

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### REPORT ON HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES & FOOD PROGRAMME (FEAST)

24<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members on the Holiday Activity and Food Programme for 2021 – 2025.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) provided funding to all local authorities to deliver a programme of school holiday activities alongside a food offer for children eligible for means tested free school meals. The programme funding was to offer 6 weeks of activities comprising a minimum of 4 days over Easter, 16 days over summer and 4 days at Christmas. Following an announcement in the October budget that a further three years funding will be made available for this programme, starting in Easter 2022 and ending in January 2025, the Council has been allocated a grant of £1.3615m for the financial year 2022/23. The funding allocation is based on the numbers of eligible children in the local authority area.
- 2.2 The Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) is intended to provide healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children. Local authorities – and partners – have flexibility to determine how to deliver this level of provision to serve the needs of children and families in their area and are encouraged to make the holiday clubs available to any children not receiving free school meals, who can pay to attend.
- 2.3 Local authorities also have discretion to use up to 15% of their funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children who are *not* in receipt of benefits-related free school meals but who the local authority believe could benefit from HAF provision for example children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable.
- 2.4 As a result of this programme, the DfE want children who attend this provision to:
- eat healthily over the school holidays
  - be 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 to be socially isolated
  - have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition
  - be more engaged with school and other local services

They also want to ensure that the families who participate in this programme:

- develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting
- are signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment, and education.

- 2.5 A national framework of standards to provide a benchmark of what is expected from those delivering the holiday, activities and food programme has been developed and it is key role of the local authority to improve the quality of provision across the local area and to ensure that all providers are supported to meet the high-level standards through training, support and partnerships.
- 2.6 In addition to the provision of activities, the local authority must also ensure that a minimum of one meal is provided. The preference is for a hot meal where possible and all food and food providers must meet quality (school food standards) and legal food preparation regulations. Councils are encouraged not to use large central contracts for food and to seek to develop local solutions using local providers.
- 2.7 Local authorities and their providers have flexibility about how they deliver provision to best serve the needs of children and families in their area. All LAs are encouraged to have a rich mix of provision catering for children with different interests and of different ages. There should also be good geographical spread across the LA but with increased supply in areas with higher levels of FSM families in order to maximise attendance levels and provision for children with SEND or additional needs.
- 2.8 In planning the programme, the Council must also be able to demonstrate it has considered sustainable practices and the impact on the environment.
- 2.9 There is a degree of flexibility in regard to how the programme is coordinated and delivered from completely in-house to through a contract or contracts with partners however there is a new requirement that every local authority will appoint or have in place a HAF coordinator who takes responsibility *within the local authority* for the delivery of the HAF programme. This will be alongside having sufficient staff who are dedicated to working on HAF all year round. The level of resource in each local authority will be determined locally but should be proportionate to the level of funding received.

### **3. DELIVERY OF THE 2021/22 HOLIDAY ACTIVITY & FOOD PROGRAMME**

- 3.1 The Council delivered the 2021 programme through a mix of internal officer support – including staff from CYPS, Stronger Communities, Libraries and Communications and by the direct award of grants to a voluntary sector consortia comprising North Yorkshire Sport, North Yorkshire Youth and Rural Arts operating under the branding of North Yorkshire Together.
- 3.2 The NYCC staff managed and administered the Council resources needed to deliver the programme such as printing, communications with schools and families, financial administration, grant and performance returns to DfE and governance. A dedicated coordinator within the Council was not recruited as it was uncertain at the time whether the programme would continue. The role of Programme Manager was undertaken by the Head of Stronger Communities supported by three other members of that team.
- 3.3 North Yorkshire Together co-ordinated all the service delivery provision including recruiting, developing, supporting and carrying out due diligence on the network of local clubs and providers; delivery of training, carrying out visits and quality checks, linking clubs to local food providers and when face to face provision wasn't possible - due to the pandemic - the packing and delivery of activity packs.

- 3.4 Delivery of the programme over 2021 saw a mix of face to face and virtual provision due to covid restrictions. In summary the following programme was delivered:

#### Easter

- 12,000 activity packs delivered to all eligible children
- Online videos and resources
- Food vouchers provided

#### Summer

- Primarily face to face provision
- 47 local sports, arts and community organisations delivered a range of enriching activities
- Food provision was through a mix of a central contract and local providers
- 2554 fsm eligible children attended (22%) and 3778 non fsm children
- 11,336 children were also provided with activity booklets and access to online provision

#### Winter

- Blend of face to face and remote provision
- 25 local providers
- 1217 fsm eligible children attended – due to the Omicron variant becoming increasingly widespread in the run up to Christmas a number of providers cancelled and families cancelled their bookings or didn't attend

### **4. PROPOSED HAF APPROACH 2022/23, 2023/24 & 2024/25**

- 4.1 The Council was able to build and deliver a programme that met the DfE minimum requirements in 2021. This provides a solid basis upon which to further develop the programme and in particular meet the broader aims of the programme as outlined above and specifically the provision of activities for SEND (particularly those with complex needs); to build in wrap-around support and signposting for families and to align and embed the programme alongside the work of the Early Help service.

#### **Staffing and Governance**

- 4.2 The guidance issued by the DfE alongside the grant determination letter announcing the 2022/23 round of funding included the requirement by all local authorities to have in place a dedicated HAF coordinator to work alongside the broader partnership. This post is currently being recruited and will sit in the Early Help team. This will provide the dedicated resource needed to develop and expand the offer in North Yorkshire to meet the requirements as detailed in 2.4 above providing wrap around support and act as a single point of contact for the operational partnership and the DfE.
- 4.3 The new post will help to build an enhanced offer for children and families by making relevant links between the programme and other council services & programmes (eg Healthy Schools Programme and Healthy Child Programme); agencies; and community programmes. This post will be supported by and work alongside the wider operational partnership which included both internal and external members.
- 4.4 It is proposed to review the governance in September 2022 and establish a Strategic Board supported by an agile Operational Steering Group.

### **Coordination Contract**

- 4.5 Following a review of the arrangements for the delivery of the 2021 programme by legal and procurement teams, it has been proposed that the coordination role carried out this year by North Yorkshire Together through the direct awarding of individual grants, would be better suited to a service contract. This is due to a number of reasons:
- the nature of the functions undertaken by North Yorkshire Together to coordinate and manage the day to day delivery of the activities by the network of delivery partners
  - the length of the programme being extended to 3 years
  - the resulting value of the investment available for this element of the work.
- 4.6 It is therefore proposed to undertake an open procurement under the light touch regime. The procurement will be a competitive process with a total value not exceeding £500,000.
- 4.7 The procurement will take place between June 2022 and September 2022 with the successful supplier starting on 1 October 2022.

### **Interim Arrangements**

- 4.8 Due to the time restraints between receiving final notification from the DfE in December 2021 and the operational needs to start planning the 2022 programme in January 2022 it has not been possible to run the procurement in advance of the 2022/23 programme starting. In order to avoid potential service interruption and risk non-delivery of both the Easter and Summer Holiday programmes it has been agreed with legal and procurement to extend the arrangements with the existing coordination until the end of September. This will however operate as a service contract rather than a grant.
- 4.9 This arrangement also enables the Early Help team to recruit for the new post.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 That the contents of the report are noted.

### **Report prepared by:**

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13 June 2022

### **Background Papers:**

[Department for Education: Grant determination letter. HAF 2022 Final.pdf](#)

[DfE: Holiday Activities and Food Programme Guidance](#)