

Officer Decision Record – Executive Decision

If Key Decision: Decision Ref. No.

B142/24.....

If not a Key Decision write n/a above

OFFICER DECISION RECORD ⁱ

Officer Key Decisions are subject to the Council's Call-In Procedure (Annex 9 of the Council's Constitution <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/open-data-statistics-about-hertfordshire/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/who-we-are-and-what-we-do.aspx>)

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.

Type of Decision: Executive

Key Decision (Executive Functions only): Yes

Executive Member/Committee Chairman: Caroline Clapper

Portfolio (Executive Functions only): Education, Libraries and Life-Long Learning

Officer Contact: Tony Fitzpatrick, Director of Education

Tel: 01438 222500

1. **Decision**

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 2025 to 31 March 2026.

2. Reasons for the decision

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 1 April 2019 and continued until 31 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.

In October 2022, Hertfordshire County Council undertook a consultation with maintained schools on proposals for the de-delegation of funding by Maintained Schools for the financial 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 Education to allow the Council to continue to fund them 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.

The proposals for the de-delegation of funding were supported by a large majority of those maintained schools that responded and formally agreed by the Schools Forum on 20th November 2024, specifically to support the extension of current arrangements with Herts for Learning with effect from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Both HCC and HFL Education 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 Education 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 £260,000.

3. Alternative options considered and rejected

As indicated in section 2 both parties believe that the support HFL Education 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** (see *Summary of Requirements below*)

Was any Councillor consulted? Yes

If yes:

(a) Comments of Executive Member for Education, Libraries and Lifelong Learning

The Executive Member, Education, Libraries and Lifelong Learning was happy to support this.

(b) Comments of other consultees

5. **Any conflict of interest declared by a councillor who has been consulted in relation to the decision**

None

6. **Following consultation with the Executive Member, I am proceeding with the proposed decision.**

Signed: ...Tony Fitzpatrick.....

Title: Director of Education.....

Date: 6 March 2025

Copies of record to:

- All consultees
- hard & electronic copy (if required to be made available for public inspection) to Democratic Services Manager - Room 213 County Hall.ⁱⁱ

Summary of Requirements to Inform/Consult Councillors

Significance of Proposed Action	Controversial	Relevant Councillor(s) to be Consulted
Technical/Professional/ Routine	No	No need to inform or consult councillors
Technical/Professional/ Routine	Yes	Executive Functions: Consult relevant Lead Executive Member and, where appropriate, Local Councillor Non-Executive Functions:

		Relevant Committee Chairman and, where appropriate, Local Councillor
Local	No	Executive Functions: Inform Lead Executive Member and Local Councillor Non-Executive Functions: Inform Local Councillor
Local	Yes	Executive Functions: Consult Lead Executive Member and Local Councillor Non-Executive Functions: Consult Local Councillor
General or County-wide	No	Executive Functions: Consult relevant Lead Executive Member (s) Non-Executive Functions: Consult relevant Committee Chairman
General or County-wide	Yes	Executive Functions: Consult relevant Lead Executive Member (s) and the Leader of the Council Non-Executive Functions: Consult relevant Committee Chairman/Leaders all Political Groups