

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	8 May 2019
Title:	Short Break Activities Commissioning Strategy
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. This report follows the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services 12 July 2018 Decision Day where the proposal to commission Short Break Activities via priorities was agreed.
2. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services on the proposed approach to the future commissioning of Short Break Activities, the proposed funding priorities, and the proposed 18 month funding period (1 October 2019 to 31 March 2021).

Recommendation(s)

2. For the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services;
3. To approve the recommended three priorities informed by stakeholder feedback of
 - i) holiday club;
 - ii) weekend club and;
 - iii) youth club provision;
4. To approve the recommended grant award period of 18 months from 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2021 (grant recommendations will return to July 2019 Decision Day);
5. To approve a total grant budget of £1,574,297 for the period 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2021;

6. To approve the principles and use of the exceptions fund described in section 6 of this report. (Any grant recommendations over £5,000 will be brought to future Decision Days for consideration).

Executive Summary

7. Further to the public consultation on reshaping Short Break activities undertaken in Spring 2018 and the subsequent report to Decision Day in July 2018, this report seeks to update the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services on the proposed commissioning strategy for Short Break Activities.
8. On his 12 July 2018 Decision Day the Executive Lead Member for Children Services approved the recommendation to commission Short Break activities on the basis of priorities set by key stakeholders including parents/carers
9. Since July 2018, views have been sought from a range of stakeholders and multiple sources of data have been analysed to inform priority activities for future Short Break Activities funding.
10. Grants were awarded for the period 1 April 2019 – 30 September 2019 and these are detailed in the 17 January 2019 Decision Day report. This short period of grant award was to allow more time to develop the priority led approach with relevant stakeholders.
11. Feedback from the public consultation, stakeholder workshop findings, a targeted parent/carer survey, grant monitoring and Gateway Card holder data and feedback from providers via providers forums has been taken into account to set the priorities.
12. This report details the development of these priorities with stakeholders and recommends extending from the historic 12 month funding allocations to 18 months for Short Break Activities funded from October 2019.
13. Recommendations for the award of funding to providers will be presented to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services at his July 2019 Decision Day.

Contextual information

14. Historically, grant awards for Short Break Activities have been driven by providers telling Children's Services what service they want to deliver and when they want to deliver it. This has led to a disparate level of service

delivery between districts, with some areas of the county left with very few activities as providers have not applied to deliver services in that area.

- 15.** Interim priorities have been implemented for the period 1 April – 30 September 2019 based on the feedback from the consultation and have been funded via six-month grant arrangements. These priorities were having a break:

 - within the school holiday periods, including; half-terms, Easter, Christmas and summer holiday periods;
 - via After School Clubs;
 - via Youth Clubs;
 - that is available on weekends;
 - that is available on weekdays, during school term.

- 16.** In order to agree the priorities for future commissioning, a stakeholder group was established consisting of representatives from:

 - Hampshire Parent Carer Network;
 - Supporting Families;
 - Family Support Service;
 - Local Children's Partnerships;
 - Services for Young Children;
 - Disabled Children's Teams;
 - Special Schools via Special School Executive Committee;
 - Voluntary Sector organisations.

- 17.** The stakeholder group met to discuss potential priorities for the county, and to consider the best approach to:

 - the number of sessions and demand for activities across the County;
 - the most appropriate time of day, duration and frequency of activities;
 - the most appropriate approach to commissioning activities.

- 18.** The group concluded that, whilst there was considered to be a gap in 0-5 years short break activities, this should primarily be covered by the Early Years offer for 3-5 year olds.

- 19.** The group further identified a gap for activities delivering sensory provision across all age ranges across the county. This will be addressed for future funded activities by encouraging providers to utilise existing resources where possible, and to include sensory in their offer where appropriate rather than commissioning new county wide standalone sensory provision.

- 20.** Stakeholders provided detailed feedback in respect of geographical considerations to factor into any new offer.

21. It was suggested that the priorities could be delivered to the following age groups:

0-5 years

5-11 years (Primary)

11–17 years (Secondary)

22. The stakeholder findings were presented to current Short Break Activity providers at a provider forum on 4 February 2019. Their feedback was sought on the priorities, any gaps or potential issues.

23. Their feedback was generally positive. Providers understand the need for the Local Authority to commission services in a different way and welcome a process that provides them with more certainty.

24. Children's Services provide clear guidance to organisations applying for grant funding about the importance of developing sustainable financial plans and not relying on the County Council for funding.

25. All providers applying for grant funding are aware that funding in any given year does not guarantee any level of future funding. This is further reinforced through twice yearly provider forums where significant notice of possible funding reductions and the importance of financial sustainability are discussed.

26. Furthermore, Action Hampshire were commissioned in 2017 to deliver sustainability training and guidance for providers, which is clearly published on the Council's website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/specialneeds/s hortbreaks/activityproviders/funding#step-5>

27. In order to seek broader feedback from a wider range of parents/carers, a survey was issued to parents and carers via Disabled Children's Teams and via Short Break Activity providers in February 2019.

28. 212 parents and carers completed this Short Break Activity questionnaire. This equates to 10% of Gateway Card holders. The highest number of respondents lived in the New Forest 18%, followed by East Hants with 16% and Basingstoke and Deane 13%.

29. Table one summarises the most popular activities identified by respondents to the questionnaire.

Table 1 February 2019 Parent/Carer Survey Feedback

Priority	“Very Important”	“Fairly Important”	Combined
1. Holiday clubs	81%	5%	86%
2. Weekend clubs	44%	19%	63%
3. Youth clubs	21%	15%	36%
4. After school clubs	16%	13%	29%
5. Weekday, term time activities	13%	10%	23%

30. Parents/carers indicated that having a break during the school holidays was very important with the summer holidays being the most important time for a break.

31. Parents/carers were asked about their preferred duration of each activity. Below are the preferred durations for the activities they identified as priorities:

- School Holidays Full day (six hrs)
- Weekend Club Full Day (six hrs)
- Youth Club two hours

Priorities

32. Based on the analysis undertaken and outlined in section 4 of this report, it is proposed to prioritise funding for the following three types of activity from October 2019:

- i) Holiday clubs;
- ii) Weekend activity club;
- iii) Youth clubs.

33. By focusing on these priorities, a viable county wide offer can be commissioned within the funding available.

34. The priorities have been informed by multiple sources of data but further engagement with key stakeholders to re-confirm that these priorities are reflective of need will be undertaken prior to the award of funding.

35. Table 2 summarises the proposed development of provision that will enable a more equitable, priority led offer across the County.

Table 2: Overview of proposed provision by district

District & Proposed Budget	Type of Activity Proposed	Overall proposed increase or decrease in provision	Stakeholder Feedback
1. Basingstoke	Holiday	Increase	Would like to see new/more provision in Tadley area
	Weekend	No change	
	Youth Club	Increase	Would like to see new/more provision in Tadley area
2. East Hampshire	Holiday	Increase	Would like to see new/more provision in Petersfield area
	Weekend	Increase	Would like to see new/more provision in Petersfield area
	Youth Club	Increase	Would like to see new/more provision in Petersfield area
2. Eastleigh	Holiday	Increase	
	Weekend	Increase	
	Youth Club	Increase	
3. Fareham	Holiday	Increase	Would like to see an increase in the number of days available, although this may mean a decrease in the number of young people attending per day in order to balance funding
	Weekend	Decrease	
	Youth Club	Decrease	
4. Gosport	Holiday	Increase	
	Weekend	Increase	
	Youth Club	Increase	
5. Hart	Holiday	Increase	
	Weekend	Increase	
	Youth Club	Increase	
6. Havant	Holiday	Increase	
	Weekend	Decrease	
	Youth Club	Increase	Would like to see an increase in the number of sessions available, although this may result in a reduction in the

			number of young people attending per session in order to balance funding
7. New Forest	Holiday	Increase	Would like to see new/more provision in New Milton and Ringwood areas
	Weekend	Increase	Would like to see new/more provision in New Milton and Ringwood areas
	Youth Club	Increase	Would like to see new/more provision in New Milton and Ringwood areas
8. Rushmoor	Holiday	Increase	
	Weekend	Increase	
	Youth Club	Increase	
9. Test Valley	Holiday	Increase	Would like to see new/more provision in Romsey area and an increase in number of sessions in Andover area to enable families to access services in their local area
	Weekend	No Change	
	Youth Club	Increase	
10. Winchester	Holiday	Increase	
	Weekend	Increase	
	Youth Club	Increase	

Exceptions Fund

- 36.** Where activities do not fit within the identified priorities described in paragraph 32, providers may seek funding from the exceptions fund.
- 37.** Providers will need to evidence demand via an application form and include the following information:
- i. What the service and/or proposed activity is, including full details of what they will be providing/undertaking;
 - ii. The number and age of young people who will be benefit;
 - iii. Where the project/activity will take place i.e. location and district/borough council area;
 - iv. The costs associated with the project including other sources of income received or being pursued;
 - v. Why they feel this needs to be considered for funding; what makes it an exception?
- 38.** Applications for exceptions funding will be considered on a termly basis by relevant stakeholders for the service being applied for. Recommendations for the award of funding will be presented to the Director of Children's Services (for grants of £5,000 and under) and to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services (for grants over £5,000) for approval.

Finance

- 39.** The budget for Short Breaks for the 2019-20 financial year is £1.821 million, of which £1.227 million is forecast to fund Short Break Activities. The remaining £594,000 will fund care support in the community, Hampshire Parent Carer Network, the Buddy Scheme and the support service for Direct Payments.
- 40.** Funding has been allocated to provide Short Break Activities for the period 1 April 2019 – 30 September 2019 to a value of £879,703. This figure was apportioned to take into account the number of school holiday weeks in the first half of the financial year and was therefore front loaded to ensure that sufficient funding was available to cover the summer period.
- 41.** Approval is sought to fund Short Break Activities for the period 1 October 2019 – 31 March 2021 to the value of £1,574,297, comprising the remaining budget for the 2019-20 financial year (£347,297) and the forecast budget for the 2020-21 financial year (£1.227M).

42. This funding will include an allocation to the exceptions fund.
43. It is recommended that Short Break Activities are funded for 18 months to allow certainty of funding, improved staff retention and increased opportunities for providers to ensure financial sustainability.
44. The distribution model to be used to allocate the available funding across districts will be calculated using five key indices, each with an individual weighting, resulting in a budget allocation per district. This is the same model that has been used in previous years.
45. District based allocations and recommendations for funding will be presented at the July 2019 Decision Day.

Performance

46. The new Gateway Card system will go live in May 2019.
47. This will enable the County Council to have up to date information on all registered holders and their attendance at short break activities as parents are required to show their Gateway Card every time they attend an activity.
48. It is a grant condition of the providers, that they must scan the card each and every time the young person attends.
49. This information will enable accurate monitoring of attendance which can be cross referenced with the original grant application in respect of the number of children benefitting from the activity.
50. In addition to the data from the scanned Gateway Card, providers will be required to provide a narrative to indicate any challenges with delivery, any opportunities or other significant issues and case studies for activities.
51. Where appropriate, payments of any agreed grant funding could be suspended, or funding will be reclaimed, should the benefits or level of access be less than planned, thus ensuring the most effective use of public funds.

Consultation and Equalities

- 52.** A range of stakeholders and parents/carers have been consulted in order to develop the priority led offer, as described in sections 4 and 5 of this report.
- 53.** The funding of projects targeted at supporting priority groups of vulnerable children and young people across the county is expected to have a positive impact on improving outcomes for equalities groups.
- 54.** Each applicant must outline how their project will contribute towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination, the advancement of equality of opportunity for everyone including those having a protected characteristic and the fostering of good relations between all including those having a protected characteristic.
- 55.** It is proposed that there will be a ceasing of funding for some activities, such as after school clubs, which have been identified as a lesser priority by parents of children with disabilities. After school clubs may still continue to operate but parents will be required to pay the full costs.
- 56.** As detailed in paragraphs 24-26 the Council works closely with Short Break activity providers, and works to ensure that they are kept up to date with, and have an opportunity to feedback on, any changes to the Short Break Activity programme's funding arrangements.
- 57.** The proposals have been informed by a range of feedback from parents and takes into account their views on priority services. By reducing support to some services, we will be able to invest in other services identified as higher priority by families of children with disabilities.
- 58.** The proposed delivery model has been developed to ensure a more consistent and equitable offer is available to Hampshire families of children with disabilities and additional needs across the County.

Conclusions

- 59.** Having considered a range of options the preferred route is to prioritise Short Break Activities in the form of holiday clubs, weekend clubs, youth clubs, via an 18-month funding arrangement from 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2021.
- 60.** This approach:
 - Honours the outcomes of public consultation in spring 2018;
 - Targets funding at stakeholder agreed priorities;

- Provides a more consistent and equitable offer across the County for families;
- Provides a longer term and therefore more attractive opportunity for providers;
- Enables flexibility in process if required through use of the exception fund.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because: N/A	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Short Breaks Grant Awards	3353	17 October 2011
Short Breaks Statement of Future Provision and Grant Awards	3153	
Short Breaks for Disabled Children	2589	6 April 2011
Short Breaks Grant Awards	3440	18 January 2012
Short Breaks Grant Allocations for 2012-13	3441	1 February 2012
Short Breaks Grant Allocations for 2012-2013	3717	17 July 2012
Short Breaks for Disabled Children: Service Statement Review	4120	6 December 2012
Short Breaks for Disabled Children – Grant Allocations 2013-14	4197	23 January 2013
Short Breaks grant awards: Specialist playschemes in Basingstoke (2013-14)	4685	25 March 2013
	4707	12 June 2013
Short Breaks activities for Disabled Children - Grants for the remainder of 2013-14	5195	22 January 2014
Short Breaks for Disabled Children - Grant Awards for 2014-15	6447	23 March 2015
Short Breaks for Disabled Children – Grants for 2015-16	7216	18 March 2016
Short Breaks for Disabled Children – Grants for 2016-17	8059	13 March 2017
Short Breaks for Disabled Children – Grants for 2018-19		12 July 2018
Proposed changes to the Short Break Activities		

Programme and consultation outcomes 2019-01-17 ELMCS Short Breaks Children's Services Grant Report		12 July 2018 17 January 2019
Revenue Budget report for Children's Services for 2015/16	6286	21 January 2015
Transformation to 2017 - Revenue Savings Proposals	6889	16 September 2015
Revenue budget report for Children's Services for 2016/17	7131	20 January 2016
Revenue budget report for Children's Services for 2017/18	8019	18 January 2017
Cabinet: Revenue Budget and Precept 2015/16	6373	01 February 2015
Cabinet: Transformation to 2017: Consultation Outcomes	6942	21 September 2015
Cabinet: Medium Term Financial Strategy Update and Transformation to 2017 Savings Proposals Integral Appendix A	6920	05 October 2015
Children and Young People's Select Committee Respite Task and Finish Group report	6003	23 July 2014
Children and Young People's Select Committee Consideration of Request to Exercise Call-in Powers	6083	12 September 2014
Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget consultation		Summer 2017
Cabinet: Medium Term Financial Strategy Update and Transformation to 2019 Savings Proposals		16 October 2017
Proposed changes to the Full Council: Medium Term Financial Strategy Update and Transformation to 2019 Savings Proposals		02 November 2017

**Direct links to specific legislation or Government
Directives**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Children Act	1989
Short Breaks: Statutory guidance on how to safeguard and promote the welfare of disabled children using short breaks	2010
Breaks For Carers of Disabled Children Regulations	2011
Short Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children: Departmental Advice for Local Authorities	2011
Children and Families Act	2014

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The funding of projects targeted at supporting priority groups of vulnerable children and young people across the county is expected to have a positive impact on improving outcomes for equalities groups.

60. Each applicant must outline how their project will contribute towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination, the advancement of equality of opportunity for everyone including those having a protected characteristic and the fostering of good relations between all including those having a protected characteristic.

It is proposed that there will be a ceasing of funding for some activities, including after school clubs, which could potentially impact some families of children with disabilities. The proposals have been informed by a range of feedback from parents and takes into account their views on priority services.

By reducing support to some services we will be able to invest in other services identified as higher priority by families.

The proposed delivery model has been developed to ensure a more consistent and equitable offer is available to Hampshire families of children with disabilities across the county.