
To: Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee

On: 31st May 2023

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Holiday Childcare and Food Support

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Fairer Renfrewshire sub-committee recently considered a report which provided an overview of the current provision of school holiday activities and food support in Renfrewshire, and noted the work being undertaken by officers to review provision and to identify gaps and barriers to access, particularly for low-income families.
- 1.2. There is a wide range of holiday activity provision in place across the Council and its partners, with the Council playing a key co-ordinating role. This co-ordination role will be increasingly important moving forward to ensure a strategic approach to directing resources to support families in the six child poverty priority groups.
- 1.3. Initial work has been undertaken to review provision, including engagement with the Fairer Renfrewshire Lived Experience Panel. This has shaped proposals for the Summer 2023 programme, which will be delivered on an interim basis to test some new elements and approaches to provision, in advance of further recommendations being brought to board in Autumn 2023.
- 1.4. £100,000 has been allocated from the Fairer Renfrewshire programme to ensure low-income families are able to access holiday provision and healthy food, with national funding from Scottish Government now coming to an end. Moving forward it will therefore be increasingly important for partners to work together to maximise all of the resources and opportunities that are available in terms of holiday provision, and to ensure support is targeted to families that need this most over the summer holiday period.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that members of the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee:

- Note the content of the report

3. Background

- 3.1 A report was previously submitted to the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee in March 2023, which provided an overview of the current provision of school holiday activities and food provision for families in Renfrewshire. This report was provided following a motion submitted to full Council in September 2022 regarding the delivery of a school holiday activity programme. It was agreed by Council that the sub-committee should review the current provision over school holiday periods and seek to identify any gaps which may require to be addressed through the Fairer Renfrewshire programme.
- 3.2 As part of the Council budget motion agreed in March 2023, £100,000 was allocated from Fairer Renfrewshire funding to provide a programme of summer activities for children and young people from low-income families, encouraging them to access a wide range of activities and healthy food.
- 3.3 It was anticipated that further funding may be allocated nationally by Scottish Government to further consolidate provision in Renfrewshire, however informal feedback has been provided through COSLA that Scottish Government funding for the “Summer of Fun” programme has now ended, and officers are therefore working on the delivery of the programme for Summer 2023 utilising the £100,000 of funding, whilst also aligning a range of partnership resources to provide a high quality summer activity programme for 2023.
- 3.4 Within the March 2023 report, information was provided on the range of activities and supports that are typically available to families over school holiday periods in Renfrewshire. In recent years this has included:
- Street Stuff / Community Learning and Development staff delivering a range of activities including arts & crafts and multi-sport camps over the summer holiday period. The camps operate across 6 locations in Renfrewshire, which were identified as having higher levels of deprivation according to the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). These run from 9.30am to 3pm on allocated days and can be accessed by children aged 5-14. All activities are free and a healthy meal is provided.
 - Family Learning delivering a free four-week Summer Programme for families across Renfrewshire. Targeted families are invited to attend 1 x half day session per week which include making and sharing lunch and have a strong focus on outdoor learning and play. Families are also be provided with an activity pack which they can take home.

- A playscheme also operates during the summer holiday period for children aged 5 years to 18 years with additional support needs. It is open to all children in Riverbrae School along with the communication units in St Paul's Primary School, Foxbar and St Anthony's Primary School in Johnstone. A hot meal is provided for lunch each day together with cereals and toast in the morning with water and fruit available throughout the day.
- Children from Mary Russell school are able to attend summer holiday provision in their area run by Community Learning and Development
- One Ren provides a range of sport, leisure and cultural programming for children and young people across the school holiday periods. 20% discounts are available for people in receipt of Universal Credit and for additional children. Parent/guardians must stay with young people participating in the Disability Sport and Activity Club. In addition to sport and leisure-based activity clubs, there are a range of cultural activities for families through the Spring period with a mixture of low cost and tiered price points including a range of free activities offered across the Library network and the Skoobmobile.
- Within Renfrewshire there is a mix of Out of School Childcare Providers, with the Council, Community Groups and private companies providing childcare during the school holidays, in addition to breakfast clubs and after-school care.
- A range of other local based community group and organisations deliver a range of activities for children and families over the holiday period which support family wellbeing and provide opportunities for activity and fun.

3.5 It should also be noted that cash payments are made in lieu of free school meals for the periods of times children have been on school holidays. This is paid at £2.25 per day for primary school children and £2.60 for secondary children. A lump sum is paid into parent's bank accounts just before the start of the relevant school holiday period.

3.6 The report to the sub-committee in March 2023 also provided a summary of national policy in relation to the provision of holiday childcare and food support. In recent years, there has been a much stronger focus on the requirement for services and partners to work much more closely to tackle child poverty, and to ensure that resources are prioritised to support children and families that are identified as being at most risk of living in poverty:

- lone parents.
- young mothers (under 25 years old)
- minority ethnic families.
- large families (with three or more children)
- families with a baby (under one)
- families with a disabled adult or child.

3.7 In their advice for the Scottish Government on addressing poverty during the school holidays, the Poverty and Inequality Commission recognised that families face a range of pressures during the school holidays, including food insecurity and childcare, but also relating to wider finances, play and activities, parenting, and social isolation. They noted a lack of co-ordination in terms of provision, leading to gaps, duplication and people being unaware of what is available.

3.8 Engagement was undertaken recently with the Fairer Renfrewshire Lived Experience Panel on current experiences of accessing holiday activities in Renfrewshire. This highlighted:

- Increasing awareness of existing provision, and how the current offer is communicated and promoted
- Coverage of provision for different age ranges, with possible gaps identified for preschool children and also older teenagers
- Some activities have additional cost barriers, for example transport and food
- Discussion around targeting and eligibility, making sure those that need it the most can access, but recognising the potential barriers and stigma of eligibility criteria
- Need to achieve fairness and consistency across different areas, balanced with local approaches suitable for different communities
- Importance of working with young people to identify the activities that they want to participate in

4 Review of current provision in Renfrewshire

4.1 In terms of reviewing provision by partners across Renfrewshire, officers have engaged with wider Council services and partners and have been discussing the gaps in provision and the priorities that the Fairer Renfrewshire programme should help to address going forward.

4.2 It is clear from this process that there is a significant amount of further work to be done, particularly in terms of developing a future programme which can be delivered within the resources likely to be available to the Council and its partners. In particular there is a clear opportunity to learn from the Winter Connections programme, and to work with local community and third sector partners to develop a holiday programme which can be delivered in a flexible and local way, and may assist us in identifying children and families that may benefit from targeted support.

4.3 It is therefore proposed that the Summer 2023 programme is delivered on an interim basis, subject to more developed proposals coming forward in Autumn 2023. Further work will be undertaken during summer 2023 to undertake a small pilot of grant funding for community groups and organisations which will inform these proposals.

4.4 It is therefore proposed that the summer 2023 programme operates based on the following key principles:

- There are a range of activities for children and families that are available in Renfrewshire – a mixture of child only, family activities, free/chargeable and across a number of different communities in Renfrewshire

- The Council will work with partners to promote the variety of activities that are available across Renfrewshire across all sectors – making sure that families know what is on and where.
- The core focus of the £100,000 funding from Fairer Renfrewshire will be to provide activities which support families from the child poverty priority groups and to target gaps in provision across localities
- Any activities funded through Fairer Renfrewshire should be free at the point of access. Full day activities should include the provision of a meal, and refreshments should be available at shorter activities
- Core sports and activity camps will be delivered by the Community Learning and Development Team on 2 days per week (over 5 weeks) in each of the 6 locations in Renfrewshire, with specific focus on offering access to families in the six child poverty priority groups. This includes additional provision in Gallowhill given recent work in relation to assessing levels of child poverty in the area.
- A family activity programme will be delivered by the Community Learning and Development Team. This will operate in partnership with schools and early learning centres to offer access to families in the six child poverty priority groups
- Opportunities will be progressed with One Ren, Future Paisley to provide free family-based activities which address gaps in geographical access and allow families to enjoy cultural and fun experiences that may not otherwise have access to in the summer holiday period.
- A grants fund will be piloted on a small-scale basis which will commence in June 2023 and will operate on a similar basis as the grant programme developed as part of the Winter Connections programme. Community groups and organisations will be invited to help partners address gaps in particular localities or for different priority groups.
- Evening activities will continue to be provided over the summer holiday period through the Street stuff activity programme – this will include multi-sports and gaming activities on the Street Stuff Buses with the provision of a healthy meal.
- Community Learning and Development Youth Services will continue to deliver activities across Renfrewshire

4.5 Engagement is underway with Children Services to align any planned activities with the ASN playscheme, as set out above.

5 Summary and next steps

5.1 From the work undertaken to date, it is clear that there is a great deal of summer holiday activity provision across Renfrewshire across all sectors in Renfrewshire – with a wide range of opportunities on a paid or free basis. It is important that all of the opportunities available are widely communicated to local families, children and young people, and that the role of all partners in providing these activities and in tackling child poverty is recognised.

- 5.2 More work is however required to ensure that opportunities are available to families within the six child poverty priority groups, and to address gaps that may exist within specific communities/localities. The council can play a key role in terms of co-ordinating all available resources and working with partners to target gaps in provision and to tackle any barriers that are being experienced.
- 5.3 The approach to summer 2023 will allow us to try new approaches in line with the feedback from the lived experience panel in relation to removing barriers and prioritising access for low income families, as well as offering high quality family activities which offer opportunities to have fun together within the local community.
- 5.4 At Leadership Board in March 2023, delegated authority was granted to the Head of Policy and Partnerships to develop and implement the summer programme in consultation with the Council Leader. An update on the summer programme will be provided to the next meeting of the sub-committee.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – £100,000 is available to deliver holiday activity and food provision to low income households during Summer 2023.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – A range of partners provide holiday activities and food support to low income households and families during holiday periods. The Council has a key role to play in terms of co-ordinating provision and in ensuring that gaps and barriers are addressed.
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality and Human Rights** – the Fairer Renfrewshire funding will allow the Council to work with partners to tackle some of the barriers that exist in terms of accessing holiday support, with a particular focus on the six child poverty priority groups.
8. **Health and Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none

13. **Climate Risk** – none

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