase of the programme through to the end of March 2025. Coventry has received an allocation of £1,587,840 for the financial year 2024/25 (compared to an allocation of £1,553,530 for the financial year 2023/24), subject to meeting the conditions of the grant determination letter. This report sets out the intended approach for delivering HAF in 2024/25 and reports on 2023/24 activity.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the acceptance of the Department for Education HAF grant allocation, of up to £1,587,840 for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 2) Delegate authority for decisions about the planning and delivery of the HAF to the Director of Partnerships and Performance, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skill, including but not limited to:

- a) Co-ordinating and awarding monies to relevant organisations in order to ensure the delivery of the programme to a high standard; and
- b) Acceptance of any future opportunities for additional in-year grant funding up to a total amount in the sum of £2.5 million pounds, in 2024/25.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: Summary of Coventry Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2023 Delivery

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Department of Education Holiday Activities and Food Programme – Grant Determination (20th December 2022) [HAF 2023 Grant Determination](#)

Department of Education Holiday Activities and Food Programme - information
[DfE HAF Guidance - updated 22 December 2022](#)

The Special Schools Initiative Summer 2023 video:
<https://vimeo.com/869583006/d3e2bb74c4?share=copy>

HAF Summer of Fun 2021 video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5sk7bSC5ag>

Coventry HAF webpages: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/haf>

Cabinet report of 9 March 2021; Council report of 16 March 2021 - Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2021: Acceptance of Grant and Proposed Distribution

Cabinet report of 15 March 2022 - Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2022: Acceptance of Grant and Proposed Distribution

Cabinet report of 14 March 2023 - Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2023: Acceptance of Grant

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2024: Acceptance of Grant

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Following the success of the national Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) during the financial year 2021/22, the Government announced the extension of the programme to March 2025. 2022/23 was the first year of this extended phase of the programme. Details of the programme remain as set out in the Cabinet report of 9 March 2021 and the Council report of 16 March 2021 and the Cabinet reports of 14 March 2022 and 14 March 2023.
- 1.2 The programme will continue to target statutory school age pupils (reception to year 11 inclusive), who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. Coventry has also included children with a social worker, children assessed (through an early help assessment) to be in financial hardship and children part of the Ukrainian Family Scheme in our eligible criteria. This means that approximately 16,000 Coventry children will be entitled to access free enrichment activities and healthy food during the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays of the 2024/25 financial year.
- 1.3 Coventry has been awarded an allocation of £1,587,840 for 2024/25. The programme allows for 15% discretionary spend on children who are not within the category of benefits-related free school meals (as noted above).
- 1.4 The grant determination letter states that all provision funded by the local authority through the HAF programme must meet the framework of standards and meet the following core aims and objectives:
 - **Healthy meals:** holiday clubs must provide at least one healthy meal a day which must meet the School Food Standards.
 - **Enrichment activities:** holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to develop or consolidate skills or knowledge. Clubs must also provide physical activities which meet the Physical Activity Guidelines on a daily basis.
 - **Increasing understanding and awareness of healthy eating:** holiday clubs must work to improve children's knowledge and awareness of healthy eating.
 - **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. This can include advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food alongside increasing awareness of healthy eating.
 - **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.
- 1.5 Local Authorities are encouraged to work with a wide range of providers in the delivery of the programme, recognising the important role that community and voluntary organisations have played in its success so far.
- 1.6 Attendance on the programme is voluntary. Each eligible school-age child is entitled to access the provision for one week during the Easter and Christmas holiday period and four weeks during the summer. One HAF week is defined as being a total of four, four hourly sessions per week.

- 1.7 Coventry City Council can evidence the success and positive impact of its programme delivery during the 2023/24 financial year, as set out in Appendix 1: Summary of Coventry Holiday Activities and Food programme 2023 delivery. The Special Schools Initiative Summer 2023 <https://vimeo.com/869583006/d3e2bb74c4?share=copy> and Coventry HAF Summer of Fun 2021 video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5sk7bSC5ag> illustrates how the grant conditions were met through both the wide range of activities delivered across the City summary, and the impact shown from a parent and child perspective.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

Decline the Award of the Grant Funding

- 2.1 Coventry City Council could decide not to accept the grant. The consequence would be that without the financial resources, the programme would cease. This is not the recommended option.

Acceptance of the Grant Funding

- 2.2 The City Council accept the grant and continue to co-ordinate the programme centrally. Funding would continue to be awarded via the grant agreement to organisations who are able to deliver the required specification of provision, building on the existing local partnership. This is the recommended option.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 No consultation is required or necessary for the programme. There is strong engagement and collaboration with a wide range of partners across Coventry and there has been significant feedback from families that influences programme delivery.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The acceptance of grant monies will be implemented immediately, and plans are already in place for delivery for the Easter 2024 holidays, building on the foundation of 2023 delivery.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

The indicative maximum allocation available is £1,587,840 for 2024/25 financial year (a slightly increased level to financial year 2023/24). The payments will be made by the DfE at various milestones throughout the year including receipt of delivery plans and reports back on actual activity and expenditure.

The funding is for the provision of free holiday club places (90% of the funding) in the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays, and for Local Authority coordination costs (10% of the funding). A small team supports the delivery of the programme within the allowed 10% of the grant allocation.

Based on the latest grant determination information, a payment of up to 80% of Coventry City Council's total 2024/2025 allocation will be made in April 2024 following satisfactory receipt by 1st March 2024 of a report to the DfE setting out how the 2024/2025 programme will work and how many children Coventry City Council expects to work with in 2024/25. A payment of up to the remaining 20% of the total 2024/25 allocation will be made in April 2025 following satisfactory submission to the DfE by 12 February 2025 of a report setting

out the actual number of children Coventry City Council have worked with during delivery of the programme at Easter, Summer and Christmas in 2024.

There is a small risk that funds would be withheld if the programme is not delivered. However, this risk is mitigated because Coventry's delivery plans are based on the scheme guidance and robust risk management arrangements are in place (see section 6.2).

An annual report must be submitted, and this must include:

- the overall number of unique children who participated in programme.
- the overall number of unique children in receipt of FSM who participated in the programme.
- the number and proportion of children who are in the: primary school age range, the secondary school age range and any children outside of those age ranges who attended the programme.
- the proportion of primary age and secondary age children who have participated in the programme.
- the number of children with SEND or additional needs who have participated in the programme.

5.2 Legal implications

5.2.1 The Council has no specific statutory duty to deliver holiday-based food and activity for families.

5.2.2 By section 31(3) and 31(4) of the Local Government Act 2003 (Power to pay grant) the Department for Education has made grant provision available to enable local authorities to provide to school age children who are eligible for free school meals, healthy meals and enrichment activities during the Easter, Summer and Christmas holiday periods free of charge. The Grant Determination sets out the conditions upon which the grant has been made available and to which the local authority must comply.

5.2.3 Law and Governance support the recommendations outlined in this report and will support the process, ensuring the interest of the Council are protected.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

This programme aligns with the One Coventry Plan, and can contribute towards the following aims:

- Improving educational outcomes by working with schools to continue to improve standards, and
- Improving health and wellbeing by supporting children and young people to lead healthier lifestyles including better mental health; keeping children and young people safe from harm by providing activities; providing early intervention for families who need it; enabling people to exercise choice and control in their daily lives; reducing health inequalities and giving our children the best start in life.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

A robust risk management approach is in place for the programme.

To ensure that participating children and young people are safeguarded, only holiday provision that is approved (for example, registered as a provider with Ofsted) is grant

funded. Organisations funded by HAF have developed a strong track record of working positively with children, families and schools across Coventry building a positive reputation based on trust. Checks are in place to ensure that staff have appropriate qualifications, and that employment and safe recruitment checks are in place (e.g. DBS).

The grant monies awarded is not sufficient to fully support all eligible children and young people in the city with the provision of food throughout the holidays. In order to manage this expectation, the scope of the HAF programme is clearly communicated to parents and carers.

The HAF Steering Group has established a risk and issue management approach. If a risk exceeds the threshold of tolerance and threatens the delivery of the project or signals a significant change of approach is required, it is escalated to the HAF Steering Group for consideration and options for mitigation/response determined. Risks and issues of a lower impact are mitigated and responded to within the day-to-day activity of the project team and are recorded in the project risk log.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The programme is co-ordinated by a small team within Education and Skills (4 Full Time Equivalent).

6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

As an intrinsic part of the programme, consideration is given to ensuring provision is accessible and engaging for all eligible children and young people (including those with a special educational need and disability, and older children). The programme has due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act in both the coordination and delivery of the programme. A detailed assessment and analysis of equality impacts of the programme will be conducted in the Spring of 2024 looking back to programme delivery in 2023/24. This will be built into the evaluation of the programme in 2024 and will also contribute to the case for further HAF funding.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

The Council will continue to work with a wide range of partner organisations in the delivery of this programme, ensuring partners are proportionately represented on the HAF steering group to oversee the implementation. In forming the HAF steering group, the Council has taken full account of the DfE recommendations on composition by including the following partners: local police and other uniform services; public health; school leaders; youth services; social services; charities and the voluntary sector. Membership of the steering groups is reviewed annually.

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This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

Appendix 1 – Summary of Holiday Activities and Food 2023 Delivery

Purpose

The primary purpose of this Cabinet report relates to acceptance of the HAF grant. This appendix provides a summary of 2023 delivery. Please watch the Special Schools Initiative Summer 2023 <https://vimeo.com/869583006/d3e2bb74c4?share=copy> and the Summer of Fun 2021 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5sk7bSC5ag>) for a broader understanding of the Coventry HAF programme.

Principles

The HAF multi-agency steering group agreed the following principles for the Coventry HAF programme, linking with the DfE objectives. These are:

- Positive, memorable and happy holiday experiences that demonstrate the value of every person
- Impacts that last beyond the holidays and experiences that reach parents and families through children and young people
- Building on, and enabling, trusted relationships and Coventry strengths
- Collaboration and partnership across a wide range of organisations and engaging with children, young people and families throughout
- Joined-up locality offer - particularly in areas of higher deprivation
- Tailored approaches for primary and secondary ages with a key focus on children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Joining-up with school summer and education recovery programmes
- Continuous learning and improvement, including learning across Coventry, West Midlands and nationally
- Coventry HAF as a part of a joined-up offer for Coventry lower-income families

2023 delivery overview

Coventry's 2023 delivery has built on the foundations of previous years and continues to deliver an effective Holiday Activities and Food programme. HAF delivers a comprehensive and diverse range of holiday activities, experiences and clubs, to lower-income families in Coventry. The offer is more focussed in areas that have higher numbers of HAF-eligible children and young people. Below is a summary of 2023 delivery.

Participation

The 2023 school summer holidays were the largest, Coventry HAF holiday programme with c.4,000 unique eligible children attending plus family members, c.18,000 sessions attended, and c.20,000 meals provided. The programme included approximately 125 different types of clubs and inspiring activities. The 2023 Easter holidays had c.2,200 unique eligible children attend activities, and the 2023 Christmas school holidays had c.2,000 unique eligible attend activities. Clubs, activities and experiences are delivered by a range of organisations (e.g. community organisations, schools, universities, creative and cultural organisations). The [additional information](#) section at the end of this appendix lists the providers directly funded, locations and a sample of the activities delivered.

Impact

There are an increasing number of stories and examples of the impact that clubs, activities and experiences have made on children and young people in terms of confidence and reduced levels of anxiety. Children and young people report that they have made new friends and tried things they would never have had the opportunity to do before. When they return to school from a school holiday they are able to share with their peers and teachers the positive activities they have participated in. They receive healthy meals and are cook and eat food that they may not have tried before and learn new skills. Providers report that many children and young people

now continue to engage with their weekly activities as a result of an initial engagement through HAF.

Focus on inclusion and activities for children with additional needs

Approximately 30% of children who attended summer HAF activities were identified as children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The following areas were considered when focusing on Inclusion and activities for children with additional needs:

- Up-skilling activity providers in SEND awareness through training provided by the SEND specialist service;
- Supporting parents/carers to find activities that best fitted their child's interests and needs;
- Additional funding for providers to accommodate the needs of individual children; and
- Contributing to Our Special School pilot programme (see below).

Special School Pilot programme – Summer 2023

As part of our focus on activities for children with additional needs, there was a partnership approach between the HAF programme and Coventry's special schools which was funded through Coventry Building Society investment. This resulted in 6 out of the 8 Coventry special schools hosting or partnering with other organisations to deliver a wide range of activities including: swimming, crafts, outdoor games, horse riding, cooking, sensory play, sports, trips (e.g. Cadbury World, Lego Discovery etc.)

Key points of feedback on this pilot from parents/carers, children/young people and staff:

- the opportunities students had to forge new friendships;
- the unique experiences pupils were able to have;
- the comfort families and students felt being in a familiar 'safe space' with staff members with whom they had established and trusting relationships;
- the complexity of needs that were able to be catered for with 1:1 or 2:1 staff to student ratios and inclusive school venues which are not typically available through mainstream holiday clubs;
- parents and carers valued the experiences their children had during the holidays.

In the Christmas school holidays, family experiences for eligible children with additional needs was piloted. This enabled families to visit local attractions and leisure centres and this received positive feedback from parents.

One Coventry HAF Partnership approach

Providers increasingly see themselves as part of a One Coventry HAF Partnership where they can collaborate and share ideas. Providers are not only implementing new ideas but are developing new relationships with each other. The HAF programme hosts a provider celebration event, bringing together all the providers following each holiday programme. This creates a context for providers to meet with others and share ideas that they can embed into their own delivery.

Food

Hot nutritional meals are provided at the vast majority of activities (trips may be an exception to this) and breakfast is increasingly being provided by clubs that start earlier – both as an important meal to start a day, and as settling in time. Nutritional education takes place in all clubs and there is the opportunity at some clubs for the children to participate in cooking meals. The number of family cooking sessions has increased with many providers buying a standard set of cooking equipment that they can use with families. Links with the Coventry Food Network also continue to strengthen.

Digital access

Activities are booked digitally. Where families do not have digital access to book they can be booked on by providers and other professionals. Letters are also translated into 6 other languages.

Feedback from parents/carers

There has been extensive feedback from parents/carers, children and young people on the programme. For example, following our summer programme, we received circa 700 responses with 96% saying they would recommend the activities. The average rating of food provided was “very good” (i.e. rating 4, based on a scale of 1 (very poor) through to 5 (excellent)).

Coventry has also received positive feedback on its programme from Childcare Works who are working with the DfE on the national HAF programme. Continuous improvement is also being enabled with our partnership with Positive Youth Foundation, hearing the voice of young people about HAF and through Coventry HAF’s involvement in a HAF evaluation (with four our local authority area) by the universities of Birmingham and Bristol. This includes hearing the feedback from children about HAF.

Quality framework

A quality framework has been developed focussing on the following key elements through our “HAFF” quality framework. Every provider/activity is assessed against the following:

- **Hospitable** - safe and have an inclusive, friendly and welcoming environment
- **Activities** - enriching, engaging, developmental and diverse
- **Food** – provision of nutritional food, nutritional education for children and families
- **Families** - activities signpost and engage families with support (e.g. cost of living information).

Partnerships

HAF providers within the overall programme have development individual partnerships with a range of companies and organisations. In addition, across the HAF programme there is partnership with the Coventry Building Society (£100k investment in 2023/24) and with Stellantis (a global car company with UK headquarters in Coventry). Stellantis staff were involved in volunteering to pack and deliver home activity boxes in the Christmas school holidays for children who were unable to access face-to-face HAF provision.

Maximising attendance

The percentage of those booking and attendance has increased in 2023. This has been through Coventry implemented the following actions to mitigate this against parents/carers booking children onto activities and not attending. These have included:

- Setting the bookable capacity of an activity to be higher (e.g. 125%, based on an expected 25% no-show);
- Being clear in all communications with parents/carers of the impact on other Coventry children if their own child is booked on and does not attend;
- Providers contacting parents/carers prior to activities in a positive way to remind them of the sessions (including phone calls, texts, messages, emails, social media etc.);
- Providers contacting parents/carers who have booked on an activity but not attended;
- Where 3 attempts have been made to contact a family, following a “no-show”, the booking being cancelled; and
- A stronger relational aspect (e.g. consultation with the children and young people on activities delivered, building on existing relationships with the school or organisation delivering the activities).

Areas of focus for Coventry HAF in 2024

The key areas of development and focus for 2024 include:

- Further development of our offer to children and young people with additional needs;
- Further development of our secondary school and skills-based offer in partnership with secondary schools, the Coventry Youth Partnership, Coventry and Warwick universities and others;

- A continued increase in attendance at HAF activities; and
- Continuing to build the case for continued funding for HAF post-2025 through recording and analysing the impact of HAF.

Additional information

The following providers were directly funded in 2023 (there other providers/organisations who were also involved, but not directly funded):

All Saints C of E Primary School, Aptitude, Arts a Riot, Ascension Dance Company, Baginton Fields School, Barr's Hill School, Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Canley Community Centre, Coventry Boys and Girls Club, Coventry Outdoors, Coventry Rugby, Coventry SDA, Cre8fun, Creative Optimistic Visions, CV Life/Culture Coventry, Edgewick Primary, Empowr-U/Energise, Epic Academy/SCCU, Feeding Coventry, Go-Go Makers, Guardian Ballers, Guiding Young Minds, Highly Sprung, Holbrooks Community Care Association, Holy Family Primary School, Kingsbury School, My Activities, Onside Coaching, PlayPals (St Christophers), Rising Stars, Riverbank School, SDH Academy, St John the Divine Church, Sky Blues in the Community, SportWorks, Staffordshire Winter Sports Club (Planet Ice), Tiverton School, University of Warwick Holiday Scheme, Vanny Radio, WATCH/Hillz FM, Willenhall Community Forum and Woodfield School.

Activities took place in the following locations in 2023:

- **Primary schools:** Aldermans Green, Aldermoor Farm, All Saints, Allesley Hall, Charter, Edgewick, Good Shepherd, Gosford Park, Grangehurst, Henley Green, Holy Family, John Gulson, Little Heath, Longford Park, Manor Park, Our Lady, St Christophers, St Johns, Stoke Heath, Templars, Walsgrave C of E
- **Secondary schools:** Barrs Hill, Cardinal Newman, Cardinal Wiseman, Grace Academy, President Kennedy, Sidney Stringer
- **Special schools:** Bagington Fields, Kingsbury, Riverbank, Tiverton, Woodfield
- **Community Centres/facilities:** Broad Horizon Enterprise Centre, Canley Community Centre, Coventry Boys and Girls Club, Coventry Central SDA church, Eastern Green Village Hall, Foleshill Community Centre, Foleshill Community Centre, Hagard Community Space (Willenhall Community Forum), Holbrooks Community Centre, Holbrooks Community Care Association, St James church, St John the Divine, Stoke Aldermoor Community Centre, Stoke Heath Community Centre, Stoke Park Youth Centre, The Crez (Jubilee Crescent Community Centre), WATCH, Wood End Community Centre
- **Leisure Centres/sports Facilities:** The Wave, Alan Higgs, AT7 Centre, Coventry Rugby (Butts Park Arena), Moat House Neighbourhood and Leisure Centre, Planet Ice, XCEL Leisure Centre, Coombe Abbey Go-Ape!
- **Arts:** The Albany Theatre, Coventry Transport Museum, Daimler Powerhouse, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Warwick Arts Centre, Warwick Castle
- **Parks:** Coombe Abbey Country Park, Edgewick Park, Gosford Green
- **University:** University of Warwick
- **Other locations:** Aztec Adventure, Barry Island, Brewers Fayre, Cadbury World, Cardiff Met University/Archers Basketball club, Conkers, Drayton Manor, Moor Farm stables, National Space Centre, Skegness, Ten-pin bowling, Western-Super-Mare

A wide range of activities took place, including:

Activities across the summer programme included the following: animation, archery, art master classes (creative journaling, floral watercolours, illustration skills, oil painting, street art murals) Aztec adventure, BBQ, badminton, basketball, bouncy castles, breakfasts, broadcasting, bushcraft and survival, chef academy, coding, circus skills, climbing, combat archery, cooking, crafts (tie dye, quilling, origami, gemtastic jewellery and fabric), creative journaling, cricket, dancing, drama, drawing, DJ-ing, fitness, football, forest school, fun days, giant board games, go-karting, Go-Ape, gadgets, gaming, gardening, gym, horse riding lessons, ice-skating lessons, inflatable air track, inflatable bungee, karaoke, lacrosse, laser tag, lego building, lava lamp

making, MicLab (sustainable stations, stop motion animation, stitch in time, connections and innovations), movies, movie making, multi-activity clubs (crafts, sports, arts etc.), music workshops, netball, pantomime, performance (parkour, free running and contemporary dance), performing arts, photography, physical theatre, podcasting, pool, pottery, radio, rap, robotics, roller skating, rounders, rugby, singing, science, skateboarding lessons, stable management, sports day, stop-motion animation, swimming lessons, team building, tennis, trampolining, tree-top adventure, tug-of-war, The Wave, trips (Western Super Mare, Drayton Manor, Go-Ape, Cadbury World, Cardiff Met University, Conkers, Space Centre, Warwick Arts Centre etc.), ultimate frisbee, videography, water sports, watercolour/ink painting, zip wire and other activities.