

DECISION RECORD ¹

Officer Key Decisions are subject to the Council's Call-In Procedure (Annex 9 of the Council's Constitution) [Council's Constitution](#)

Subject: To negotiate an extension of the existing contract between Hertfordshire County Council and Herts for Learning for the provision of HfL services and support to HCC.

Officer Contact: Simon Newland

Tel: 01992 588755, ext. 28755

Executive Member: Terry Douris

Portfolio: Education, Libraries and Lifelong Learning

1. Decision ²

To further extend the contract between Hertfordshire County Council and Herts for Learning for the provision of Herts for Learning Services and Support to Hertfordshire County Council by one year to cover the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

2. Reasons for the decision ³

The original contract commenced on the 1 September 2013 and continued for a period of three years until 31 August 2016 but could be extended at the agreement of both parties for up to three years. This extension took place.

A new contract commenced on 1st April 2019 and continued until 31st March 2020 but could be extended at the agreement of both parties for further one-year periods of up to a total of six (6) further Contract Years. Extensions took place for 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022/23.

During October and November 2022, Hertfordshire County Council undertook a consultation with maintained schools on proposals for the de-delegation of funding by Maintained Schools for the year 2023/24 and also for the following two years i.e. 2024/25 and 2025/26 for school improvement and other support provided by HfL to allow the Council to continue to fund Herts for Learning to undertake a range of functions in support of schools, separate to and beyond what is provided to those schools on a traded basis.

These activities are necessary for the Council and its Maintained Schools to continue to operate as successfully on behalf of local children as we have come to expect over many years.

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The proposals for the de-delegation of funding were supported by a large majority of maintained schools (81% of 171 schools that responded) and formally agreed by the Schools Forum on 23 November 2022 specifically to support the extension of current arrangements with Herts for Learning for 2023-24.

Schools Forum also agreed the principle that the arrangements are for three years ie 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 including increases annually in line with national formula unit funding rates pupils, that they are subject to annual confirmation by Forum, and that there is an expectation that the 2022/23 level of services will continue to be provided for the three years.

Both HCC and HfL believe that the support provided by Herts for Learning through the contract has contributed and continues to contribute to the excellent performance of Hertfordshire schools. HfL is a schools' company and owned by HCC and Hertfordshire Schools. The share capital comprises 126 (19%) shares owned by HCC and 521 (81%) shares owned by Hertfordshire schools.

The total cost of the contract is being met by a combination of allocated DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) budget and de-delegation as agreed by the Schools Forum and additionally HCC funding totalling £329,000.

3. **Alternative options considered and rejected** ⁴

As indicated in section 2 both parties believe that the support HfL provides schools through the contract has been extremely beneficial to Hertfordshire schools overall and because the contract enables an extension for a further six years up to the financial year 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027, no alternative options were considered at this time.

4. **Consultation**

(a) Comments of Executive Member ^{5 6}

The extension of the contract for the financial year 2023/24 was discussed with Councillor Terry Douris, Executive Member for Education, Libraries and Lifelong Learning at the Education Management Board meeting on 9 December 2022. Terry Douris confirmed his agreement to extend for a further year.

(b) Comments of other consultees ⁷

5. **Following consultation with, and the concurrence of the Executive Member, I am proceeding with the proposed decision.**

Simon Newland

Signed:

Title: ...Operations Director, Education

Date: ...9 January 2023.....

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6. Copies of agreed document to:

- All consultees
- All members of the County Council (Democratic Services to send)
- Hard & electronic copy (for public inspection both at County Hall and on hertfordshire.gov.uk) to the Democratic Services Manager - Room 213 County Hall; democratic.services@hertfordshire.gov.uk

¹ Please refer to the Call-in and Contract Award Process for officers to determine if notice on this decision record for successful and unsuccessful bidders is exempt information and is therefore subject to inclusion in Annex 'A'

² If this decision relates to the award of contract, please provide a summary of the evaluation process and reasons for the award of contract to the successful bidder.

³ for guidance see Director of Law and Governance's note "Taking Decisions"

⁴ details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer at the time the decision was made

⁵ record any conflict of interest declared by any Executive Member consulted. If an Executive Member declares a conflict of interest DO NOT PROCEED without taking advice from the Director of Law and Governance.

⁶ If the matter has general significance for the Council and/or is, or is likely to be, controversial, then the officer shall consult the appropriate Executive Member before proceeding. In some cases it will be necessary to consult more than one Executive Member, and in some cases the Leader of The Council will need to be consulted

⁷ If the matter has local significance, but no general significance for the Council and no controversial aspects, the officer shall consult or inform the local member in writing (or by email) and proceed. It is essential that all officers responsible for delivering services ensure that local members are kept well briefed on issues affecting their areas.