

Record of Decisions

Easter Food Poverty and Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 01 March 2021

Decision

That the following proposals for Easter Holidays 2021 be approved:

- (a) that Torbay Council funds and issues food vouchers to the wider cohort of children identified as being in food poverty for the Easter holidays. Estimated cost £210,000 to be funded from COVID grants. This cohort includes all children who may be in food poverty – over 7000 children;
- (b) that the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme works in partnership with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners to issue food parcels, activity packs over Easter;
- (c) that the Council recognises that there will also be need to address half term and summer holiday food poverty and resolved that Torbay Council and partners work on a solution for half term and summer holidays to complement the Holiday Activities and Food Programme; and
- (d) that proposals for a Strategic Food Partnership and Food Action Plan for Torbay be 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 was good for people and planet and addresses the following issues;
 - I. tackling food poverty, diet-related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food – prioritising the immediate issue of school holidays.
 - II. supporting the creation of a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy.
 - III. tackling the climate and nature emergency through an end to food waste locally;
 - IV. building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement.

Reason for the Decision

The proposals in the submitted report will help Torbay Council to address the immediate risk of food poverty for children and the issues faced by families in food poverty over Easter holidays 2021.

Implementation

This will come into force immediately as the decision maker has decided that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would prejudice the public's interest. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator was consulted on 24 February 2021.

Information

The government 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. 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.

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. 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. The free holiday club places must only be targeted at children who are eligible for and receiving benefits-related free school meals

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

None

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

No

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None

Published

3 March 2021

Signed: _____
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: _____

