ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

Item No.

10

Produced for: Community & Events Committee	**By:** Community and Events Officer/Town Clerk	**Date of Report:** 27th October 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

To seek the Committee's recommendation to Full Council to allocate funding for the delivery of U-Choose and U-Choose+ during the Easter and Summer school holidays in 2027. The projects are designed to support young people and families across Andover, with U-Choose+ providing dedicated SEND provision.

2. Background

School holidays can present challenges for many families, particularly where financial pressures, reduced routine, social isolation and limited access to affordable activities create barriers to participation. U-Choose was developed to address these challenges by providing subsidised access to local leisure activities and experiences, helping young people remain active, engaged and connected to their community. U-Choose+ extends this support by providing targeted opportunities for children and young people with SEND.

3. Summer 2026 Impact

The Summer 2026 U-Choose programme was delivered between 23rd July and 3rd September 2026. Following the successful Easter 2026 pilot in two mainstream secondary schools, eligibility was extended to primary schools and to non-mainstream primary and secondary schools. The Committee received a full impact report on the programme at its meeting on 30th September 2026 (Item 10), which is attached at Appendix A for reference. That report proposed that Officers bring forward a detailed proposal and budget for recommendation to Full Council, and this report responds to that proposal. The key outcomes are summarised below.

Delivery and finance

Measure	Result
Cards sold	505
Activity sessions redeemed	948 (1.88 per card)
Food and drink redemptions	501
Approved budget (C073/06/26, Youth Services)	£17,427.27
Total expenditure	£6,894.60
Recovered through card sales	£2,525.70 (36.6%)
Net cost to Council	£4,368.90
Underspend	£10,532.67

Uptake was recorded in every Andover ward, with Millway accounting for around a third of all cards sold and strong take-up in Harroway and St Mary's. Bowling at Riverside Activity Zone was the most popular activity. The full programme was delivered for around a quarter of the approved budget.

Hampshire Police data shows a 14.7% reduction in overall anti-social behaviour (ASB) across Andover between May and August 2026, a 40.3% reduction in July 2026 and a 56% reduction in cannabis-related ASB between June and July 2026. ASB trends have many contributing factors and a direct causal link cannot be shown; however, these reductions coincided with the scheme's delivery period. More than 260 responses to the Andover Youth Survey provide an evidence base for developing the scheme further.

The proposals for future development identified in the impact report, including delivery in Easter 2027, improved SEN accessibility and an expanded activity offer such as cinema access, have informed the proposals set out in this report.

4. U-Choose

Partner venues have expressed a strong desire to continue their involvement in the scheme, demonstrating confidence in its value and community impact. Feedback from young people, parents and carers shows a clear appetite for the programme to return. Officers have also approached Odeon cinema regarding participation, as cinema access was regularly identified as a popular addition that would broaden the range of activities available.

5. U-Choose+

Children and young people with SEND often experience barriers to accessing mainstream holiday activities. UChoose+ seeks to address this by creating inclusive and accessible opportunities that improve confidence, independence, wellbeing and social connection. Officers are working closely with Icknield School to understand local needs and have issued a survey to parents and carers to ensure the final offer is shaped directly by SEND families. The survey closes at the end of November 2026 and will help inform the final programme design.

6. Strategic Benefits

The programme provides structured, affordable holiday activities; reduces financial barriers for families; supports physical and mental wellbeing; reduces loneliness and social isolation; increases participation in community facilities; and delivers targeted, inclusive support for children and young people with SEND

Council Priorities this project aligns with:

- Help make Andover a welcoming, safe, and well cared for town
- Engage with Andover community stakeholders to provide targeted support for residents, taxpayers and businesses
- Put civility and respect at the heart of everything Andover Town Council does

7. Financial Implications

Easter Holiday provision

Figures taken from summer 2026 expenditure

Project	**cost**
U Choose	£2,298.00
U Choose+	£2,298.00
5% inflation cost	£114.90
Total	£4,710.90

Figures for U-Choose are based on previous expenditure plus a 5% increase in cost in line with inflation. This hasn't yet been confirmed by partner venues but is an anticipated cost which may not be as high as 5%. This will be confirmed in April by partner venues and communicated to members during an update report.

Summer Holiday provision

Project	**cost**
U Choose	£6,894.00
U Choose+	£6,894.00
5% inflation cost	£344.70
Total	£14,132.70

N.B: U-Choose+ figures are based on an approximate figure of SEND only school students within the Andover Parish. This estimated figure is for 400 students.

All figures above are shown as gross expenditure. In Summer 2026, card sales recovered 36.6% of expenditure (£2,525.70), so the net cost to the Council is expected to be lower than the budget requested, subject to uptake and the charging model adopted for U-Choose+. Any unspent funds will remain within the Youth Services budget line.

Remaining budget as of 13/10/2026

Youth Services	**£31,810.02**
Pensioner Services	**£15,001.00**

8. Risk Implications

The risks associated with the above projects are considered low and will be managed through appropriate management and communication with partner venues and the schools which are taking part in the scheme.

9. Officer Assessment

Officers consider U-Choose and UChoose+ to be preventative, high-impact initiatives that deliver significant community benefits for a modest investment. The strong support from families, schools and partner venues demonstrates clear demand. The projects align closely with the Council priorities around wellbeing, inclusion, community engagement and support for vulnerable residents. The introduction of UChoose+ represents an important opportunity to provide dedicated holiday provision for SEND families and ensure activities are accessible to all young people.

10. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. **Note** the outcomes of the Summer 2026 U-Choose programme set out in Section 3 and Appendix A.
2. **Recommend to Full Council** that a budget of £18,843.60 is approved for the Easter 2027 and Summer 2027 provision of U-Choose and U-Choose+, to be taken from the Youth Services budget line and delivered across Andover Parish schools for Andover Parish taxpayers.
3. **Recommend to Full Council** that Officers are instructed to proceed with the above proposal and to begin work immediately in order to deliver within the timeframes required.

Appendix A: U-Choose Summer 2026 Impact Report

As presented to the Community and Events Committee on 30th September 2026 (Item 10)

ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL
Community and Events Committee

Item No. **10**

Produced for: Community & Events Committee	**By:** Community and Events Officer/Town Clerk	**Date of Report:** 22nd September 2026

1. Purpose and Background

To update Members on the delivery, participation and community impact of the 2026 U-Choose Holiday Activity Card Scheme, funded by Andover Town Council and delivered between 23rd July and 3rd September 2026.

Following a successful Easter 2026 pilot in two mainstream secondary schools, Members expanded eligibility for Summer 2026 to primary schools and non-mainstream primary and secondary schools. For a nominal £5 card, young people could access swimming, bowling, laser tag, crazy golf, glo golf, court hire and arcade sessions, with the Council meeting the remaining cost. A new dedicated U-Choose website landing page gave residents a single place to check availability and book.

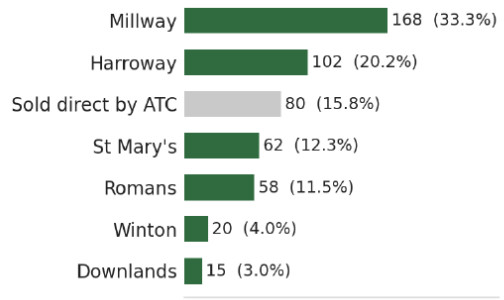
2. Summer 2026 at a Glance

505	948	1.88	501	£4,369	36.6%
cards sold	activity sessions redeemed	sessions per card	food and drink redemptions	net cost to Council	of cost recovered

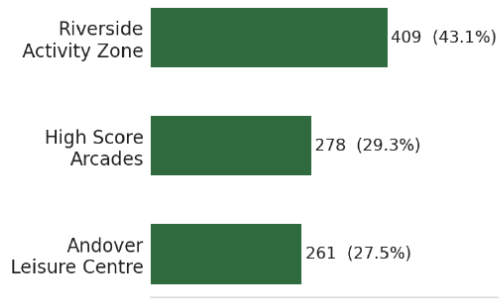
3. Reach and Participation

Uptake was recorded in every Andover ward, with Millway accounting for around a third of all cards sold and strong take-up in Harroway and St Mary's. Bowling at Riverside Activity Zone was the single most popular activity. The card was also used 501 times for a drink or snack, almost one for every card sold; every beverage allocation at Riverside Activity Zone was claimed and a large proportion of the Andover Leisure Centre offer was redeemed.

Cards sold by ward (505 total)



Activity sessions by venue (948 total)



4. Community Impact

Hampshire Police data shows notable reductions in anti-social behaviour (ASB) across Andover over the summer:

14.7%	40.3%	56%
reduction in overall ASB, May to August 2026	reduction in ASB in July 2026	reduction in cannabis-related ASB, June to July 2026

ASB trends have many contributing factors and a direct causal link cannot be shown. However, the reductions coincided with the scheme's delivery period and support the case that U-Choose contributed to a safer, more

positive summer for young people. More than 260 responses to the Andover Youth Survey provide an evidence base for developing the scheme further. (Feedback sheet and school information documents available on request.)

5. Financial Summary

Approved budget £17,427.27 (C073/06/26, Youth Services)



The full summer programme was delivered for a net cost of £4,368.90, around a quarter of the approved budget, with card sales recovering 36.6% of expenditure. The underspend of £10,532.67 shows the scheme is cost-effective and leaves headroom to expand delivery within the existing budget envelope.

6. Proposals for Future Development

Officers recommend that the Committee agree, in principle, to the continued development and expansion of the scheme, building on the following areas:

Area	Proposal
Easter 2027	Deliver U-Choose again in the Easter 2027 school holidays using the same proven model.
SEN accessibility	Work with venues so every school can access SEN sessions, including quieter or adapted activities and, where not already available, dedicated SEN swimming at Andover Leisure Centre.
Activity offer	Explore the additions most requested in feedback: clip and climb at Andover Leisure Centre, cinema access through a local cinema partner, and creative and arts-based activities.
Food and drink	Move from the current snack option toward a more substantial choice, such as a sandwich or toastie with a canned drink, and explore a sweet treat and drink option with local businesses.
Digital access	Improve online booking with venues and communication through schools and partners, building on the new landing page.
Future funding	Establish a dedicated U-Choose budget line of up to £25,000 per annum to fund more activities and venues, enhanced food and drink, SEN-specific opportunities and wider reach, subject to a detailed proposal (Recommendation 3).

7. Conclusion

U-Choose delivered real social, wellbeing and financial value for Andover families in Summer 2026, reaching every ward at a modest net cost and coinciding with a marked fall in anti-social behaviour. Continued investment would allow the Council to build on a strong first full year and extend these benefits further.

8. Officer Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. **Note** the delivery, participation and community impact of the 2026 U-Choose summer programme, delivered between 23rd July and 3rd September 2026.
2. **Agree in principle** to the continued development and expansion of U-Choose for future school holiday periods, including Easter 2027 and Summer 2027.
3. **Instruct Officers** to explore the expansion opportunities set out in this report and bring a further report to a future Committee meeting with a detailed proposal and budget, up to £25,000 per annum, for recommendation to Full Council.