



## Report to Children and Young People's Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

**Report of:** James Henderson (Director of Policy Performance and Communications)

**Subject:** Tackling Poverty - Holiday Hunger 2017

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### Summary:

This report is an evaluation of a pilot project run over the 6 weeks summer holidays of 2017 with funding for the pilot set aside from the Fairness Commission. The Project was to contribute to the development of a sustainable approach to reducing holiday hunger in Sheffield over holidays, when children do not have access to free school meals. Proposals from organisations or partnerships were invited to show how they could develop, co-ordinate and run programmes offering free nutritious food and enriching activities, based on available evidence.

**Type of item:** The report author should tick the appropriate box

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Reviewing of existing policy              |          |
| Informing the development of new policy   |          |
| Statutory consultation                    |          |
| Performance / budget monitoring report    |          |
| Cabinet request for scrutiny              |          |
| Full Council request for scrutiny         |          |
| Community Assembly request for scrutiny   |          |
| Call-in of Cabinet decision               |          |
| Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee | <b>x</b> |
| Other                                     |          |

**The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:**

- Consider this report
- Provide comments on the pilot project, the evaluation and the learning points
- Recommend whether a similar scheme should be run again, if funding can be found.

### Background Papers:

Request for Quotation: Developing Sustainable Schemes to Tackle Holiday Hunger in Sheffield

**Category of Report:** OPEN/ (please specify)

# Report of the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications Tackling Poverty – School Holiday Hunger Project 2017

## 1. Introduction/Context

1.1 This Project was run as part of the Councils commitments under the Tackling Poverty Strategy 2015-18. £30,000 in funding was available to run a pilot project to reduce holiday hunger over the school holidays from 21<sup>st</sup> July to 1st September 2017. A procurement process to find a provider was undertaken in line with Council procurement policy.

1.2 The Project needed to offer free nutritious food and activities and be inclusive to children in the city in terms of both dietary need and type of holiday activities. Funding was to be focussed on areas where there are high levels of child poverty and low levels of activities available for young people to participate in.

1.3 Proposals had to demonstrate strong knowledge of Sheffield and the specific areas in which the project would operate as well as strong partnership working and links with local organisations and groups working in the areas.

1.4 The procurement process took longer than anticipated which meant that providers had a limited 3 weeks to submit a proposal for the project.

1.5 VAS were the successful bidder and they are be subcontracting with a range of organisations to support delivery. Providers have already begun running activities in 5 localities for the duration of the summer holidays. Pilots will take place in Netherthorpe (supported by Zest), Firth Park (supported by SOAR and Longley 4G), Broomhall/Central (supported by Home Start), Manor and Castle (supported by MCDT) and Sharrow (supported by Sharrow Community Forum). Fare Share and The Real Junk Food Project are also involved with food provision. Sheffield Hallam University supported with evaluation and data collection tools

1.6 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 home learning environment, wellbeing, social interaction and reduced isolation, where needed.

## 2. The Project and evaluation

2.1 We wanted to invest in the development of a proposal that could make a significant contribution to holiday hunger. We expected the activities with free food to run for at least three days per week during each of the six weeks of the holidays.

2.2 We expected the provision to reach at least 200 different children (50 per lot) who are at risk of not having sufficient food during the summer holidays 2017. We expected there to be at least 3,600 (900 per lot) child-days of activity and food. By this we mean the number of children attending multiplied by the number of days they attend for. We want to achieve a balance between reaching sufficient children and providing a regular opportunity to attend consistently for those who would really benefit from it. We therefore expect providers to ensure that a core of at least 80 (20 for each lot) children attend for at least 15 days.

2.3 We have held a feedback meeting with the providers to discuss the Project and the learning from it. See the enclosed evaluation report by the providers for full details but some key areas are noted below.

2.4 The main areas of provision in terms of areas were Manor 30% (highest level of foodbank use), Darnell/Tinsley 15%, Shiregreen/ Brightside 12% and Arbourthorne and Norfolk Park. There were over 47,000 child days of activity were provided and at least 124 families attended for 15 days or more. A summary of the breakdown of the number, ages of children who have benefitted is below.

| Age range      | 0 – 4 | 5-10 | 11-15 | 16+ | Parents | Others? |
|----------------|-------|------|-------|-----|---------|---------|
| <b>Number:</b> | 602   | 750  | 256   | 45  | 716     | 72      |

| Breakfast | Lunch | Afternoon/tea time | Total |
|-----------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| 918       | 344   | 2966               | 7228  |

2.5 Overall over 7228 meals provided for families (which is broken down to 1674 children and 716 parents) and there was access to free activities that included food which would otherwise have been unaffordable. Where there was surplus food was taken home by families.

2.6 Here are some comments from the evaluation from the providers.

- Parents and carers disclosed they would struggle through the holidays and in some cases families only attend when food is being served. Sessions that included food had a 35% higher attendance than those that didn't". (MCDT).
- The 'market stall' – with pay as you feel –was very popular however families were encouraged to take more food without needing to make a donation as they didn't have the money to make a contribution"(SCF). A number of parent volunteers and children supported the preparation of food.
- Because of high numbers of families attending, extra food deliveries were organised to keep up with demand" (HSSY).

2.7 In addition to the outcomes achieved as set out in the tender, a lot of additional benefits and 'added value' was achieved from the 6 weeks including in-kind support.

- 39 volunteers were recruited / donated time to the holiday schemes, many of whom are willing to continue to support similar projects.
- Sheffield Student Union provided storage space for perishable foods.
- There was also donated food and sports equipment etc
- It's estimated that least £11,936 of in-kind volunteer time, resources, food and room hire were donated.

2.8 There was also match funding of £30,883 cash-match – delivery, reach and impact would not have been possible without the already planned and resourced activities by delivery partners over the school holidays i.e. this contract provided 50% of the resource. Staff time e.g. staff volunteered time during the summer holidays to support the project and other staff had to work on the schemes due to the demand.

2.9 This was a partnership project FareShare and RJFP with the donation of food, skills and time, e.g. The Real Junk Food Project has supported the project through deliveries (extra as required) throughout the summer. They also helped to set up the 'Market stall' which was staffed by children. They also acted as a consultant, offering ideas and expertise.

- There was also work with Supermarkets: e.g. Tesco stores (Sharrow, Abbeydale and Ecclesall Road)
- Best Start Communities Count worked in partnership with the City Council's Children's Centre staff to cover all activities to ensure capacity.
- Work with 'Parklives' to provide active outdoor sessions.
- Work with SIV on delivery activities for the children/families

2.10 Another additional outcome was promoting community development / cohesion within neighbourhoods. The numbers of people attracted to the play schemes and centres and outdoor spaces used, supported other actions associated with play, social cohesion and community development. Many of those registered had not used or were familiar with the work and other support available to them.

2.11 As well as the positive outcomes there were also areas of challenge and learning the main one being the limited lead in time due to delays in the procurement process. This would really benefit any future project as this would enable more effective planning and a more targeted programme. Also this would enable time to make the right partnership links is also important, particularly with local schools and MAST. Other learning includes

- Piggy backing onto existing activity increased reach and did not stigmatise people who will have been financially struggling to make ends meet during the holidays. They could participate without being made to feel different.
- Match funding: by bringing this contract into pre-planned activities with resources already identified has helped increase the reach of support to families whilst ensuring those in need also benefit as part of a socially inclusive community development approach.
- Volunteer recruitment, engagement and training. We learnt that families were happy to be involved and lead on the food activity, introducing new foods to their children so more value can be added to the programme if there is a longer lead in time for training for parents.
- Helping ensure more added value through better planning and sharing of food suppliers. Whilst a lot of resource/food has been donated through our food supplier partners, more can be achieved with better planning and a longer lead-in time to co-ordinate what is needed where.
- Food does add value into holiday activity schemes – it helps meet the needs which are not always initially apparent and is an effective way of addressing food poverty alongside meeting a wider set of needs for families to achieve more impact and wider outcomes including building support networks and increasing families and communities' resilience.

2.12 Although we feel this pilot project was successful overall, there were areas of very high deprivation that the project did not cover. An example of this is Burngreave, which according to the latest child poverty figures is the highest area in Sheffield for child poverty. Any further projects of a similar nature would need to ensure a longer lead in time, wider coverage to take in the areas of very highest need and take into account the learning from this pilot.

### **3. What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?**

3.1 This Pilot Project was important for children and families' living in poverty in Sheffield and the specific focus was on those children and families who were;

- Eligible for income-based free school meals during term time
- Other children who are at risk of not having sufficient food during the summer holidays, for example, children who are living in poverty but not eligible for free school meals, children who are not of school-age and others
- Children who might otherwise be hungry, but we were open to proposals that involved a mixture of children and families, for example with some free places and some paid for, so

long as this is done in a non-stigmatising way and provided that at least 200 children who are at risk of not having sufficient food during the summer holidays 2017 are reached..

- Living in areas of the city where there are large numbers of children in poverty so in Wards or Lower Super Output Areas where more than 30% of children are in poverty. (See the tender for details)
- Living in areas of the city where there is little or no activity available for children to take part in over the summer holidays.

3.2 Given the outcomes achieved in this Pilot Project we are working with organisations to see if a further project could be run again in summer 2018 taking into account the learning from this Project. We have set up meetings this year with a range of interested people to explore options for developing another one. We are not sure at this stage whether there is funding available.

#### **4. Recommendations**

4.1 The committee are being asked to

- Consider the report
- Provide views on the Pilot Project, the evaluation and the learning
- Consider whether we you think that a similar project should be prioritised if funding were available.

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