

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 01 March 2021

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Easter Food Poverty and Holiday Activities and Food Programme

This decision needs to be implemented 02/03/21 to allow time to purchase vouchers in time for the Easter Holidays.

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Cordelia Law, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Director/Assistant Director Contact Details:

Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services

Joanna Williams, Director of Adult's Services

1. Purpose of Report

To highlight the issues regarding the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme for the Easter Holidays 2021 and to recommend that The Council supplements food provision for children for Easter Holidays with the purchase of vouchers.

To mandate further action on food to address longer term food sustainability in Torbay.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

We want Torbay and its residents to thrive.

We want Torbay to be a place where we have turned the tide on poverty and tackled inequalities; where our children and older people will have high aspirations and where there are quality jobs, good pay and affordable housing for our residents.

2.1 The proposals in this report help us to deliver this ambition by addressing immediate risk of food poverty for children over Easter.

2.2 The reasons for the decision are that the HAF programme does not reach sufficient children and does not comprehensively address the issues faced by families in food poverty over Easter holidays 2021

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1.1 That Cabinet endorses the proposals for Easter Holidays 2021, which are:

- That Torbay Council funds and issues food vouchers to the wider cohort of children identified as being in food poverty for the Easter holidays. EST cost £210,000 to be funded from COVID grants. This cohort includes all children who may be in food poverty – over 7000 children.
- That the HAF works in partnership with VCSE partners to issue food parcels, activity packs over Easter

1.2 We recognise that we will also need to address half term and summer holiday food poverty and propose that Torbay Council and partners work on a solution for half term and summer holidays to complement the Holiday Activities and Food Programme.

That proposals for a Strategic Food Partnership and Food Action Plan for Torbay are brought to Cabinet as a matter of priority.

Those proposals would be that Torbay Council develops a strategic food partnership for Torbay, which would take a collaborative approach to create a more resilient local food system, which is good for people and planet and addresses the following issues:

- Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food – prioritising the immediate issue of school holidays
- Supporting the creation of a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy
- Tackling the climate and nature emergency through an end to food waste locally
- Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement

Background Documents

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme>

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The government has announced the significant expansion of its Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. This is an extension of an existing programme which was established in 2018, but not all Local Authorities have participated – Torbay has not been part of the programme thus far. The programme provided healthy food and enriching activities during the summer holidays to children who receive benefits-related free school meals.
- 1.2 The expanded programme, which comprises a £220 million allocation delivered through grants to local authorities, will be expanded to reach all local authority areas over the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays in 2021. It is intended to address the issue of hunger for children during these school holidays. Torbay has been allocated £560,110 of this grant funding to deliver the programme to eligible children in the Bay.
- 1.3 The grant cannot be used to provide food vouchers and must be used to deliver a holiday activity provision with a food element (equivalent of one meal), as well as support to families as outlined earlier.
- 1.4 The holiday club places will be available for the equivalent of at least 4 hours a day, 4 days a week. This provision covers four weeks in the summer, plus a week's worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas holidays. This means that for the Easter fortnight, two days per week provision is allowed for.
- 1.5 The free holiday club places must only be targeted at children who are eligible for and receiving benefits-related free school meals.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 The report is not proposing the 'do nothing' option because of the following issues with regards the HAF programme:
 - Research from other areas who have been involved in the programme pre the pandemic and national rollout identifies that the largest reach is only 25% of the total children eligible for Free School Meals
 - We are not able to use the funding to provide food directly to families via a voucher or other funding to partners. So the scheme will not support the Torbay Food Alliance, who are able to provide decent food parcels at a low cost.
 - Many families will not want to access holiday provision so will not be entitled to the food element of this programme, however they will remain in food poverty.
 - It is limited to only being available for families during term holiday dates and not half term

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 The HAF Grant allocation to Torbay Council is £560,110. This must be used to deliver holiday activities with a food provision. This must cover 4 days per week, over one week at Easter, four weeks for summer and one week for Christmas.
- 3.2 Estimated cost of £210,000 to be funded from Council funds – for food vouchers of £30 per child for the Easter Holidays.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 N/A

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 Engagement was undertaken for the COVID Winter Grant scheme with educational establishments and Voluntary Sector Partners.

A steering group with Voluntary and Community Sector Partners has been established, in order to co-produce the HAF scheme

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 N/A

7. Tackling Climate Change

- 7.1 N/A

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 Under the terms of the programme, there will be limited access for children and families in food poverty to this support. It is for two days per week for two weeks and for FSM children only.

As a comparator, The COVID Winter Grant scheme in Torbay targeted a wider cohort of children and families in food poverty. The eligible cohort is a small proportion of the 7000 children who accessed the food vouchers under the winter grant scheme. To address this issue both DCC and PCC are proposing to supplement the scheme with vouchers issued to families.

Equality Impacts

9.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups		
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	This proposal is designed to improve issues of food poverty facing children		
People with caring Responsibilities			No impact
People with a disability			No impact
Women or men			No impact
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>			No impact
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No impact
People who are transgendered			No impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No impact

	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No impact
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	This proposal is designed to improve issues of food poverty facing children		
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	This proposal is designed to improve issues of food poverty facing children		
10..	Cumulative Council Impact (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)			
11.	Cumulative Community Impacts (proposed changes within the wider community (inc the public sector) which might worsen the impacts identified above)			