

## Delegated Officer Report

<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Rebekah Sutcliffe, Strategic Director of Communities &amp; Reform</b>
<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> July 2021</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Holiday Activity and Food Programme, Payment terms for providers.</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Neil Consterdine Assistant Director, Youth, Leisure and Communities and Sally Robson, Programme Director, Oldham Opportunity Area.</b>
<b>Ward (s):</b>	<b>All</b>

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<b>Reason for the decision:</b>	To approve the payment terms for organisations providing services to the Holiday Activities and Food Programme.
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<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The purpose of the report is to request approval of the payment terms for organisations providing services to the Holiday Activities and Food Programme. Due to the nature of this activity some organisations are small and not for profit and therefore are unlikely to have reserves to support these activities without advance funding. The report sets out requirements of the programme and the need for these payment terms. No individual awards of over £100k are payable to individual organisations– see appendix 1</p>
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The Department for Education (DfE) has made funds available to every local authority in England to coordinate free holiday club/activity provision, including healthy food and enriching activities, for children receiving benefits-related free school meals for the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021.

Oldham Council has received £1.355m from the DfE to deliver the Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) this year. See appendix 2 Grant offer.

Our ambition is to ensure eligible children and young people across Oldham have access to a diverse range of exciting holiday clubs and activities, offering a blend of borough-wide and more locally based activities. See appendix 3 for further background on HAF.

***What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):***

Option 1 To pay all providers in advance of delivering their Holiday Activities and Food provision. This would allow adequate funding for activities to be delivered by small providers with limited reserves. This option presents a level of risk to the Council and there is potential for needing to claw money back if they fail to deliver in full.

Option 2 To have a tiered payment process based on the value of the grant being awarded to the provider.

- Awards under £20k will be paid in advance
- Awards over £20k will be paid 75% in advance and 25% on completion.

This option allows us to balance the need of small providers with the risk presented to the council. It should also be noted that the majority of these providers are known to the council.

Option 3 To pay all providers on completion of delivering their Holiday Activities and Food provision. This option provides maximum security to the council but will exclude a large number of providers from taking up the HAF grant and will ultimately limit the provision we are able to make available for our children and young people.

**Recommendation(s):**

The recommendations are that:

Option 2 To have a tiered payment process based on the value of the grant being awarded to the provider.

- Awards under £20k will be paid in advance
- Awards over £20k will be paid 75% in advance and 25% on completion.

The Council accepts the risk that it may have to finance any expenditure for which it is not possible to claim grant reimbursement and that the additional cost will be funded by the budget of the Education, Skills and Early Years Directorate and Communities and Reform or from the Directorates reserves.

## Implications:

*What are the **financial** implications?*

The Grant allocated to Oldham to deliver the holiday activities and food programme is £1.355 million. Of this sum £0.136m was received in 2020/21 and carried forward into 2021/22

The Department for Education (DfE) has made funds available to every local authority in England to coordinate free holiday club/activity provision, including healthy food and enriching activities, for children receiving benefits-related free school meals for the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021.

The current proposal is to award payments to 35 providers totalling £0.975m in advance of the delivery of the grant related activity. As only £0.745m of the grant has been received to date, this requires £0.230m to be spent in advance of the total grant allocation being received.

The anticipated profile of payments to providers is broken down as follows: -

	Amount £	Balance Remaining £
Awards under £20k will be paid in advance	190,480.24	
Awards over £20k will be paid 75% in advance and 25% on completion.	588,176.22	196,058.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>778,656.46</b>	<b>196,058.74</b>

The Authority has been in contact with the Department for Education as the allocation of funding received no longer reflects the pattern of actual eligible expenditure to see if the timing or amount of grant payments can be changed accordingly.

At this stage the remaining grant will be paid 30% November 2021 and 20% February 2022 upon receipt of a satisfactory delivery plan report.

Whilst this option enables small providers to deliver services, it presents a risk to the Council. There may be a requirement to claw back funding if providers fail to deliver in full. Should any organisation fail to deliver and be unable to return the funding, the Council would be unable to show eligible expenditure under the grant rules and regulations. As a result, the Council would have to finance any ineligible expenditure. Whilst the majority of the providers are known to the Council and payments of £165k are providers linked to the Council, a risk remains.

In approving Option 2, the Council will have to be prepared to underwrite any expenditure for which there is no grant reimbursement. This would have to be financed from the budget of the Education, Skills and Early Years Directorate and Communities and Reform or from the Directorates reserves.

(Liz Caygill)

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What are the **procurement** implications?

As this is in relation to the commissioning of Grants, there are no Procurement implications. (Emily Molden).

What are the **legal** implications?

The decision to accept the recommended proposal should have regard to both the benefits for the recipients of the grants and service users but also the potential financial risk to the Council of having to recoup grant funding that is paid in advance to providers that are unable to fund the proposed activities without the proposed support, having regard to the Council's current budgetary position. (Colin Brittain)

What are the **Human Resources** implications?

None

**Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment** attached or not required because (please give reason)

None

What are the **property** implications?

Not applicable

**Risks:**

**Co-operative agenda**

None

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Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?


Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?



No

**List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:**

Title	Available from
Background papers are set out in the Appendices some of which contain exempt information under Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972	

<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
Neil Consterdine Assistant Director, Youth, Leisure and Communities	
<b>Date:</b>	8 July 2021

Appendices to the report are set out below

Appendix Number or Letter	Description
1	Individual award payments table  Book1.xlsx
2	Grant offer letter  Grant determination letter - S31 Ringfence
3	HAF Background Information

Signed: (Strategic Director/Director)  
Rebekah Sutcliffe



Date: 08/07/2021

## **Appendix 3- Holiday Activities and Food Programme**

### **1. Background**

In November 2020, the Department for Education announced £220m would be available for Holiday Activities and Food, with £1.355m to be provided to Oldham Council to cover Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.

School holidays can be particular pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced incomes. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap - with children from disadvantaged families less likely to access organised out-of-school activities; more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health and are more likely to experience social isolation.

Free holiday clubs are a response to this issue and evidence suggests that they can have a positive impact on children and young people. It also shows they work best when they provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities, when they offer more than just breakfast or lunch, and when they involve children (and parents) in food preparation.

The grant funding is to cover the provision of free holiday places, including healthy food and enriching activities, for children who receive benefits-related free school meals and the coordination of the programme locally. It will be optional for eligible children to attend this provision if they wish.

The aim is that through this programme children who attend will:

- a) To eat more healthily over the school holidays;
- b) To be more active during the school holidays;
- c) To take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider education attainment;
- d) To be safe and not to be socially isolated;
- e) To have greater knowledge of health nutrition; and
- f) To be more engaged with school and other local services

### **2. Current Position**

Due to the short period ahead of Easter, we decided to put on a light programme using existing process and use the exercise as a test and learn. We spent around £77k and used 15 providers with a mix of larger providers and smaller community groups.

For the Summer provision, we are aiming to put together a more holistic offer for our pupils that are eligible for and claiming Free School Meals. We have set up a working group drawing on expertise from around the council and the sector. To date the group has completed the following activities.

- a) Conducted a survey of schools.
- b) Mapped the distribution of pupils across the LA of pupils eligible for Free School Meals.
- c) Held a provider event.

- d) Identified existing infrastructure to allow the offer to be displayed and bookings to be made.
- e) Assessed 40 EOIs and have a short list of successful providers.

Payment terms need to be finalised before Grant Agreements are sent out to the successful providers. We are aiming to start sending Grant Agreements out w/c 28 June. Due to the nature of this programme some of the successful organisations are small and not for profit and therefore are unlikely to have reserves to support these activities without advance funding. We are therefore proposing a tiered payment structure. This will allow us to pay smaller grants (under £20k) that are more likely to go to smaller organisations in advance. For larger grants (over £20k) we have proposed split payment (75% in advance and 25% on completion) to balance the need for funds with the financial risk to the council.

## Outline Programme Plan

Programme Phase	3-May-21	10-May-21	17-May-21	24-May-21	31-May-21	7-Jun-21	14-Jun-21	21-Jun-21	28-Jun-21	5-Jul-21	12-Jul-21	19-Jul-21	26-Jul-21	2-Aug-21	9-Aug-21	16-Aug-21	23-Aug-21	30-Aug-21	6-Sep-21	13-Sep-21	20-Sep-21	27-Sep-21	4-Oct-21
Summer programme start up																							
Expressions of interest																							
Funding arrangements for providers finalised																							
Booking and monitoring take up levels																							
Monitor the running of activity sessions																							
Data collection and evaluations																							
Winter programme starts																							