



Hartlepool
Borough Council

Children's Services Committee Agenda

Tuesday 3rd February 2026

Time: 4.00pm

Location: Council Chamber

Members: Children's Services Committee

Councillors Boddy (VC), Buchan, Dunbar, Harrison, Holbrook, Little and Morley (C).

Co-opted Members: Gillian Hood, C of E Diocese and Joanne Wilson, RC Diocese representatives.

School Heads Representatives: Adam Palmer (Secondary), Sue Sharpe (Primary), Zoe Westley (Special).

Parent Governor Representative: Martin Pout

Six Young Peoples Representatives

Observer: Councillor Allen, Chair of Adult Services and Public Health Committee

1. Apologies for absence

2. To receive any declarations of interest by members

3. Minutes

- 3.1 To receive the Minutes and Decision Record in respect of the meeting held on 2 December 2025 (previously published and circulated).

CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone. The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has to be evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.



4. Budget And Policy Framework Items

No items

5. Key Decisions

5.1 School Admission Arrangements for 2027-28 – *Executive Director, Children's Services*

5.2 Dedicated Schools Grant – Early Years Block 2026/27 – *Executive Director, Children's Services and Director of Finance, IT and Digital*

5.3 Dedicated Schools Grant – School Budget Shares 2026/27 and Central School Services Block 2026/27 – *Executive Director, Children's Services and Director of Finance, IT and Digital*

6. Other Items Requiring Decision

No items

7. Items for information

7.1 Ofsted Inspection of Park Road Children's Home – *Executive Director, Children's Services*

7.2 Special Educational Needs (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Capital Plan – *Executive Director, Children's Services*

8. Any other business which the chair considers urgent

For Information

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 3rd March at 4pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool.



Children's Services Committee

3 February 2026

Report of: Executive Director, Children's Services

Subject: SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2027-28

Decision Type: Key CJCS 105/26

1. Council Plan Priority

Hartlepool will be a place:
- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)
- with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community. (Organisation)

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To consider and agree the proposed admission arrangements for community schools in Hartlepool for 2027-28 academic year. As the local authority, the Council is the admission authority, it is therefore responsible for determining the admission arrangements for these schools.

3. Background

- 3.1 It is a mandatory requirement of the national School Admissions Code that all schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted to schools, including the criteria that will be applied

if there are more applications than places at the school (oversubscription). Admission arrangements are determined by admission authorities. The local authority (LA) is the admission authority for community schools, while the Governing Body is the admission authority for Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools, and the relevant Trust for an Academy or Free School.

- 3.2 All admission authorities must set admission arrangements and their published admission number annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority must first consult on those arrangements. If there are no changes proposed they only need to be consulted on at least every seven years. Consultation must be for a minimum of six weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January of the school year before those arrangements are to apply. The consultation period allows parents and carers, other schools, religious authorities and the local community to raise any concerns about proposed admission arrangements.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 As Admissions Authority for Rift House Primary School, the Local Authority is required by the School Admissions Code 2021 to consult on a reduction of the published admission number (PAN) for entry into Reception for 2027/2028 academic year. A consultation was carried out in accordance with the Code (as detailed in 3.2 above). The consultation period ran from 24/10/25 to 5/12/25.
- 4.2 The proposed reduction will enable the school to address the needs of some children in the Early Years and KS1 classes with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by redeveloping the school space, however, this will reduce the ability to split Early Years and KS1 classes.
- 4.3 Additionally, there is a duty to comply with the Government's Infant Class Size Legislation where infant classes (those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher. The reduction in PAN is the only proposed change to the current admission arrangements.

- 4.4 There were no responses received at the end of the consultation period. Children's Services Committee are therefore asked to approve the proposed changes to Rift House Primary School admission arrangements.

5. Statutory Requirements and Future Implications

- 5.1 It is a statutory requirement that all admission authorities must determine arrangements every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required. Admissions authorities must determine admissions arrangements for entry in September 2027 by 28 February 2026 and these must be published on their website for the whole offer year. The LA must receive a copy of the admission arrangements of other admission authorities, including Academies, before 15 March in the determination year and provide details on its website of where these can be viewed. Information on how to refer objections to the Schools' Adjudicator (which must be made by 15 May 2026) will also be available on the website.
- 5.2 The LA must publish online, with hard copies available for those who do not have access to the internet, a composite prospectus for parents by 12 September 2026, which contains the admission arrangements for each of the state-funded schools in the LA area to which parents and carers can apply.

6. Proposals

- 6.1 The admission arrangements/over-subscription criteria in respect of community schools are included in **APPENDIX 1**.
- 6.2 The published admission number for each community school is detailed in **APPENDIX 2** to this report which Committee are asked to approve.

7. Other Considerations/Implications

RISK IMPLICATIONS	There are none.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no financial considerations.

SUBSIDY CONTROL	None
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	There will be a breach of statutory duty imposed on the LA if admission arrangements for 2027/28 are not determined by 28 February 2026 and published on the Council's website by 15 March in the determination year (2026), The School Admissions Code 2021.
SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Appendix 3.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There are none.
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There are none.
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	There are none.
CONSULTATION	There are none.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to approve the following in respect of community schools, when determining the admission arrangements for 2027-28:

- the current admission arrangements, detailed in **APPENDIX 1**
- the admission numbers, including the reduction for Rift House Primary School, as detailed in **APPENDIX 2**

9. Reasons for Recommendations

9.1 To comply with the statutory requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 There are no background papers.

11. CONTACT OFFICERS

Amanda Whitehead

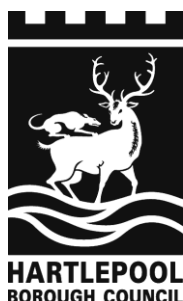
Children's & Joint Commissioning Services

Email: amanda.whitehead@hartlepool.gov.uk

Telephone: 01429 523736

Sign Off:-

Chief Executive	Date: 14.01.2026
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 15.01.2026
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 15.01.2026



HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

School Admissions Arrangements 2027-28

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS DETERMINED ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR 2027-28

The admissions policy for entry to community primary schools, effective from 2027/28 admissions round, is as follows:

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan where the school is named in the Plan, will be admitted to the school. The remaining places will be awarded in the following priority order:

Oversubscription Criteria:

1. Looked after children and children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, child arrangements order, or special guardianship order¹ including those who appear [to the admission authority] to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
2. Those children who have brothers or sisters who will be attending the school at the time of admission;
3. Those children who live in the school's admission zone;
4. Those children who are distinguished from the great majority of other applicants whether on medical grounds or by other exceptional circumstances and who would suffer significant hardship if they were unable to attend the school;
5. Those children who live closest to the school as determined by a straight-line distance measurement; from the address point (geographical co-ordinates) for the child's home to the address point (geographical co-ordinates) of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

¹ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

6.

Tie-breaker:

If more children qualify under a particular criterion than there are places available, priority will be given to those children who live closest to the school (as described under criteria 5). Should it not be possible to separate two or more applications, for example two applicants who live at an equal distance from the school, the Local Authority's computerised system will use random selection.

Definitions:

Sibling: Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step-brother or sister, or the child of the parent/guardian's partner and, in every case, the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address. In all cases the responsible parent will hold the child benefit for those children permanently living at that address. A brother or sister living at the same address must be attending the preferred school at the same time as the child who is applying. *Please note, this criteria only applies to siblings who are of compulsory school age, not younger siblings who attend a nursery setting attached to a school*

Twins or multiple birth children: If you have more than one child who are twins or part of a multiple birth going through the application process this year, you must make a separate application for each child and indicate on each online or paper form that your child has a sibling also going through the process. For community schools, we will offer a place to the other child(ren) if one of your twins/multiple birth children is offered the last place available and you have applied to the same school for the other child(ren).

Distance: Distance will be measured by a straight line measurement from the address point (geographical co-ordinates) of the child's home address to the address point of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

Admission Zone: All community schools in Hartlepool have a defined geographic area called an Admission Zone. Do not assume that you live within a particular school's admission zone as some streets are split. To find out which admission zone you live in contact the School Admissions Team on telephone number 01429 523765 or 01429 523768. Please note, a child is not guaranteed a place at an admission zone school.

Medical Grounds/Exceptional Circumstances: A panel of specialist officers will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this criterion. If you think your child has a particular medical or social need to go to a certain school, you must provide supporting evidence from a doctor, psychologist or other professional involved with your child. The supporting evidence must relate specifically to the school you are claiming medical grounds/exceptional circumstances for, and clearly demonstrate why it is only that school that can meet your child's needs in a way that no other school can. If you are applying on-line for a place under this criterion, please send your supporting evidence to the Admissions Team by the National closing date, which should include your child's name and date of birth.

NB: Exceptional social reasons do not, in the view of the Authority, include domestic inconvenience arising from parents' work patterns, child-minding problems, separation from particular nursery/primary school friends. Problems of this kind are widespread and cannot be classed as exceptional. Medical reasons do not include temporary conditions. They are permanent medical conditions which require special treatment available at the preferred school only. Medical evidence must be provided and the Authority's officers must be satisfied that the child would suffer to a significant degree if he/she went to any other school.



PROPOSED ADMISSION NUMBERS 2027-28

Community Schools	2027/2028
Fens Primary School	60
Kingsley Primary School	55
Rift House Primary School	30
Throston Primary School	60

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

5.1

Appendix 3

Guidance for completing this form is available in the “Single Impact Assessment: Toolkit for Officers”, available from the Single Impact Assessment page on the intranet at <https://hbcintranet/Pages/Single-Impact-Assessments.aspx>.

Section 1 – Details of the proposed action being considered

1.1 Lead Department:	Children’s Services
1.2 Lead Division:	Education
1.3 Title of the proposed action: To approve the 2027-28 School Admission Arrangements for community schools	
1.4 Brief description of the proposed action: To consider and agree the 2027-29 School Admission Arrangements	
1.5 Who else is involved:	

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1.6 Who will make the final decision about the proposed action: Children's Services Committee

1.7 Which wards will be affected by the proposed action? Tick all that apply

All wards	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hart	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seaton	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burn Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Headland & Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
De Bruce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manor House	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Victoria	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fens & Greatham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rossmere	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A - Internal council activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foggy Furze	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rural West	<input type="checkbox"/>		

1.8 Completed By:

Name	Job Title	Date Completed
Julie Reed	School Place Planning, Capital & Admissions Manager	5 January 2026

1.9 Version	Author	Summary of Changes	Date
1	J Reed	Only change to community school admission arrangements is the reduction in admission number for Rift House Primary School	5 January 2026

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Section 2 – Explaining the impact of the proposed action

2.1 What data and evidence has informed this impact assessment?

Statutory consultation carried out in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021.

2.2 If there are gaps in evidence or not enough information to assess the impact, how have you addressed this or how will you address it?

Gap(s) Identified	How it / they have or will be addressed
None	

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2.3 Risk Score

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
Age		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: e.g. Almost certain 4 Impact score: e.g. Major 3 Overall score: e.g. Red 12	
Disability		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	
Gender Reassignment		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	

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Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
Pregnancy and Maternity		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	
Race (Ethnicity)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	

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Religion or Belief		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	
Sex		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	
Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
Sexual Orientation		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	

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Care Leavers (Local)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	
Armed Forces (Local)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	
Poverty and Disadvantage (Local)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	

Section 3 - Mitigation Action Plan or Justification

Group(s) impacted	Proposed mitigation	How this mitigation will make a difference	By when	Responsible Officer
None	None			

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Justification If you need to justify your proposed action explain this here

Section 4 - Sign Off

Responsible Officer sign off:	
Name	Julie Reed
Job title	Pupil Place Planning, Admissions & Capital Manager
Assistant Director / Director sign off:	
Name	Amanda Whitehead
Job title	

Once the Single Impact Assessment is completed please send to impactassessments@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Section 5 - Review (To be completed after implementation)

5.1 Review completed by:		
Name	Job Title	Date review completed

5.2 Did the impact turned out as expected?

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5.3 Were the proposed mitigations the correct ones and were they successful in reducing any negative impacts?

5.4 Were there any unexpected outcomes?

5.5 Following the review please identify next steps here (Select one)

- ☐ Additional mitigation required (give details below - 5.6)
- ☐ Original proposed course of action needs to be revisited
- ☐ No further action required

5.6 Additional mitigation(s) or justification

Group(s) impacted	Proposed mitigation	How this mitigation will make a difference	By when	Responsible Officer

Justification If you need to justify your proposed action explain this here

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

5.1

Appendix 3

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Submit form with completed review to impactassessments@hartlepool.gov.uk



Hartlepool
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CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 FEBRUARY 2026

Report of:	Executive Director, Children's Services and Director of Finance, IT and Digital
Subject:	DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT – EARLY YEARS BLOCK 2026/27
Decision Type:	Key Decision – CJCS 173/25

1. Council Plan Priority

Hartlepool will be a place:

- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present the indicative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding allocation for Early Years Funding in 2026/27 and propose the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) that sets hourly rates for providers from April 2026.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Early Years Block (EYB) is issued to local authorities specifically for the delivery of the early year's offer. Funding and associated entitlements expanded in 2025/26 with the extension of both the 9 months to 2 years entitlement and the 2-year-old working parent entitlement to 30 hours per week. These changes build on the significant expansion introduced in 2024/25, which saw the launch of 2-year-old entitlements for working parents from 1 April 2024 and new entitlements for 9 months to 2-year-olds from 1 September 2024.

- 3.2 2026/27 will be the first full year of the expanded entitlements. As changes continue to embed, there remains a level of uncertainty in budget planning for the local authority. As such, careful consideration of proposed hourly rates for providers is required, along with an appropriate amount that should be centrally retained to fund the effective management of expanded entitlements by the authority.
- 3.3 Funding provided through the 2025 to 2026 early years national insurance contributions and teachers' pay grant (EYNTPG) has been rolled into the national average funding rate for 3 and 4-year-olds, 2-year-olds and 9 months to 2-years-old. Local authorities will not, therefore, pass on a separate EYNTPG allocation to providers in 2026 to 2027.
- 3.4 Local authorities are required to consult providers on proposed annual changes to local early year's funding formulas, although the final decision rests with the local authority.
- 3.5 Consultation with providers was open between the 5th January and noon 9th January 2026.
- 3.6 The Council is consulting on proposed hourly rates for the following provisions in 2026/27:
- 3- to 4-year-old provision;
 - 2-year-old FRAS (Families Receiving Additional Support) provision (formerly known as disadvantaged provision);
 - 2-Year-old Working Parent provision;
 - 9 months to 2-year-old provision.

4. Early Years Block Funding 2026/27

- 4.1 The table below provides the provisional early year's funding for Hartlepool provision in 2026/27. The Department for Education (DfE) are now moving to three census points for all entitlements, not just the newer entitlements. This means funding will be adjusted three times during 2026/27 to reach the final confirmed allocation.
- 4.2 At a national level, DfE analysis shows that changing from an annual to a termly census will result in a lower number of funded hours being reported across the year. However, DfE recognise that local authorities will still need to fund the same number of hours locally. To compensate for the budget reduction local authorities would otherwise see from reduced headcounts under a termly funding model, DfE have adjusted the 3 and 4-year-old rates, reflecting the termly variation at the national level. This means, in financial year 2026 to 2027, each local authority will

receive an 'adjusted' hourly rate for 3 and 4-year-olds after allowing for the termly funding adjustment. This change will only take place in 2026 to 2027 to support transition and will not be an ongoing adjustment.

- 4.3 DfE expect local authorities to pass-on an uplift to their provider rate which is broadly in line with their DfE's unadjusted year-on-year percentage uplift, that is, using the rates and uplifts from the 'without termly adjustment'. Funding shown in the table below is based on the 'with termly adjustment' rate of £6.25, whereas the figures used in section 6 of this report are based on the 'without termly adjustment' rate of £6.07.

Early Years Block 2026/27	Hourly Rate Funding £	Part Time Equivalents (Estimate)	Indicative Funding £
3 to 4 Year Olds – Universal	6.25	1,238.88	4,413,510
3 to 4 Year Olds – Additional	6.25	475.25	1,693,078
3 to 4 Year Olds – Pupil Premium	1.15	399.16	261,649
3 to 4 Year Olds – Disability Access Fund			82,875
2 Year Olds – FRAS	8.63	312.40	1,536,727
2 Year Olds – Working Parents	8.63	621.36	3,056,532
2 Year Olds – Pupil Premium	1.15	149.39	97,925
2 Year Olds – Disability Access Fund			21,450
Under 2 Year Olds	11.69	755.31	5,032,857
Under 2 Year Olds – Pupil Premium	1.15	18.03	11,819
Under 2 Year Olds – Disability Access Fund			4,875
Total Indicative Funding 2026/27			16,213,297

- 4.4 Local authorities need to consider the following in proposing an hourly rate structure for each provision:

- At least 97% of the funded hourly rate must be passed to providers. This has increased from 96% last year;
- The level of funding needed to effectively administer and manage the expanded early year's offer by the Council. This can be up to 3% of the hourly rate in 2026/27;
- An appropriate level of contingency in case payments to providers during the year exceed census funding levels;
- A Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) to support individual children with low level and emerging needs – an area of growing concern. The authority is appointing to a new Outreach Worker post for 2026/27. This will be

funded from the Centrally Retained budget. The new post holder will be visible across settings and will offer greater support to providers in strategies for managing early intervention. The SENIF funding proposed within each hourly rate is in addition to investment in the new Outreach Worker post;

- Additional financial support for those children living with a greater level of deprivation.

- 4.5 The sections that follow outline proposed changes to current hourly rates, along with the rationale for how we plan to allocate additional funding.
- 4.6 Analysis of estimated increases to providers shows that several school settings benefit to a lesser extent from the hourly rate increase compared to their allocation of the separate National Insurance (NI) grant in 2025/26. The NI grant was only payable to school settings (as per the grant conditions). In mainstreaming the grant into the 2026/27 hourly rate, the rate is less favourable than the separate grant allocation. This seems to be the case across all school settings as can be seen from the table at paragraph 4.7 below.
- 4.7 The average increase in payments across each type of setting is shown in the following table.

Setting Type	Average increase 2026/27 (proposed) %
Childminder	4.49%
PVI	4.60%
Schools	0.62%
Total	3.08%

5. Centrally Retained Budget Proposal 2026/27

- 5.1 For 2026/27, a maximum of 3% funding can be retained to deliver the early years' service. This has reduced from 4% in 2025/26 and 5% historically. The change to 3% for 2026/27 results in a budget reduction of £0.024m, when compared to 2025/26 (at 4%).
- 5.2 The authority proposes to retain the maximum of 3%, or £0.465m (£0.489m in 2025/26).
- 5.3 The majority of centrally retained funding supports staffing costs, including the new Outreach Worker role (2-year fixed term). The £0.465m would fund:

Costs	£m	Comments
Staffing	0.320	Includes: 2,3- & 4-Year-Old FNE Officer Funded Childcare Officer Senior Officer – Childcare Free Nursery Entitlement Assistant Early Years Teaching and Learning Consultant Inclusion Outreach Worker (Fixed Term) Head of Service Early Help
Other Expenditure	0.014	Supplies and services, training, etc. Contribution to EYES system of £0.007m.
Other services provided to the Early Years Block	0.131	These services include Finance, HR and Legal and support from senior Council Officers outside the Early Year's team. Finance support includes administration of the improved monthly payment system to providers for example The charge equates to less than 1% of the EYB funding
TOTAL	0.465	

5.4 The centrally retained budget requirement allows the service to:

- Support the delivery of the key priorities as outlined within the approved Early Years Strategy for Hartlepool.
- Support the costs of the early years and childcare staff team to deliver the increasingly growing early years free entitlement offer.
- Support settings with training delivery, including outsourcing if needed.
- Provide business support to all providers in relation to all business issues including financial matters.
- Ensure the Families Information Directory is relevant and up to date as part of Ofsted requirements.
- Fund an Early Years Teaching and Learning Consultant to support delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage across provision.
- Administration of the SEN inclusion fund for low level and emerging needs.
- Support the costs of the EYES system required to administer early years that is mandated by DfE.
- Administration of the Disability Access Fund (DAF) including advice and support.
- Quality assurance in relation to Ofsted outcomes and Local Authority statutory duties in relation to Early Years.
- Childcare sufficiency reporting as required by DfE.
- Support the sufficiency development within the Local Authority.

- Advice and guidance for parents and practitioners.
- Provide expert advice to Early Years panel, ensuring capacity and support within setting.
- Manage and quality assure monthly headcount for statistical and payment purposes.
- Carryout management and quality assurance of new termly census requirements.
- Support and signpost with HAF.
- Liaison with DfE representative to ensure service is up to date.

6. 3-4 Year Old Hourly Rate

- 6.1 Government have increased the funded hourly rate (without termly adjustment as outlined in paragraph 4.3) by 17p to £6.07. After applying the additional 17p and increasing the pass-through rate from 96% to 97%, there is an increase of 23p to allocate.
- 6.2 The local authority priorities for allocating the extra funding are:
- We would like to target additional financial support to providers caring for those children living with a greater level of deprivation;
 - We would prefer for the remainder of the increase to benefit all providers by supporting increased pay costs and other inflation.
- 6.3 In line with these priorities we propose to:
- Increase the deprivation supplement from 1p to 4p – an overall budget increase from £10k to £39k;
 - Increase the base rate from £5.36 to £5.56 – an increase of 3.7%
- 6.4 The proposed hourly rate payments for 3- to 4-year-old provision are shown in the table below.

3- to 4-Year-Old Provision	Hourly Rate	Percentage	Funding Split (using estimated PTE)
Total funded hourly rate	£6.07	100%	£5,930,718
Retained by local authority	£0.18	3%	£175,870
Proposed split for the 97% pass through to Providers			
Base rate	£5.56	97%	£5,432,421
Deprivation Supplement	£0.04		£39,082
Teacher Pay / Pension Supplement (unchanged)	£0.24		£234,493
Contingency (unchanged)	£0.02		£19,540

SEN Inclusion (unchanged)	£0.03		£29,312
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7. 2-Year-Old Working Parent Hourly Rate

7.1 Government have increased the funded hourly rate by 35p to £8.63. After applying the additional 35p and increasing the pass-through rate from 96% to 97%, there is an increase of 42p to allocate.

7.2 The local authority priorities for allocating the extra funding are:

- We would like to increase SENIF funding significantly across 2-year-old provision. Additional targeted funding for those providers seeing increased SEN needs would help us intervene early, prior to children reaching school age.
- After increasing SENIF funding, we propose to apply the remainder of the available funding to the base rate to benefit all providers.

7.3 In line with these priorities we propose to:

- Increase SENIF funding from 3p to 16p per hour – growing the budget from the current £7k to £57k. This injection of funds could make a real difference at this age group;
- Increase the base rate from £7.82 to £8.11 per hour.

7.4 Proposed hourly rate payments for 2-year-old Working Parent provision are shown in the following table.

2-Year-Old Provision (working parent)	Hourly Rate	Percentage	Funding Split (using estimated PTE)
Total funded hourly rate	£8.63	100%	£3,056,532
Retained by local authority	£0.26	3%	£92,086
Base rate	£8.11	97%	£2,872,361
Deprivation (unchanged)	-		-
Contingency (unchanged)	£0.10		£35,417
SEN Inclusion	£0.16		£56,668

8. 2-Year-Old FRAS Hourly Rate

- 8.1 Government have increased the funded hourly rate by 35p to £8.63. After applying the additional 35p and increasing the pass-through rate from 96% to 97%, there is an increase of 42p to allocate.
- 8.2 The top priority for the local authority is to pay as much as possible over and above the 2-year-old Working Parent rate. There is growing concern that placing 2-year-olds from FRAS will not be sustainable if providers take up the 30-hour opportunity for children of 2-year-old working parents. We recognise that an improved financial incentive should be in place to reduce this risk.
- 8.3 In line with this top priority, proposals are:
- We need to match the base rate for 2-year-old Working Parent provision – an increase from £7.82 to £8.11 per hour
 - We would like to target additional financial support to providers caring for those children living with a greater level of deprivation by increasing the deprivation supplement from 7p to 20p. This means that all providers of 2-year-old FRAS provision would be paid at £8.31 per hour compared to £8.11 per hour for 2-year-old Working Parent provision.
- 8.4 Proposed hourly rate payments for 2-year-old FRAS provision are shown in the following table.

2-Year-Old Provision (FRAS)	Hourly Rate	Percentage	Funding Split (using estimated PTE)
Total funded hourly rate	£8.63	100%	£1,536,727
Retained by local authority	£0.26	3%	£46,298
Base rate	£8.11	97%	£1,444,131
Deprivation	£0.20		£35,614
Contingency (unchanged)	£0.03		£5,342
SEN Inclusion (unchanged)	£0.03		£5,342

9. Under 2-Year-Old Hourly Rate

- 9.1 Government have increased the funded hourly rate by 42p to £11.69. After applying the additional 42p and increasing the pass-through rate from 96% to 97%, there is an increase of 52p to allocate.
- 9.2 The local authority priorities for allocating the extra funding are:

- Based on projected spending in 2025/26, we believe the contingency funding can be reduced from 10p to 5p. This provides an additional 5p for reallocation – a total of 57p
- We would prefer for the full increase to benefit all providers by supporting increased pay costs and other inflation.

9.3 In line with these priorities, we propose to increase the base rate from £10.69 to £11.26 per hour.

9.4 Proposed hourly rate payments for the under 2-year-old provision rate are shown in the following table.

Under 2-Year-Old Provision	Hourly Rate	Percentage	Funding Split (using estimated PTE)
Total funded hourly rate	£11.69	100%	£5,032,857
Retained by local authority	£0.35	3%	£150,684
Base rate	£11.26	97%	£4,847,731
Deprivation (unchanged)	-		-
Contingency	£0.05		£21,526
SEN Inclusion (unchanged)	£0.03		£12,916

10. Consultation

10.1 In line with regulation, consultation with providers on the proposed hourly rates for 2026/27 was open from Monday 5 January to Friday 9 January 2026. Participation rates were significantly higher than in previous years at 63%.

10.2 At their meeting on 12 January 2026, Schools' Forum considered the hourly rate proposals, along with the planned centrally retained funding of the maximum 3%. Results from the provider consultation were tabled at the meeting.

10.3 Consultation responses are shown in the table below.

Early Years Consultation 2026/27 - Responses	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total	% Agreed
1: A pass-through rate of 97% is proposed. This proposal is expected to provide the budget required to effectively administer and manage the extended offer, including the new Outreach	49	3	4	56	87.5%

Worker post. Do you agree that 97% should be passed through to providers across all hourly rates in 2026/27?					
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Early Years Consultation 2026/27 - Responses	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total	% Agreed
2: The proposed hourly rate changes would increase the current SENIF budget from £50k to £104k. This funding would be paid to providers as targeted support for children with low level and emerging SEN. Do you agree that SENIF funding should be increased?	41	12	3	56	73.2%
3: Do you agree with our proposals to increase the gap between provider payments for 2-year-old FRAS provision and 2-year-old Working Parent provision? The extra payment would be 20p per hour, or £114 per year for one child.	35	6	15	56	62.5%
4: Do you agree with our proposal to use all the available increase on under 2-year-old provision to increase the base rate?	40	4	12	56	71.4%
5: Do you agree with our proposal to significantly increase the deprivation supplement on 3- to 4-year-old provision?	32	13	11	56	57.1%

10.4 Schools' Forum discussed the hourly rate proposals and the responses from provider consultation, along with the planned centrally retained funding of the maximum 3%.

10.5 Forum were concerned that school settings benefit to a lesser extent from the proposed hourly rate increases (as discussed in paragraph 4.6 of this report). However, Forum concluded that a consistent approach across all providers remains important and that introducing new supplements for schools only to accommodate the disparity in increases would be a negative move.

10.6 Forum asked for further information on use of the centrally retained funding, although there was strong agreement to recommend retention of the maximum 3%

to Committee for approval. Section 5 of this report contains the additional information

11. Other Considerations/Implications

RISK IMPLICATIONS	There is a risk that actual places exceed funded places during 2026/27. DfE have moved to funding based on 3 census points across all entitlements from 2026/27. This reduces the risk for the newer entitlements but increases the risk for 3–4-year-old provision. Government have recognised this risk and compensated the authority by introducing the termly adjusted rate. The contingency elements proposed within the hourly rates for 2026/27 further mitigate this risk.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	<p>The 2026/27 allocations are subject to adjustment following the May 2026, October 2026 and January 2027 census points. Therefore, the figures provided in the table shown at paragraph 4.3 are subject to change during 2026/27, although the hourly rates will not vary.</p> <p>All of the proposed hourly rates for early year's provision reflect the revised requirement within the regulations to pass through at least 97% of the NFF to providers (previously 96%).</p>
SUBSIDY CONTROL	There are no Subsidy Control Implications.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	<p>The local authority is required under the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations to consult providers on annual changes to their formula. This has been completed, with the outcomes reported at paragraph 10 of this report.</p> <p>Providers must be notified of the 2026/27 hourly rates by the statutory date of 28 February 2026.</p>
SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	No requirement.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There are no staff considerations.

ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There are no asset management considerations.
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	There are none.
CONSULTATION	Please refer to section 10 of this report.

12. Conclusion

12.1 Following consultation, Schools' Forum recommended retention of the maximum 3% to allow the authority to deliver the early year's service and agreed the proposed hourly rates for 2026/27 for all entitlements.

13. Recommendations

13.1 It is recommended that Members:

- a) Note the contents of this report.
- b) Approve the retention of £0.465m (3% of total funding) to deliver the early year's service as outlined in section 5 of this report and recommended by Schools' Forum (15 for; 0 against; 1 abstention).
- c) Approve the hourly rate for 3- to 4-year-old provision shown at paragraph 6.4 of this report as recommended by Schools' Forum (16 for; 0 against; 0 abstention).
- d) Approve the hourly rate for 2-year-old Working Parent provision shown at paragraph 7.4 of this report as recommended by Schools' Forum (16 for; 0 against; 0 abstention).
- e) Approve the hourly rate for 2-year-old FRAS provision shown at paragraph 8.4 of this report as recommended by Schools' Forum (16 for; 0 against; 0 abstention).
- f) Approve the hourly rate for under 2-year-old provision shown at paragraph 9.4 of this report as recommended by Schools' Forum (16 for; 0 against; 0 abstention).

14. Reasons for Recommendations

- 14.1 It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to review their Early Years Formula on an annual basis. Providers must be notified of hourly rates by 28 February 2026.

15. Background Papers

- 15.1 Schools' Forum Report and minutes 12 January 2026.

16. Contact Officers

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Sign Off:-

Chief Executive	Date: 21.01.2026
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 22.01.2026
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 22.01.2026



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 FEBRUARY 2026

Report of: Executive Director of Children's Services and Director of Finance, IT and Digital

Subject: DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT – SCHOOL BUDGET SHARES 2026/27 AND CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK 2026/27

Decision Type: Key Decision – CJCS 172/25

1. Council Plan Priority

Hartlepool will be a place:
- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide details of the 2026/27 Schools Block funding allocation within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), propose school budget shares for 2026/27, and present the draft budget requirement for the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB).

3. Background

- 3.1 The Department for Education (DfE) published indicative National Funding Formula (NFF) allocations for 2026/27 on 19 November 2025 based on October 2024 census data.

- 3.2 On 17 December 2025, DfE released final funding information to reflect the October 2025 school census.
- 3.3 Members will recall that Hartlepool agreed to adopt the “hard” formula that mirrors the NFF. This approach continues to be supported by Schools’ Forum for 2026/27.
- 3.4 In adopting the “hard” formula, local authorities are still required to consider how they set their individual school budgets (ISBs) for 2026/27. Any transfers to and from the school’s block from other DSG blocks must be considered. Also, a local approach to setting a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) and Cap must be agreed and implemented.
- 3.5 Consultation on setting individual school budgets (ISBs) and Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) budget 2026/27 took place with Schools’ Forum on 16 September 2025 and 12 January 2026.

4. 2026/27 Schools Block Funding

- 4.1 The following table shows the Hartlepool Schools Block allocation of £90.841m based on October 2025 census numbers. This shows an increase of £1.167m from 2025/26, or 1.3%

Schools Block	Pupil Numbers (Oct 2025)	2026/27 Funding (£m)
Primary	7,440	46.078
Secondary	5,562	44.142
Premises		0.529
Growth		0.092
NFF Schools Block 2026/27		90.841
NFF Schools Block 2025/26, including grants rolled into the formula in 2026/27		89.674
Funding increase		1.167
Percentage increase in funding		1.3%

- 4.2 The £90.841m compares the equivalent figure of £89.674m for 2025/26 (Schools block NFF plus the separate SBSG and NIC Grants), an increase of 1.3%.
- 4.3 Units of funding for 2026/27 are £6,193 for primary pupils (£5,843 in 2025/26) and £7,936 for secondary pupils (£7,521 in 2025/26). Some of the increase in unit funding reflects the mainstreaming of the grants.
- 4.4 The National Funding Formula (NFF) for 2026/27 continues to include a guarantee of a minimum per-pupil funding amount. For 2026/27, these levels have risen to £5,115 (up from £4,955 2025/26) for primary schools and £6,640 (up from £6,465 2025/26) for secondary schools. One primary school fell below the minimum threshold and received the mandatory uplift, while all secondary schools were above the minimum per pupil funding amount and required no adjustment.
- 4.5 At their meeting on 16 September 2025, Schools' Forum voted in favour of applying the maximum possible MFG (Minimum Funding Guarantee), along with an appropriate cap. The maximum MFG was agreed at 0.0%, within the allowable range of -0.5% to 0.0%. Following release of the Authority Pro Forma Tool (APT) on 17 December 2025, the cap has been calculated at 2.97%. This means that all schools will receive at least the same amount per pupil as in 2025/26 (0.0%) but no more than 2.97% per pupil.
- 4.6 At their meeting on 16 September 2025, Schools' Forum agreed in principle to transfer 0.5% of Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block. This transfer was proposed in recognition of the growing DSG deficit and the need to support pupils with SEND and was agreed ahead of confirmation of final funding allocations.
- 4.7 The Schools Block Budget includes an allocation for Growth Funding, calculated by the DfE using Office for National Statistics data. Previously, funding was provided to schools that increased their Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN) at the request of the Local Authority. In 2024/25, Schools' Forum reviewed this policy due to significant pupil number fluctuations between census points. A revised growth policy was agreed and implemented from 2025/26. Under the new policy, support will be provided to schools whose pupil numbers increase by more than half a class size between census points.
- 4.8 For 2026/27, disbursements under this new policy total £0.005m, leaving £0.087m available to contribute towards the proposed 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block

4.9 After growth fund of £0.005m and the 0.5% block transfer of £0.454m to the High Needs Block, funding available for ISBs in 2026/27 is £90.382m (£89.674m in 2025/26), an increase of 0.79%. In both 2025/26 and 2026/27, the remaining growth funding after disbursement is used to support ISBs.

4.10 The table below summarises the proposed school budget for 2026/27.

School Budget Share 2026/27	Proposed Budget £m
Schools Block funding (including growth funding)	90.841
Growth disbursement	(0.005)
Transfer-out to High Needs Block	(0.454)
School Budget Share Proposed 2026/27	90.382
School Budget Share Increase from 2025/26 (£m)	0.708
School Budget Share Increase from 2025/26 (%)	0.79%

5. 2026/27 Central Schools Block Funding (CSSB)

- 5.1 The Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) of the DSG funds local authorities for the statutory duties and other commitments they hold for maintained and academy schools.
- 5.2 CSSB funding of £0.666m for 2026/27 (£0.688m in 2025/26) was published by DfE on 17 December 2025 based on October 2025 census numbers.
- 5.3 The historic cost element of the CSSB (originally approximately 50% of the block) has been reduced by 20% in 2026/27 for the sixth successive year as part of the government's strategy to gradually remove funding for historic items that are expected to reduce in cost over time.
- 5.4 Although a number of historic items for Hartlepool no longer require CSSB funding, there are two historic items remaining that will not reduce or come to an end in the short to medium term. These relate to the school's contribution to licences and the pension costs associated with the former Brierton school closure. Although the government's 20% reduction will eventually result in a financial pressure, this is not expected to materialise until 2027/28. Officers have raised this position in advance with DfE.

- 5.5 Schools' Forum is required to agree each element of spending against the CSSB on an annual basis. At their meeting on 16 September 2025, Schools' Forum agreed to fund the elements amounting to £0.619m shown in the table below.

Historic Commitments		Forum Approval £m
Licenses		0.067
Termination of Employment costs		0.031
	Total	0.098
Ongoing Responsibilities		Forum Approval £m
Retained Education Services		0.210
Admissions		0.165
Copyright licences		0.098
Servicing Schools Forum		0.048
	Total	0.521
Grand Total		0.619

- 5.6 The CSSB budget requirement of £0.619m leaves residual funding of £0.047m. At their meeting on 16 September 2025, Schools' Forum recommended that the residual balance be transferred to the high needs block to support the financial pressure on supporting pupils with SEND.

6. Other Considerations/Implications

RISK IMPLICATIONS	If individual school budgets are not approved, the local authority may not meet its requirement to notify the DfE of individual school budgets by the statutory date. In addition, individual schools will not be able to plan their budgets.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	As outlined in this report, providing schools with an MFG of the maximum 0.0% per pupil, along with a 2.97% cap, is affordable within 2026/27 NFF.

SUBSIDY CONTROL	There are no Subsidy Control Implications.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	The local authority is required to consult all schools on annual changes to their formula, along with any proposed block transfers.
SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	No requirement.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There are no staff considerations.
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There are no asset management considerations.
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	There are none.
CONSULTATION	Schools' Forum and the Head Teachers they represent have been consulted on options for setting Individual Schools Budgets (ISBs) for 2026/27, as well as on the Central Schools Block (CSSB) funding proposals.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Updated funding arrangements for the School's Block in 2026/27 allow for an MFG of the maximum 0.0% increase per pupil compared to 2025/26 funding, along with a cap of 2.97%.
- 7.2 Following consultation, Schools' Forum recommended a block transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2026/27. Residual growth funding of £0.087m would be used towards the 0.5% transfer.
- 7.3 At their meeting on 16 September 2025, Schools' Forum recommended that the residual balance of £0.047m within the CSSB be transferred to the high needs block to support the financial pressure on supporting pupils with SEND.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that Members:

- a) Note the contents of this report.
- b) Note the agreement by Schools' Forum to the budget requirement of £0.619m for the Central School Services Block and to the transfer the residual funding from Central School Services Block to the High Needs Block (£0.047m) as outlined in paragraphs 5.5 and 5.6.
- c) Note the agreement by Schools' Forum to transfer 0.5% of schools block funding (£0.454m) to the High Needs Block as outlined in paragraph 4.6.
- d) Agree MFG to be used for 2026/27 as outlined in paragraph 4.5 of this report and noting the recommendation from Schools' Forum of applying an MFG of 0.0%, alongside an appropriate cap which has been calculated at 2.97%.
- e) Approve the School Budget Share for 2026/27 as summarised in the table at paragraph 4.10 of this report.

9. Reasons for Recommendations

9.1 It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to consult and agree the school budget share to inform individual school budget allocations so that figures can be confirmed to DfE by the deadline of 22 January 2026. Members are asked to note that figures will be provided to DfE by the deadline, stating the date of Committee as 3 February 2026. DfE will contact the Council to confirm details of the decisions taken at Committee as part of their validation checks.

10. Background Papers

10.1 Schools' Forum Report and minutes 16 September 2025 and 12 January 2026.

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Sign Off:-

Chief Executive	Date:21.01.2026
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date:22.01.2026
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date:22.01.2026



Hartlepool
Borough Council

Children's Services Committee

3 February 2026

Report of: Executive Director, Children's Services

Subject: OFSTED INSPECTION OF PARK ROAD CHILDREN'S HOME

Decision Type: For information

1. Council Plan Priority

Hartlepool will be a place:
- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)
- with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community. (Organisation)

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Children's Services Committee the recent full inspection report of Park Road Children's Home by OFSTED, which took place on 5 and 6 November 2025.

3. Background

3.1 Inspection of children's homes is carried out by Ofsted. Ofsted has a duty to inspect children's homes annually under The Children's Homes Regulations 2015. The scheduling of inspections takes account of;

- Children's standard of care
- Previous inspection findings
- Complaints and concerns about the service
- Notifications from the home; and
- The content of monitoring reports to Ofsted by children's homes under regulations 44 and 45 of The Children's Homes Regulations 2015

3.2 The inspection judgments and descriptions for a full inspection are:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Inadequate

Inspectors will use the descriptors as the benchmark against which to grade and judge performance. Inspectors are required to weigh up the evidence in:

- How well children and young people are helped and protected
- And the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers
- And consider it against the evaluation criteria, outstanding, good, requires improvement, and inadequacy, before making the judgment of the experience and progress of children and young people

3.3 Park Road has had three inspections since opening. All were rated GOOD. These took place on 6 and 7 February 2024, 6 and 7 November 2024, and 5 and 6 November 2025.

4. Proposals

4.1 There are seven children's homes that are operated and managed by Hartlepool Borough Council. They provide care for children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

4.2 A full inspection of Park Road took place on 5 and 6 November 2025, against the judgments and descriptors outlined in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 above, and the service was judged as GOOD overall, and OUTSTANDING

for the effectiveness of leaders and managers. Therefore, this meets the criteria that the children's home provides effective services in line with the requirements for a GOOD rating.

- 4.3 The full inspection report is attached at **Appendix 1** of this report and provides committee with the detailed findings reached by Ofsted in making their judgements.

5. Other Considerations/Implications

RISK IMPLICATIONS	The children's home does not need to take action; however, it must continue implementing the statutory requirements to ensure children and young people continue to receive a good service. If the children's home does not continue to meet the required standards, it runs the risk of being judged 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate', meaning the care of children and young people has become unsafe or poor.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no financial considerations arising from this report.
SUBSIDY CONTROL	None
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no legal considerations arising from this report. Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.
SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Single Impact Assessment is not required as this is for information only.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There are no staffing considerations.
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There are no asset management considerations arising from this report.

ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	There are no environmental, sustainability, and climate considerations arising from this report.
CONSULTATION	During the inspection, inspectors observed and sought the wishes and views of children and young people living at Park Road, and this informed their findings.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to note the positive inspection report of Park Road children's home. This provision has been judged to be GOOD, which this is a testament to the care, commitment, and skill of the staff teams.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 Park Road children's home is a regulated statutory service providing care for children and young people, and the Children's Service Committee must be kept informed of inspections and the judgments of OFSTED in relation to the provisions.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Park Road Ofsted Full report 5 and 6 November 2025.

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Sign Off:-

Chief Executive	Date: 14.01.2026
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 15.01.2026
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 14.01.2026

2745434

Registered provider: Hartlepool Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2023.

There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection and three children were spoken with.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 November 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/11/2024	Full	Good
06/02/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making progress in varying degrees. This is due to children's individual needs and the amount of time they have lived in the home. Children who have lived in the home longer have made good progress in managing big feelings. This has led to a reduction in incidents. One child who is newer to the setting is making some progress in adapting to the boundaries in their new home.

Some children experience difficulties with their education. Staff support children and work closely with education providers to find creative ways to encourage children to engage. This helps children to recognise the importance of education and learning.

Professionals speak highly of the home, saying communication with the staff is good. One professional said: 'Nothing can be improved, the staff do everything they can.' Another professional said: 'Staff have an excellent understanding of each child's needs.'

Staff at the home know the importance of family time for children. This often involves building positive and healthy relationships with family members and loved ones. One family member commented that staff are doing 'a brilliant job'. The family member went on to say: 'I know that [child's name] likes living at the home and I am confident that they are being kept safe.' Staff support children to spend quality time with their families. Where there are concerns, staff advocate on the children's behalf to ensure they are safeguarded.

The home is large, with a variety of communal areas and outdoor space for children to access for play and to relax. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their individual needs. The manager has identified areas of the home that are tired and need attention. The manager has a schedule for this work to take place. This includes important repairs that will provide greater security around the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff at the home have children at the centre of their practice. Staff keep contemporaneous care plans for children which are individualised and written for each child. This supports children to understand their care in a clear and simple way. Equally, risk assessments are detailed and provide clear guidance to staff to help keep children safer.

When there are specific worries about risks that affect children, staff seek support from partner agencies. This includes specialist work around knife crime and substance misuse. Children are supported by staff at the home with discussions to help their understanding of such dangers. Room searches are completed only when necessary to help keep children safer.

Some children are vulnerable to going missing from the home. When this happens, staff respond promptly and appropriately. They follow children's plans, which includes notifying partner agencies and important people in the child's life, and searching the local area. An independent return home interview is completed, which helps to ensure children are supported, as well as identifying and addressing any issues to prevent reoccurrence of episodes of going missing.

On occasions, children have left the home by climbing out of windows. Staff respond immediately to ensure the home is safe for children. The manager has contacted professionals to consider better ways to keep children safe. This has resulted in some new security measures being installed in the home.

Children are supported by staff with online safety. This includes an individualised plan for each child and educational work with staff. The result has led to children being able to access devices in a safe and age-appropriate way.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager knows the children exceptionally well and understands their individual needs. The manager leads a motivated and committed culture in the home, which aims to provide excellent care to children. This means staff practice is child focused, and children are supported to reach their full potential.

The manager prioritises children's needs, and this is evident from the point of the initial referral. The experiences of new children are finely balanced against the needs of children who already live in the home. The skills of staff are also an important factor to help assure the manager that children's needs are being consistently met.

The manager and staff work collaboratively with partner agencies and have developed strong working relationships. This helps the manager and staff to have the most up-to-date information regarding children's needs. This means children are supported in the best way possible.

The children benefit from being cared for by a core staff team. Staff speak positively about their roles in the home and one staff member said that they love working at the home. Staff are committed to their roles, and consider the children and their colleagues in the home as their extended family. Staff feel well supported by managers and feel their personal development is prioritised. This is reflected in the low staff turnover in the home. Staff are supported with regular supervision sessions which are reflective and provide staff with a forum to talk about children's care.

The manager is meticulous in ensuring they have oversight of the home. There are various monitoring tools in place to support this. This equips the manager with oversight of children's care, and they can identify any issues with staff practice. When areas of improvement are identified, the manager supports staff through regular

supervision sessions and access to training and resources to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need.

No requirements or recommendations were raised following this inspection.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2745434

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hartlepool Borough Council

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool TS24 8AY

Responsible individual: Laura Gough

Registered manager: Brian Thwaites

Inspector

Kerry Chater, Social Care Inspector

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Children's Services Committee

3 February 2026

Report of: Executive Director, Children's Services

Subject: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEND) AND
ALTERNATIVE PROVISION (AP) CAPITAL PLAN

Decision Type: For information

1. Council Plan Priority

Hartlepool will be a place:
- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)
- with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community. (Organisation)

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To share with members the Local Authority's Capital Plan priorities for Special Educational Needs (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) for children and young people in Hartlepool 2025 – 2028.

3. Background

- 3.1 We have recently undertaken a sufficiency assessment for children and young people with SEND in Hartlepool using validated data sets and local

intelligence from our schools and partner agencies. This report highlights emerging and current needs within the town and identifies a number of schemes which will support us in meeting future needs and allow our children and young people to access their learning within Hartlepool.

- 3.2 In As a result of increasing numbers of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Hartlepool and children and young people who require additional support in or outside of a mainstream provision, the Council will need to increase capacity by building or expanding existing provision, in order that we can meet future needs and prevent expensive out of area placements.
- 3.3 The SEND Capital and AP Report highlights a number of potential schemes which will support this. The schemes are dependent upon available funding and we are awaiting the publication of the SEND White Paper and any associated funding linked to the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNCPA) grant for the DfE.

4. Proposals

Background to how SEND Capital funding can be spent

- 4.1 The Local Authority has previously received a High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNCPA) grant from the Department for Education (DfE) to develop specialist provision to meet current and future needs. There is currently £0.257m unallocated following approval of the Kingsley build.
- 4.2 We are awaiting the publication of the SEND White Paper, which we anticipate will include an allocation for SEND/AP capital for 2026 – 2029 onwards. The funding for HNCPA intended purpose is to:
- **Create New Specialist Places:** Expanding special schools, developing new SEN units or resourced provisions within mainstream schools, or establishing new AP settings to meet the growing demand for specialist support.
 - **Improve Accessibility and Suitability:** Adapting or remodelling existing mainstream school buildings to make them more inclusive and accessible for pupils with physical disabilities or a range of SEND, allowing more children to be educated in their local area.
 - **Reduce Out-of-Borough Placements:** By increasing local, in-house provision, local authorities aim to reduce the reliance on expensive

independent or out-of-area placements, which also helps to reduce travel times and associated carbon emissions.

- **Provide Sustainability and Efficiency:** Local authorities are encouraged to consider environmental sustainability, carbon reduction, and energy efficiency when planning capital projects, in line with wider government targets.

- 4.3 Following the publication of the white paper and associated funding, the Council and members may need to consider if there is insufficient funding available that not all schemes would be able to ahead and as such they would be prioritised by the greatest area of need, linked to demand and cost efficiencies.

5. Other Considerations/Implications

RISK IMPLICATIONS	<p>If none of the schemes were to go ahead and we were at capacity within our existing provision, children and young people would need to access high-cost provision out of area, which will have a significant impact on the high needs block and transport costs.</p> <p>There is also a lack of suitable provision available across the Northeast, meaning the Council would not be able to fulfill its statutory duty in relation to education.</p>
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	The proposals will be prioritised based on funding made available through the HNCPA allocation and alternative funding sources where available.
SUBSIDY CONTROL	N/A
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	N/A
SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	N/A
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	N/A

ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	N/A
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	N/A
CONSULTATION	N/A at this point in time.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that members of the Children's Services Committee note the contents of **Appendix 1**, SEND and AP Capital Report 2025 – 2028.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 To provide rationale to support future decision making upon review of available funding.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 SEND and AP Capital Report 2025 – 2028

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Sign Off:-

Chief Executive	Date: 14.01.2026
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 15.01.2026
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 15.01.2026



Hartlepool
Borough Council

SEND and Alternative Provision Capital Strategy

2025 - 2028

Foreword

This Capital Strategy supports the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Sufficiency 2025 – 2028, by outlining the SEND landscape in Hartlepool Local Authority.

The strategy provides a greater understanding of the demographics of the cohort, describes the Council's existing SEND provision, and provides evidence that supports the Council's decision making, as it seeks to fulfil its sufficiency, by investing in and maintaining its educational offer.

This strategy will be a dynamic document, responding to change in the local area. The Local Authority will continue to collaborate with schools, partners, and stakeholders, to ensure our long-term planning, and ensure that we are providing a needs led offer that allows our children and young people to access their education in area, where possible.

We will update this strategy on an annual basis to reflect the following:

- Department for Education (DfE) capital allocations available
- Pupil place requirements by areas of need
- Any other significant changes that may have taken place

The current SEND capital funding available from the DfE for the 2025/26 financial year is £0.822m. Including the carry forward from previous SEND Capital allocations, the budget pot currently stands at £1.464m.

The Local Authority is awaiting the outcome of the Chancellor's Autumn Budget and the publication of the SEND White Paper in the Autumn Term.

Purpose of the strategy

This strategy is limited to children and young people with identified SEND needs, this includes those with an Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), SEND Support which may lead to an EHCP or who require Alternative Provision, and for whom the LA has specific statutory obligations to regarding their educational provision



Background and context

To ensure there is appropriate capacity for children and young people with SEND in Hartlepool, the Local Authority (LA) regularly engages in consultation and discussion with local stakeholders, including via Schools Forum, to try to increase capacity locally. This includes utilising existing provision, and where possible, extending and expanding the capital estate by identifying current and future gaps. This ensures we can use capital monies to provide the most cost-effective solutions.

The Local Authority has increased local specialist places and provision over the past three years by 221 places; as per the following breakdown:

- Development of a new complex SEND base for up to 20 young people at St Helens Primary School. St Helens Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) is also included in their new-build programme with the DfE.
- New build at High Tunstall College of Science for 48 children and young people with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- Increase of 25 places at Kingsley Primary School to provide an additional complex SEND ARP. Due to high levels of need across the whole of the school, to accommodate the children and young people with EHCP and SEND needs, a temporary measure was put in place to accommodate 60 mainstream children in a temporary demountable on the playing field. **Due to planning restrictions, the children will need to be back in the main school by July 2026**, therefore it is a priority to develop appropriate accommodation for children with complex SEND, this will take significant capital investment.
- Increase of 12 places at Grange Primary School to provide an additional ARP for complex SEND.
- Development of a new complex SEND base for 20 young people at Greatham Primary School.
- Catcote Post 16 Autism (ASD) College satellite provision opened in October 2023 and offers 24 places to free up accommodation on the Catcote Academy Site.
- Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Free School opened in September 2024 and offers places for 64 children and young people, this is preventing



the use of high cost, out of area SEMH placements. The bid was via the DfE programme for SEND Free Schools and was an LA led bid.

- A classroom conversion at Springwell School accommodate and additional 8 children with Proufoud and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) needs for September 2024, preventing them having to access their education out of area.

Summary of Current Specialist Provision

Outlined below is a more detailed overview of the current specialist education offer for children and young people in Hartlepool.

Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPs) and SEND Base Capacity

To support the increasing demand for SEND provision in Hartlepool, and to ensure we have capacity within specialist settings, we have continued year on year to increase the number of ARPs and SEND bases, ensuring children and young people are able to access their education within the town.

ARPs and SEND bases are part of the wider strategy for inclusion by keeping children and young people in mainstream schools, by increasing provision on mainstream sites to sustain children in long-term suitable places.

In the last 3 years, we have increased capacity by adding another 125 places to ARPs and SEND bases across the town. This has reduced the pressure on our Special Schools and the need for out of area placements. We will continue to work closely with schools to ensure that progression opportunities are available.

Primary

Eskdale Primary	Speech, Language and Communication (SALT)	10 places
Grange Primary	ASD/Physical/ medical Complex Needs	21 places 12 places
Greatham Primary	Complex Needs	20 places
Kingsley Primary	ASD Complex Needs	25 places 25 places
Rossmere Primary	SEMH	6 places short term placements stay on roll at home school
St Helen's Primary	ASD	20 places



Secondary

High Tunstall Secondary	ASD/Physical/Medical MLD	20 places 48 places
Manor Secondary	ASD	20 places

At present, our provision offers places for 227 children and young people.

Specialist Settings Offer and Capacity

Springwell School, Primary - capacity 94

- at capacity for the 2025/26 academic year
- operates on a constrained site, which has been extended multiple times
- there are limited opportunities for further expansion other than on fields which require permission from Sport England – highly likely to receive planning objections
- cohort consists of ambulant and non-ambulant, recent change to designation to meet the needs of children and young people with significantly more complex needs
- there is no nursery offer
- school has limited dining/indoor physical activity space to meet the needs of the children and young people
- current Ofsted rating of good

Catcote Academy, Secondary and Post 16 – capacity 235

- has entry criteria regarding admissions, linked to levels of assessed learning
- will be at capacity by 2027/28 based on future growth predictions
- operates on single site for secondary provision
- had a large new build extension to the rear of the existing building to increase capacity in 2021, option to further expand across the top floor to increase capacity further
- has off-site post-16 ASD provision created to increase capacity in the secondary accommodation
- Offers supported internships



- cohort consists of ambulant and non-ambulant
- has difficulty providing an educational offer for children and young people who have ASD with extreme challenging behaviours, due to the restrictions of the accommodation and risk to the existing cohort
- current Ofsted rating of good

Hartlepool SEMH Free School, Secondary – capacity 64

- new school opened September 24
- children and young people have challenging behaviour, trauma or an SEMH diagnosis, ASD may also present a secondary need
- offers provision for children and young people who are overall able to follow the national curriculum, or parts of it
- on a 3-year growth trajectory of planned pupil numbers into the school
- occupies a large site offering indoor and outdoor learning

Hartlepool also has young people who attend Further Education (FE) Colleges outside of the town at neighbouring LA's, however these numbers are small and tend to be because the courses are not available within the local area. Numbers have reduced in the last 3 years, as there is no post-16 transport budget.

Hartlepool College of Further Education, Pre-16 AP and Post-16 SEND

- rapid expansions over last 4 years to provide an enhanced offer for young people with SEND within the main building, can continue to expand according to needs. In 2024/25 academic year, 80 young people with an EHCP accessed college programmes
- offers Entry level 3 and above provision
- provides a wide-ranging curriculum offer across numerous sectors, including supported internships
- cohort consists of ambulant and non-ambulant, recent change to designation to meet the needs of children and young people with more complex needs
- specialist teaching areas in place for young people with SEND
- piloted a successful, regulated Alternative Provision offer for the LA, which has now increased to 40 young people. Requires investment from the LA



for a dedicated building for young people who require AP and are at risk of exclusion

- current Ofsted rating of good

Catcote Futures, Post-19 Independent Specialist Provision

- situated on a separate site to pre- and post-16 accommodation
- offers educational and day centre provision for adults, no restrictions on age
- provides a curriculum for adults with highly complex SEND
- cohort consists of ambulant and non-ambulant
- specialist teaching areas in place for young people with SEND
- joint funded packages with Hartlepool Council Adult Social Care
- joint funded continuing healthcare packages with health
- at capacity due to lack of adult community-based provision from social care
- current Ofsted rating of good

Hartlepool also has young people who attend Further Education (FE) Colleges outside of the town at neighbouring LA's, however these numbers are small and tend to be because the courses are not available within the local area. Numbers have reduced in the last 3 years, as there is no post-16 transport budget.

Alternative Provision (AP)

Hartlepool Borough Council has developed an AP framework to support the number of young people who require AP, to try and maintain their school places and prevent exclusion. The Commissioning Team oversees the framework, and children and young people are discussed at Hartlepool Inclusion Panel, to have their placement agreed and monitored.

There are currently 16 providers on the AP framework, and 65 young people were accessing AP provision as at end of Summer 2025 term.

In line with Ofsted requirements, the LA are working with providers to try and encourage providers to become regulated, or to increase the regulated offer for AP within town.



This is a continued area of growth in Hartlepool, as more children and young people require education outside of a mainstream school setting, with a more vocational curriculum. This is linked to the development of an AP offer at HCFE and AP providers becoming Ofsted accredited.

Schemes In Development

Emotional School Based Avoidance (EBSA) Provision

Proposal

Due to an increase in demand and lack of appropriate provision for secondary age young people across key stages 3 and 4 with EBSA the LA has commissioned an ARP for children and young people who have:

- experienced significant trauma
- mental health needs which may or may not be diagnosed and can result in behaviour which has put them at risk of permanent exclusion (PEX) or non-attendance in school
- physical needs which may or may not be diagnosed
- low level learning due to missed schooling
- poor attendance
- families open to early help/social care

Number of Children and Young People Accommodated

The ARP facility will accommodate up to 12 young people who have an EHC plan, or who require an assessment place, and are unable to have their needs met in mainstream setting. The provision will be in place for September 2025.

Estimated Costs

Capital investment will be minimal, and most costs will be linked to revenue and allocated to the High Needs Block (HNB).

The revenue cost of the provision is for experienced specialist staff and rental of the building, at £0.151m per year.

Potential Savings

This provision will allow children and young people who currently have no educational offer to access a full-time placement. We have been unable to source placements in and out of area for this specialist need. Day placements of this type are in region of £65k per year, plus transport. Which for 12 young people would total £0.780m per year, plus transport.



Invest to save estimate of £0.629m per year.

Complex/Challenging Behaviour Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Provision

Proposal

Due to an increase in demand and lack of appropriate provision for secondary age young people across key stages 3 and 4 with complex Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). The LA has commissioned an ARP for children and young people who have:

- an EHC Plan
- experienced significant trauma or have mental health needs which may or may not be diagnosed and can result in behaviour which has put them at risk of (PEX)
- co morbid conditions around their learning
- undiagnosed or unmet SALT needs
- extreme and challenging behaviours which prevents them from being in a larger group setting or school
- low level learning due to missed schooling
- are at risk to harm outside of the home, including anti-social behaviour

Number of Children and Young People Accommodated

The ARP facility will accommodate up to 12 young people who have an EHC plan and are unable to have their needs met in mainstream setting. The provision will be in place for September 2025.

Estimated Costs

Capital investment will be minimal and will focus on around reinforcing one wall and doors, costs will be linked to revenue and allocated to the HNB.

Revenue cost of the provision is for experienced specialist staff and rental of building at £0.252m per year.

Potential Savings

This provision will allow children and young people who currently have no educational offer to access a full-time placement. We have been unable to source placements in and out of area for this specialist need. Day placements of this type are in region of £65k per year, plus transport which for 12 young people would total £0.780m per year, plus transport.



Invest to save estimate of £0.528m per year.

Kingsley School Development of SEND/Complex Needs Accommodation

Proposal

The development of a new build ARP on the school site, to provide additional capacity and to re accommodate children and young people with SEND currently in classes allocated for mainstream children. The ARP will prevent admission to specialist provision and out of area placements, the proposed build will need to provide classrooms, breakout/regulations spaces and facilities for staff.

Number of Children and Young People Accommodated

The new provision will provide capacity for between 32 - 48 children and young people, plus the existing ARP provision with the main build for less complex needs, dependent upon needs and matching, 12 – 24 additional places will be provided, the remaining places will be children and young people already accommodated in the main school, who need to be re-located to allow 2 mainstream classes of 50 - 60 children and young people to be re accommodated back in the main school.

Estimated Cost

Capital investment of £1.2m has been allocated for this build from the SEND capital allocation. There will be no impact on the revenue costs, as most staff are already in place for existing children and for young people in the main school. This is funded as revenue from the HNB. As the provision expands and more children are accommodated this will increase the place funding and associated top up value, linked to the funding banding and ranges document for children and young people in ARP's.

If the children and young people could not be accommodated in ARP's at Kingsley School, they would all need special school or specialist provision to meet their needs. This is likely to be out of area as the primary special school is at capacity.

Potential Savings

Day placements in out of area provision via other Local Authority Schools, Academy Trusts or Independent Schools for are in region of £35k - £80k per year, plus transport costs. There is however a lack of available provision across the North East.



Invest to save for a minimum of 30 children and young people would be in the region of £1.05m - 2.4m per year.

Schemes For Consideration

Development of Complex and Challenging Behaviour ASD Provision

Proposal

In Hartlepool, the specialist school's estate is small, with one primary and one secondary special school. Hartlepool, in line with regional and national trends in EHC, are seeing a higher number of young people of secondary age with ASD and extreme/complex challenging behaviour, who are unable to be accommodated in local special schools. There is a waiting list for specialist ASD Day placements in the region, which still require travel of approximately 25 miles as a minimum, out of town each way.

This is resulting in young people being accommodated at ASD residential schools away from their family, or not receiving any education at all. This is having a significant impact on children's social work and child protection.

Hartlepool needs a specialist ASD provider in town who can meet the needs of these young people, and others in the future. This will also free up Catcote Special School to meet the needs of less complex children and young people with a diagnosis of ASD.

Discussions have been held with the Chief Executive of NEAS and the Strategic Commissioner at the LA.

Number of Children and Young People Accommodated

The LA will need to find a building that children and young people can be educated in; this is currently being explored. The building would need to accommodate 20-30 children and young people. Hartlepool would take a percentage of these places and would sell the remaining to neighbouring authorities.



Estimated Costs

Depending on the provider, it is anticipated that the costs associated would be revenue-only costs from the HNB and would not require capital investment.

If this were not the case, the LA would need to explore Free School bids or prudential borrowing. A building of this type is likely to cost around £2-3 million.

Potential Savings

It is difficult to estimate a potential saving, however it is hoped the specialist provision would stop children needing to access 52 week residential settings which costs in region of £0.500m per young person per year or an expensive day placement package, which is in the region of £0.100m, if travel is factored in.

Currently there are significant wait lists for day package placements which can meet this type of need. We therefore have no provision offer for our young people and are having to use agency staff 2:1 within the community, at £35 per hour per staff member.

Catcote Academy Expansion

Proposal

Catcote Academy had a new build to the rear of the main building in 2021 to increase capacity and remove an older demountable which was no longer fit for purpose, where young people received their education. When the building was developed it was built across two storeys, so that if additional modular classrooms were required, we could continue to expand the 2nd floor across the whole of the building.

We are closely monitoring numbers of children coming from primary school who will require special school provision. We estimate that by 2027/2028 academic year, we may be at capacity and would require additional space for 2028/29 academic year. This will be linked with the development of new specialist provision being developed in the town. We will need to ensure we do not build until spaces are required, as otherwise we put ourselves at risk of other LA's requesting places and being taken to tribunal if we decline.



Number of Children and Young People Accommodated

There is the space to accommodate, if required, a further 4 classrooms on the 2nd floor. This would provide capacity for 32-40 learners.

Estimated Capital Cost

It is estimated that additional building works to Catcote would be in the region of £1 - £1.3m.

Potential Savings

Significant savings to prevent high-cost, out of area placements, which for children and young people with these levels of need, are in the region of £50 - £80k per placement, plus travel costs. Under the proposed model, additional place funding of £10k and average top up funding of £30k would cost between £1.280m and £1.600m.

Invest to save benefits of up to £1.6m per year based on 40 additional places (this will not include any element of transport costs). There is also a lack of available provision across the region and some children may need to access out of area specialist 52 week residential schools, which are between £350k – 500k per year.

Hartlepool College of Further Education (HCFE) Development of Regulated Alternative Provision

Proposal

To meet the needs of increasing numbers of young people who have been PEX, and those who are identified as being at risk of PEX, a purpose-built, Ofsted-regulated 14-16 Alternative Provision will be developed on the existing Hartlepool College Site. The new build will offer more vocational areas and allow a greater number of young people to access a successful 2-year pilot programme, where demand exceeds available capacity.

There also needs to be consideration given to the young people with an EHC and Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs who have successfully transitioned from high cost independent places to Hartlepool College of FE when they have completed year 11. These places cost in region of £60-75k per year plus transport costs. A small class of up to 6 – 8 young people could be



considered to complete their studies with the college in years 10/11 as opposed to accessing high cost out of area provision.

Hartlepool College have worked with an architect at their own cost to further develop this proposal.

Number of Children and Young People Accommodated

This would be dependent upon the size of the building, but it is estimated that between 45 – 65 young people at Key Stage 4 could be supported. This programme will bring much needed regulated AP in town and reduce the numbers of young people being transported out of town to unregulated education provision.

Estimated Capital Cost

We are waiting on initial costings from architects, but we anticipate that it will be in the region of £2m-£3m.

Potential Savings

The current annual spend for Alternative Provision for 2025/26 is estimated to be over £400k, it is anticipated this will rise if exclusions and those at risk of exclusion continue.

The cost to educate 6-8 young people in an out of area SEMH independent provision is £360k - £600k plus transport per year.

Secondary Schools are also interested in buying places from the college, which, where they have been able to accommodate, the college have facilitated this under the current pilot arrangement. These costs have not been included, as they are self-funded by the schools.

Springwell Primary School Development of Eating and Inside Play/Therapy Spaces

Proposal

Springwell Primary School is now at capacity and will continue to be for the foreseeable future, due to an increase in complexity of needs. Class sizes are now smaller. Springwell School has had 2 large extensions and classroom conversions in the last 7 years to increase capacity and meet need so children can remain in area



The school currently has one small dining hall, which is used for eating, indoor play and some physical therapies.

We are currently meeting the needs of children who would have previously gone to Springwell School, by increasing the number of primary ARP's for children with complex SEND needs and promoting inclusion within mainstream settings.

This is working well and is further supported by the Kingsley ARP build.

There is no available land left to build on that is not land which requires Sport England approval at Springwell School. This will make any future builds difficult, and objections are likely to be received.

In future years, we need to provide additional eating/indoor areas for children and young people, a piece of land has been identified that could, subject to planning, accommodate a small, double, extra high hall, and 2 additional classrooms.

Number of Children and Young People Accommodated

The additional classrooms would provide capacity for between 12 – 16 children and young people. The hall would provide more spaces for eating, play and physical therapies.

Estimated Capital Cost

It is anticipated costs would be in the region of £800 - £1.1m capital expenditure, due the relocation of some outdoor play spaces.

Potential Savings

Currently, children are having their education needs met in the newly commissioned ARP's. However, for complex placements, the additional 2 classrooms would prevent high-cost, out of area placements, which for children with these levels of need, are in the region of £50 - £80k per placement, plus travel costs. Under the proposed model, additional place funding of £10k, and average top up funding of £30k, would cost between £0.480m and £0.640m.

Invest to save estimated costs of £0.120m - £0.640m per year.



Summary of Capacity

If all the above capital projects were to go ahead the increased in places would be as follows:

- Primary 24 - 40 places
- Secondary 113 – 149 places

There is capacity within post-16 sector.

Strategic Priorities for the Capital Estate

The above schemes have been prioritised to meet future needs 2025 – 2028. The priority of these schemes will be reviewed annual to continue to meet need and in line with budgets available to the Local Authority.

- ASD/Complex behaviour provision developed with external partner – should require minimal capital investment. In place 2026/27 academic year.
- Catcote Expansion on existing 2 storey building – in place for 2027/2028 or 2028/29 academic year, additional mapping exercise to track the children and young people coming through needs to take place.
- Hartlepool College of Further Education new build to offer Ofsted regulated Alternative Provision to LA and Schools to prevent exclusions and a dedicated class for young people with an EHC and SEMH needs to access their education in Hartlepool.
- Springwell School expansion to create 2 additional classrooms and additional dining/indoor play and therapy space.



Glossary of Terms

AP	Alternative Provision
ARP	Additionally Resourced Provision
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
EHCP	Educational Health and Care Plan
EBSA	Emotional School Based Avoidance
HNB	High Needs Block
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
SALT	Speech Language and Communication Therapy
SEMH	Social Emotional Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs

