

REPORT TO	ON
CABINET	13 November 2019



TITLE	PORTFOLIO	REPORT OF
Holiday Hunger Scheme	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Leisure	Director of Neighbourhoods and Development

Is this report a KEY DECISION (i.e. more than £100,000 or impacting on more than 2 Borough wards?)	Yes
Is this report on the Statutory Cabinet Forward Plan ?	Yes
Is the request outside the policy and budgetary framework and therefore subject to confirmation at full Council? This should only be in exceptional circumstances.	No
Is this report confidential?	No

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. This report is an evaluation of a pilot project run over the 6 weeks summer holidays of 2019 in the Broadfield area and a proposal to extend the project. The Project was to contribute to the development of a sustainable approach to reducing holiday hunger in South Ribble, when children do not have access to free school meals.

PORTFOLIO RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Cabinet consider this report and provides comments on the pilot project, the evaluation and the learning points.
3. Cabinet recommend the scheme should be expanded to include further areas and to include the development of a Pantry project.
4. Cabinet approves a Holiday Hunger budget to a total of £60,000 over a 4 year period, and authorises expenditure on this scheme up to the overall budget value.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

5. The reason for this report is to provide Cabinet with an update on the holiday hunger pilot which took place over the 6 weeks summer holidays and to recommend an

expansion to the scheme if the budget is approved. This is a key part of our Corporate Plan to tackle poverty and to ensure our residents can live in a place where they can be happy, healthy and safe.

CORPORATE OUTCOMES

6. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (tick all those applicable):

Excellence, Investment and Financial Sustainability	
Health, Wellbeing and Safety	x
Place, Homes and Environment	x

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

Our People and Communities	x
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BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

7. Children deserve the best start in life and this is made clear in the Scrutiny Review of Health Inequalities 'Mind the Gap'. Childhood hunger shouldn't be allowed to have a damaging impact on their health, attainment and opportunity. Lack of adequate nutrition impacts children's development and ability to take part in education.
8. Holiday hunger pushes many families into food poverty and insecurity. While many children from low-income families are entitled to free school meals during term time, there is currently no such provision during holidays. Local voluntary sector organisations 'fill the gap' in some places by providing food banks but this is far from universal.
9. A report by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger found that children were returning to school in a worse educational, health and developmental state than that in which they had left in the summer. That report found that as many as three million children face the risk of food insecurity during the summer months.
10. Not only does the lack of food have a physical impact, children from poorer backgrounds are also suffering increased mental health difficulties, due to the 'loneliness, stigma and isolation' that comes with holiday hunger. A senior associate at the General Medical Council stated that anxiety and mental health difficulties faced by children as a result of holiday hunger are leading to socioeconomic differences in mental health and wellbeing when children return to school.
11. Research from Cardiff University, based on a study of 103,971 children from 193 secondary schools, showed that children from poorer backgrounds were more likely to report loneliness and hunger during the summer holidays, and were less likely to spend time with friends or engage in physical activities.
12. The Project was run as part of the Council's commitments to tackling poverty and £10,000 in funding was available to run one pilot project to reduce holiday hunger over the school holidays from 21st July to 1st September 2019. The Broadfield area was chosen based on the number of children accessing free school meals.

- 13.** The Project offered free nutritious food as a packed lunch two days a week where children or parents could choose ten items of food. These items then could be used to make 5 nutritious lunches which included healthy drinks, fresh fruit, breads and sandwich fillings. In addition the charity FareShare provided free of charge additional items such as breakfast cereals, milk, snacks and vegetables. These items were additional items to the ten items of food provided by the Council.
- 14.** The Council worked with a Charity called Key Unlocking futures who volunteered to provide the building and a member of staff to run the scheme. Key had access to a large number of local volunteers to help run the scheme who know the area well. The use of volunteers from the community and that the building was set up like a shop helped to reduce the feeling of stigma in accessing the food.
- 15.** The Council sent vouchers to all primary and secondary school children in the area of the scheme who had free school meal provision via their school. We worked to ensure that every child had 6 vouchers one for every week in the holiday. The schools volunteered to give these vouchers to the children and we gave the schools extra vouchers to give to children who may not have access to free school meals but are in need. This system proved effective as it meant that at the point of delivery families did not need to be asked intrusive questions. Families just needed to provide a voucher in return for the food.
- 16.** The main expected outcomes of the Project were;
- A reduction in financial strain and food insecurity for families
 - A reduction in hunger for children over the holidays
 - Improved nutritional knowledge, where needed
 - Improved wellbeing, social interaction and reduced isolation, where needed.

The pilot project provided 231 food parcels and cost the Council £1,155. This cost includes the purchase of food, equipment and a small contribution to FareShare. In addition to this, FareShare provided food to the value of £900. Key has provided 90 hours of staff time with an attributable cost of £1,170 and 84 hours of volunteer support with an attributable cost of £689.

17. Here are some comments from the families:

“It has been really helpful to see us through the weeks which meant less stress and more time for fun with my family”

“Lovely staff and a massive help with food during the summer holidays”

“Friendly and helpful volunteers with a wide choice of foods available”

“Great atmosphere and approachable volunteers- it was extremely helpful I am so grateful”

“A great help when you are struggling with money- nice friendly people who always have a smile on their faces”

“It has been so well run, it has been extremely helpful and it is nice knowing that others are thinking of families in need over the holidays”

“Absolute God send thank you”

18. In addition to the outcomes achieved above a wider benefit to the community is how this project has drawn people in to the Community Centre who hadn't previously visited. This has helped people to feel comfortable coming to the centre and to find out what else is on offer. This had led to increased demand in other sessions which take place in the centre such as their youth club, coffee mornings and a number of new volunteers are in the pipeline from those who have used this service.
19. Although we feel this pilot project was successful overall and delivered the outcomes we expected, there were areas of deprivation that the project did not cover. An example of this is Kingsfold in Penwortham, which according to the latest free school meal data show in some schools 42% of children have access to free school meals.

PROPOSALS (e.g. RATIONALE, DETAIL, FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT)

20. The report show the great success and positive feedback the project has received, but that there are areas of need in our Borough the project did not cover. Therefore it is proposed to extend the scheme to cover a further three areas of the borough.
21. The three further areas proposed are Bamber Bridge, Kingsfold and Wade Hall. These additional locations have been selected based on the numbers of children receiving school dinners in these areas. Further areas may be selected in the future based on the need.
22. The proposed project will be using the same model as the pilot scheme but with different community organisations providing the buildings and support. The proposed project will run during all school holidays to provide nutritious lunches for children in both Primary and Secondary School who receive free school dinners.

Pantry Project

23. Working with the community and our partner Key it was clear that people needed support all year round. During the pilot people reported that they felt food banks were stigmatising and would not use them even though they were in need and were referred from their doctor. Therefore we contacted an agency called Christians Against Poverty to see if we could find an alternative to food banks.
24. Christians Against Poverty proposed that we offer a Pantry Project. Pantries operate as a membership scheme designed to help people make their money go further. Members can join without being referred and can remain members as long as they wish. To this extent Pantries are a step on from food banks in a number of important ways:
 - Member run: Pantries are run on very much cooperative lines, by and for their members, with many of the volunteers who run the Pantry also being members.
 - Open to all: Membership to anyone within the local neighbourhood who satisfies a basic 'low income' criterion, with no requirement to be referred by a professional or other third party.
 - Choice: Members are entitled to choose what food they want, using a colour coded system to ensure that this includes a balance of fresh, packaged and high value goods.
 - No time limits: Local Pantry membership is not time limited; members can choose to come every week (or not) for as long as they want.

25. Pantry membership is generally a £2.50 weekly fee and the aim is to reduce food shopping bills, provide advice and support, develop skills and bring communities together. In addition to the food members are offered training courses, cooking demonstrations and seasonal competitions and event.
26. For the £2.50 weekly fee pantry members can choose at least 10 items of groceries, with the average shopping basket often worth in excess of £15, which is a potential saving of £650 per year. The membership fees are directly invested back into the pantry to provide fresh produce on top of the £15 basket of goods.
27. Christians Against Poverty have interviewed a number of people who use their existing Pantry project and the feedback has been excellent. One comment from a member demonstrates the need "With the food bank I feel like I'm lowering myself. I'd rather go without food. And it's local so people I know are there...The Pantry feels different because you have paid and you are making a choice on the food you take home."
28. Key have offered to run the pantry project in one of their buildings and use their staff to support the project until the members are able to undertake this role themselves.
29. In order to become part of the Pantry franchise the cost for the Council would be £3000 this includes all the set up costs for Christians Against Poverty. No further funding is required as FareShare will provide the food free of charge, Key will provide the staffing and the membership fees are invested back into the project for fresh items such as fruit and vegetables.

CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

30. As addressed above 100% of the people visiting the holiday hunger project appreciated the provision and the comments provided above demonstrate the feedback.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

31. The alternative is to not run the project at all, but based on the research undertaken as highlighted in the report showed that children from poorer backgrounds were more likely to report loneliness and hunger during the summer holidays, and were less likely to spend time with friends or engage in physical activities.
32. Another alternative would be not to expand the pilot, but as shown there would be areas of deprivation that would miss out on the project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

33. The Council has set aside £10,000 in 2019/20 to fund this project. The pilot scheme cost the Council £1,155, however the total value of the pilot project (including voluntary contributions of food and time) was about £3,900. Further projects are in place for the school holiday periods, including October half-term and Christmas. The costs of these projects can be met from the existing budget provision.
34. In order to become part of the Pantry franchise the cost for the Council would be £3,000 which includes set up costs and no further funding would be required as FareShare will provide the food free of charge, Key will provide the staffing and the membership fees are invested back into the project for fresh items such as fruit and vegetables.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

35. The issues of Equality have been addressed. The remaining issues would be to ensure that the delivering service adequately risk assesses food provision and has in place appropriate insurances and policies to mitigate risk to the consumer/service user.

AIR QUALITY IMPLICATIONS

36. None

HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

37. My Neighbourhoods team are supporting this project and working to build the community assets to run both the proposed holiday hunger project and Pantry project. The proposal is that following initial setting up of the schemes staffing support from the community will run the projects.

ICT/TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

38. None

PROPERTY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

39. None

RISK MANAGEMENT

40. The key risk is that the Community groups are not able to support the project and Council officers will have to provide the staffing for the project.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT

41. This project is specifically targeting residents who live in areas of deprivation where the need is the greatest for these projects. The project has been designed using school meal data provided by The Office of Standards in Education.

RELEVANT DIRECTORS RECOMMENDATIONS

42. Cabinet consider this report and provides comments on the pilot project, the evaluation and the learning points.
43. Cabinet recommend the scheme should be expanded to include further areas and to include the development of a Pantry project.
44. Cabinet approves a Holiday Hunger budget to a total of £60,000 over a 4 year period, and authorises expenditure on this scheme up to the overall budget value.

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

This is a new initiative being implemented and supported by the Council who are working with community groups and charitable organisations to deliver the projects. Approval is sought for a total budget of £60,000 over a 4 year period in order to expand the project to include further areas and develop a Pantry project.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

45. Clearly what is proposed here is something new and innovative for the council. The Pantry proposal in particular is something different. Whilst there are some practical issues that will need to be attended to (please see the Legal Implications section) nevertheless there are no fundamental issues or concerns with what is proposed.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

There are no background papers to this report.

APPENDICES

There are no appendices to this report

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