

Notice of NON KEY Executive Decision containing exempt information

This Executive Decision Report is part exempt and Appendix A, is not available for public inspection as it contains exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. It is exempt because it contains information that is commercially sensitive, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

Subject Heading:	Allocation of Grant Funding - Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme Summer 2026
Decision Maker:	Trevor Cook – Assistant Director of Education
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Kevin Gill – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
ELT Lead:	Tara Geere, Director of Starting Well
Report Author and contact details:	Celia Freeth- Early years Quality Assurance Manager/Strategic Lead for HAF- celia.freeth@havering.gov.uk 01708 433802
Policy context:	The Children and Families Act 2014, The Education Act 1996 (section19).
Financial summary:	The Funding forms part of the statutory Children, Youth and Families Grant, being delivered through the Local Government Finance Settlement. The multi- year funding settlement for HAF is ring-

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	fenced. This provides the local authority with stability and certainty. The local authority has flexibility and autonomy to design and deliver the programme to meet the needs of their locality. The summer series programme will cost £461,814 and funding will be allocated to providers of the schemes based on an application process and an approval panel. Providers indicate at application stage the nature of their provision and anticipated numbers of children. This allows the panel to ensure balanced coverage for areas and types of provision. 25% is paid up front to the provider for set-up costs and 75% post delivery based on evidence of the numbers of children who attended.
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee:	People OSC
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	The decision will be exempt from call in as it is a Non key Decision

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well x

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy x

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Assistant Director of Education is recommended to approve the award of grant funding to the Provider's listed at Exempt Appendix 1 to deliver the Summer 2026 Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3.3 of the Council's Constitution

Scheme 3.3.3 Powers common to all Strategic Directors

4. Contracts

4.2 To award all contracts with a total contract value of below £1,000,000 other than contracts covered by Contract Procedure Rule 16.3. This delegation shall include the ability to extend or vary a contract up to and including a value of £1,000,000 (provided that the extension is in line with the existing contractual provisions.)

As notified to the Monitoring Officer in the Sub Delegation from the Director of Children's Services / Director of Starting Well to the Assistant Director, Education Services, dated 7 August 2025.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Council has been allocated £809,040 in funding by the Department for Education for delivery of the 2026 HAF programme. Last year the Council awarded £450,000 in grants to providers during the summer programme.

Due to the time required to set up and promote clubs, funding decisions are required urgently to ensure clubs can run a successful programme. Delays to this process will risk delivery becoming unviable and clubs withdrawing, which would leave us in breach of our grant agreement with DfE, resulting in the return of funding to DfE.

The Council has received 30 applications to deliver HAF for Summer 2026. The Council intends to award to 15 providers who between them have indicated that they can deliver a total number of 720 sessions over the summer holidays. Based on the successful applications the Council will award up to £461,814 for summer 2026 delivery. However this amount may be less as the Council pays 75% of the award post delivery based on the actual number of attendees

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This year's maximum spend for summer will be £461,814. The final budget will be closely monitored and capped to ensure it does not exceed the allocated limit.

The overall purpose of the programme is to provide support to children in Reception to Year 11 who are entitled to free school meals during school holiday periods. Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. Children from low-income households are more likely to experience food insecurity and social isolation, miss out on physical activity and enriching experiences, and fall behind in development and wellbeing.

The HAF programme is a direct response to this, providing free nutritious meals, enriching activities and safe environments for eligible children, benefiting their health, wellbeing and learning

Having worked closely with procurement and legal teams, we are adopting the Grant Funding model, because the DfE 2026/27 Guidance encourages Local Authorities to tailor their offer to the unique needs of the community, so that children of ages 5-16 and those with significant additional needs can benefit from an appropriate offer of programmes that meet their interests and needs and abilities. Prospective providers set out their programme offers and the panel ensure the overall provision is balanced and varied.

Grant process;

Officers undertook an application process whereby providers were asked to apply, providing details of the venue, nature of their provision and anticipated numbers of children. This was then assessed by a panel before a decision was taken as to which providers to award grant funding to. This allowed the panel to ensure balanced coverage for areas and types of provision. The amount of funding awarded is based on a flat rate of £6 per child per hour. If providers require additional funding for specific items (e.g. day trips, hiring equipment) then this must be evidenced and the Council can evaluate if this meets the DfE grant funding criteria before awarding any additional funding. Any additional funding is capped.

25% of awarded funding is paid up front to the provider for mobilisation costs and up to 75% post- delivery based on evidence of the numbers of children who attended.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Consideration was given to going down a procurement route and setting a smaller number of contracts for specified programmes. This is a model seen in some local authorities.. However, the Council have already developed a grants application process for local providers which is working well and delivering a success HAF programme. Therefore there will be no benefit in changing the process at this time.

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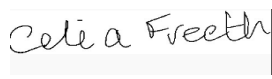
PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

Not applicable

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Celia Freeth

Designation: Early Years Quality Assurance manager and Strategic Lead for Holiday Food and Activities Programmes

Signature: 

Date: 12/06/2026

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This report seeks approval to award grant payments to successful applicants as listed at Exempt Appendix 1.

The Council has the general power of competence under s1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that an individual may generally do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation and the power is exercised in accordance with the limitations specified in the Act. This gives the Council the ability to award the funding as set out within this report.

8.2.3. Although the Council is able to determine the arrangements within their area, it must be within the scope of the conditions set out in the grant funding guidance. The Council must also document their eligibility criteria. Reporting on spend is required and the DfE guidance must be complied with and any unspent funding will need to be repaid to the DfE.

Whereas the Council is deploying grant funding, it is not making arrangements for Services which would otherwise be caught under the Procurement Act 2023. Officers will ensure that written arrangements are made in such deployments including covering any transfer of personal data as protected under UK General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018.

The Council will enter into grant agreements with all of the organisations setting out the terms and conditions on which the grant is being awarded.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Revenue

The Council has received a ring-fenced Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme allocation of £809,040 from the Department for Education (DfE) for the 2026/27 financial year.

The funding forms part of the Children, Youth and Families Grant and must be used in accordance with the HAF grant conditions and programme guidance. The funding is revenue in nature and is fully externally funded. No additional Council funding is required to support the delivery of the programme. The DfE has confirmed a three-year funding settlement, providing greater certainty for planning and delivery of the programme.

The DfE's standard expectation is that local authorities utilise up to 7.5% of their HAF allocation for administration costs. However, following a formal application by Havering and consideration of the exceptional circumstances presented, the DfE has approved the Council's request to retain 10% of the allocation for administration purposes.

Accordingly, the allocation is proposed to be utilised as follows:

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Budget Area	Amount (£)
HAF Programme Delivery	728,136
Administration (10%)	80,904
Total Allocation	809,040

The administration allocation will support the staffing, programme management, quality assurance, safeguarding oversight, contract and grant monitoring, data reporting, compliance, communications, provider support and partnership development activities required to deliver the programme successfully across the borough.

This report seeks approval to award grant funding of £461,814 to providers for delivery of the Summer 2026 HAF programme. This expenditure forms part of the wider annual HAF allocation and will be contained within the overall approved programme budget. The remaining programme funding will support subsequent delivery phases, including Christmas and other eligible holiday provision, together with centrally managed programme costs and contingency requirements.

As the funding is ring-fenced, there is a risk that any expenditure incurred outside the scope of the grant conditions or any material underspend may be subject to recovery by the DfE. To mitigate this risk, expenditure will be closely monitored throughout the financial year and grant claims from providers will be subject to verification and attendance monitoring before final payments are released.

There are no direct financial liabilities to the Council arising from this decision beyond the management of the grant allocation. Any future funding changes or amendments to DfE guidance may impact future programme delivery and will be considered as part of the Council's ongoing financial planning arrangements.

Capital

There are no capital implications arising from this decision. The HAF allocation is a revenue grant and the proposed expenditure relates solely to the delivery and administration of holiday provision. No capital assets will be created or acquired as a result of the recommendations within this report.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

There are no HR risks or implications arising as a result of this decision.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

No equalities and social risks relating to the proposed decision as the programme has significant positive implications.

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HAF also improves accessibility and affordability of childcare during school holidays opening up work opportunities for parents on low incomes to support their families. Adopting mixed models or longer sessions can also help to support families more broadly to work or manage other commitments.

Families can also benefit, when HAF providers include their needs in planning and delivering their programme. This could be through:

- providing opportunities to get involved in sessions, for example, cookery classes
- ensuring they are signposted towards other sources of information and support, such as health services or employment and education opportunities

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

No climate change Implications or risks relating to the proposed decision.

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The are no risks related to this programme.

The programme has substantial positive implications in this area:

The programme aims to help eligible children eat more healthily, be more active and develop resilience, character and wellbeing through enriching activities. It also aims to ensure that children are safe, not socially isolated during the holidays and return to school feeling more engaged and ready to learn.

There are many benefits for children who attend the HAF programme. HAF providers should ensure a high-quality experience that will result in children:

- receiving healthy and nutritious meals
- maintaining a healthy level of physical activity
- being happy, having fun and meeting new friends
- developing a greater understanding of food, nutrition and other health-related issues
- taking part in fun and engaging activities that support their development and wellbeing
- feeling safe and secure
- getting access to the right support services
- returning to school feeling engaged and ready to learn

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 List of Grant Recipients and Funding (Exempt)

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Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

~~Proposal NOT agreed because~~

Details of decision maker

Signed 

Name: Trevor Cook

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

~~Head of Service title~~

~~Other manager title:~~

Date: 19 June 2026

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____