

**REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES**

**TO: EXECUTIVE**

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**Report Author: Gill Dickson**  
**Tel. No: 01282 661361**  
**E-mail: Gill.dickson@pendle.gov.uk**

## **HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD (HAF) PROGRAMME 2025**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To seek approval for a new management model for the Pendle Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme 2025/26, subject to continued HAF funding

To seek agreement to delegate authority to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to undertake decision making for 2025/26 Pendle Holiday Activities and Food Programme, as part of the transition process to Pendle Leisure Trust (PLT).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That the Executive agrees that the 2025/ 26 Holiday Activity and Food Programme is coordinated by Pendle Leisure Trust going forwards, subject to continuation of the HAF grant.
- (2) That delegated authority is given to the Director of Resources and Leader for any financial decisions as part of the transition handover from PBC to PLT.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To support vulnerable children/young people and their families over the three main school holidays whilst releasing capacity for the council.

### **ISSUE**

1. Since 2021, Lancashire County Council (LCC) has received government funding to roll out the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme to provide healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children and young people throughout the main school holidays.

2. 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
  - more likely to experience social isolation
3. Free holiday clubs are a response to this issue and evidence suggests that they can have a positive impact on children and young people and that they work best when they:
  - provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities
  - cover more than just breakfast or lunch
  - involve children (and parents) in food preparation
4. The free HAF provision targets 4- 16 year olds who are eligible for and receiving benefits related free school meals. 15% of the programme can also be used to provide places for children/ young people who are considered vulnerable or in need of provision. The scheme also accommodates SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) children and young people.

### **Pendle HAF update**

5. Pendle was allocated £378,000 for 2024/25 HAF programme. District allocations are based on Free School Meal levels. There are 3,367 FSM recipients in Pendle, 9.3% of Lancashire's FSM total.
6. Three programmes were delivered throughout 2024/25: one week over Easter, four weeks over Summer and one week over Christmas. At the time of writing this report, final figures for Christmas are yet to be collated but the Easter and Summer programmes supported more than 1,600 children and young people.
7. Pendle has commissioned over 20 HAF providers over 2024/25, all delivering high quality holiday provision throughout Pendle.
8. PBC is currently awaiting confirmation of HAF grant 2025/26.

### **Pendle HAF Existing Management arrangements**

9. Since its inception in 2021, Pendle Council (Policy Team) has managed and coordinated the programme. Management and coordination of the programme is resource intensive, taking the equivalent of 1 FTE between the Policy Team. PBC has previously accessed the 10% admin costs to recharge against staff time, rather than having a dedicated post for this programme.
10. Other East Lancashire authorities utilise their leisure trusts to coordinate HAF on their behalf (Hyndburn and Rossendale). Leisure Trusts are experienced holiday club providers and are well placed to coordinate and deliver community activity initiatives, as part of their commitment to providing leisure services.
11. PLT has been involved in supporting HAF, providing some operational support, and in more recent years, leading on the marketing. At that time, they were unable to commit more to HAF, however, their supporting role was appreciated.

12. Since then, with a recent change of leadership, PLT has confirmed their willingness to coordinate Pendle's HAF. PLT CEO has been in discussions with Hyndburn and Rossendale Leisure Trusts to better understand the innerworkings of the programme and what this role will entail from a leisure services perspective. This presents an exciting opportunity to review management arrangements of the programme to ensure Pendle's HAF programme continues to grow and thrive.
13. Releasing PBC of the HAF programme coordination will then provide much needed capacity within the Policy Team to focus on other emerging corporate priorities such as developing and delivering the community cohesion strategy and related community engagement work.

### **Proposed new management arrangements**

14. It is now proposed that, subject to continued funding, PBC passes on responsibility of the coordination of HAF programme to PLT, commencing in January 2025. Given their remit around activity and leisure, they are naturally placed to lead on such programmes.
15. LCC has confirmed it is unable to award the 2025/26 Funding Agreement to a third party, other than district councils, so PBC would need to continue as the accountable body. So, whilst the Funding Agreement would remain with PBC, it is proposed that a Service Agreement is drawn up to enable PLT to take on the day-to-day management and coordination of the programme. The model would be similar to the LCC PBC Healthy Weight Collaboration Agreement with quarterly contract review meetings held between PBC and PLT.
16. It is proposed that the 2025/26 Pendle HAF grant, the amount of which is yet to be determined at the point of writing this report, is passported on to PLT, with PBC retaining a percentage of the admin costs to cover overall management. The remaining admin cost would then be utilised by PLT to coordinate the 2025/26 programme, to be determined by the delegated authority.
17. The transition to PLT will be gradual, with PBC supporting the handover. Consideration needs to be given to the timings of the HAF programme too. Although delivery of Easter HAF falls in 2025/26, planning commences in 2024/25, hence the need to seek Executive approval for this revised management model in January.
18. It is proposed that the financial considerations of this transition are delegated to the Director of Resources and the Leader to ensure a seamless and efficient handover.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** Delivery of Pendle HAF programme will contribute to improved health outcomes for our vulnerable children and young people.

**Financial:** The proposed new management model would passport all the 2025/26 HAF grant (the amount of which is yet to be determined at the point of writing this report) to PLT, with PBC retaining a percentage to cover overall management of the programme, to be determined by the delegated authority.

**Legal:** None arising from the report

**Risk Management:** None arising from the report

**Health and Safety:** None arising from the report

**Sustainability:** None arising from this report

**Community Safety:** None arising from the report

**Equality and Diversity:** Targeting priority wards will help address Pendle's health inequalities.

## **APPENDICES**