

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

AGENDA



Tuesday 21 June 2022

at 4.00 pm

**in Committee Room B,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

Those wishing to attend the meeting should phone (01429) 523568 or (01429) 523019 by midday on Monday 20 June 2022 and name and address details will be taken.

You should not attend the meeting if you are displaying any COVID-19 symptoms (such as a high temperature, new and persistent cough, or a loss of/change in sense of taste or smell), even if these symptoms are mild. If you, or anyone you live with, have one or more of these symptoms you should follow the [NHS guidance on testing](#).

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Boddy, Groves, Harrison, Leedham, Lindridge, Little and Moore.

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

School Heads Representatives: Mark Tilling (Secondary), David Turner (Primary), Zoe Westley (Special).

Six Young Peoples Representatives

Observer: Councillor Buchan, Chair of Adult and Community Based Services Committee

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**
3. **MINUTES**

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on date 15 March 2021 (*previously circulated and published*).

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. PRESENTATION

- 4.1 The Role of the Children's Services Committee – *Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*

5. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

None

6. KEY DECISIONS

- 6.1 High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) 2022-2024 (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

7. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 7.1 Amendment to Golden Flatts / Lynnfield Primary School (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 8.1 Mockingbird Family Model (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 19 July 2022 at 4.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

15 March 2022

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Jim Lindridge (In the Chair)

Councillors: Tom Cassidy, Christopher Groves, Brenda Harrison and Shane Moore

Also Present: Councillor Sue Little

Co-opted Members:

David Turner, Primary Head Representative

Jo Heaton, C of E Diocese Representative

Officers:

Sally Robinson, Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services

Amanda Whitehead, Assistant Director, Education

Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning Services

Sandra Shears, Head of Finance (Corporate and Schools)

Julie Reed, Pupil Place Planning, Admissions & Capital Manager

Julian Heward, Senior Communications and Marketing Officer

Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

57. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Moss Boddy, Tim Fleming, Joanne Wilson, RC Diocesan Representative, Zoe Westley, Special School Head Representative and Mark Tilling, Secondary Head Representative.

58. Declarations of Interest

None.

59. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022

Received.

60. Dedicated Schools Grant – Early Years Block 2022/23

(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)

Type of decision

Key tests (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Reference CJCS 118/21

Purpose of report

To present the indicative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding allocation in relation to the Early Years Funding for 2022/23 and propose the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) that sets hourly rates for providers for 2022/23.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Committee was referred to the 2022/23 funding allocation for the Early Years Block, shown in a table included in the report which had been announced in December 2021. Following consultation with providers and the Schools' Forum in relation to three to four year old provision, an increase of 17p per hour to the existing formula was proposed with 16p of the increase being applied to the base rate and the remaining 1p to centrally retained budgets, details of which were set out in the report.

In relation to the proposed hourly rate structure 2022/23 for two year old provision and the Government's announcement that hourly rate funding increases be passed to providers, it was proposed that the previous 16p increase be retained and the new hourly rate funding increase for 202/23 of 21p be passed directly to providers.

In response to queries raised arising from the report, clarification was provided in relation to take-up arrangements and participation rates.

The following decision was agreed with no dissent.

Decision

- (i) The contents of this report and the outcomes from the consultation with providers and Schools' Forum were noted.
- (ii) The recommendation of the Schools' Forum to centrally retain funding of 5% was noted.
- (iii) That the hourly rate funding formula for three to four year old provision for 2022/23, as show in the table at paragraph 5.3, passing the increase of 16p onto providers through the hourly rate formula be approved.

- (iv) That the hourly rate funding formula for two year old provision for 2022/23, as outlined at paragraph 7.2, passing the increase of 21p onto providers through the hourly rate be approved.

61. 2022/23 Schools' Capital Works Programme (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Tests (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Ref CJCS 123/21.

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the 2022/23 Schools' Capital Works Programme, as detailed in confidential **APPENDIX A**, in order to progress the design and detailed costing exercise in time for the majority of projects to be carried out during the summer holiday period. **This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided background information in relation to capital funding allocations. At the time of writing the report, capital funding allocations for 2022/23 had not been communicated to the Local Authority. Approval was sought for the schemes proposed in confidential Appendix A. **This item (Appendix A) contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006), namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Para 3).**

The Committee was referred to Table 1 which outlined the total funding available of £877,400 for works and Table 2 which detailed the total cost of schemes and contingency proposed of £877,000 of which Members' approval was sought.

The Committee raised a number of queries arising from the report. Clarification was provided in relation to the funding allocation process and it was noted that the proposed works in schools converting to academy status would proceed, details of which were provided.

The following decision was agreed with no dissent.

Decision

- (i) The Committee approved the schedule of 2022/23 capital works programme as summarised in confidential APPENDIX A, subject to the LA agreeing contributions from schools towards individual schemes in line with the shared funding principles established by the Schools Forum. **These items contain exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Para 3.**
- (ii) That the Director of Children's & Joint Commissioning Services, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee, be given dispensation and discretion to authorise works where an emergency (eg risk of school closure) or a significant health and safety risk is exposed;
- (iii) That the Director of Children's & Joint Commissioning Services, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee, be given dispensation and discretion to add or remove a project(s) as a result of an increase or decrease in the 2022/23 SCA funding allocation;

62. To Nominate A Local Authority Representative to Serve on the Governing Body of Fens Primary School *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To consider a nomination for the role of Local Authority Governor position at Fens Primary School.

Issue(s) for consideration

A schedule was submitted with the report setting out details of a vacancy that existed at Fens Primary School together with details of the application received. One application had been received for the position, as set out in a confidential appendix to the report. **This item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government), (Access to Information), (Variations Order 2006) namely, information relating to any individual (Para 1).** Discussions had taken place between the applicant, Chair of Governors and Head Teacher regarding the skills the applicant could

contribute to the Governing Body. The application was in relation to a position that was currently vacant.

The following decision was agreed with no dissent.

Decision

The Committee approved the local authority nomination of the applicant as set out in confidential Appendix A in respect of Fens Primary School.

63. Holiday Activities and Food Programme *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To provide the Children's Services Committee with a report on the delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme during the summer and Christmas school holidays during 2021 and outline proposals for future delivery of the programme.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services presented the report which provided background information in relation to the expansion of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme across England in 2021 as previously reported to Committee in July 2021. The delivery of the HAF programme in Hartlepool was overseen by a Steering Group. The summer school holidays HAF programme was delivered by 34 different providers across Hartlepool and the Christmas programme by 28 providers, details of which were provided. Feedback on the 2021 HAF programme from providers, children and families was very positive.

Given the Government's announcement of further investment, Hartlepool had been awarded a maximum allocation of £595,000 to deliver the programme in 2022/23 and work had commenced on the delivery of the programme. In accordance with the guidance that all local authorities appoint a HAF co-ordinator, recruitment arrangements in Hartlepool were underway.

In the discussion that followed, the Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services responded to issues raised arising from the report. Members spoke in support of the initiative, commenting on the positive feedback and the benefits as a result. The Committee were also pleased to note the high level of engagement and take-up. Emphasis was placed upon the importance of widely publicising the success of the scheme to

encourage wider participation. It was suggested that publication include Hartbeat, local press and television.

The Committee took the opportunity to thank everyone who had contributed to the success of the programme.

Decision

- (i) The Committee noted the detail of the HAF delivery programme for 2021 and future delivery arrangements for 2022/23 and beyond.
- (ii) That the comments of Members, as detailed above, be noted and actioned as appropriate.

64. Ofsted Focused Visit – Care Leavers *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To report the outcome of the Ofsted focused visit to Hartlepool Children's Services, which took place in January 2022.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Committee was advised that a focused visit in relation to the support provided to care leavers in Hartlepool had taken place on 18 and 19 January. Members were referred to a letter from Ofsted, appended to the report, which outlined the findings. The report reflected a strong performing service that supported care leavers well, had continued to deliver a high quality service to care leavers and the number of care leavers engaged in education, employment and training was improving, despite the impact of the pandemic. Whilst the report identified one area for improvement in terms of the voice and influence of care leavers in developing and owning their individual pathway plan, work had commenced in this regard, details of which were provided.

Following presentation of the report, the Chair together with Elected Members welcomed the report and spoke in support of the service acknowledging the care, commitment and skill of the staff teams and

dedication of Foster Carers who had contributed to the positive inspection findings.

Decision

The Committee noted the outcome of the Ofsted focused visit on services to care leavers delivered by Hartlepool Children's Services.

65. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

66. Any Other Business – Dedicated Schools Grant - Disapplication Request

Members were referred to a decision taken by this Committee in November to submit a disapplication request to the Secretary of State for Education regarding funding for statutory duties in relation to maintained schools. The Secretary of State had confirmed, on 20 January 2022, that the disapplication request was successful. This was the sixth successive year that the Council's request had been successful, securing just under £270k for the Council.

67. Any Other Business – National Social Work Day

Given that today was National Social Work Day, the Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services and Elected Members took the opportunity to express their thanks and acknowledge the work of the Council's Social Work teams in both Children's and Adult Services.

68. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was reported that the next meeting would be confirmed following the May elections.

The meeting concluded at 4.50 pm

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 22 MARCH 2022

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

21st June 2022



Report of: Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services

Subject: HIGH NEEDS PROVISION CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS (HNPCA) 2022-2024

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Key decision – General exception

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 For members to approve the SEND capital allocations for 2022 -2024 as set out in section 4.1

2.2 For members to approve officers to explore options for the development of further provision and obtain costs for these works.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 HNCPA (High Needs Capital Provision Allocation) is paid to Local Authorities to support the provision of places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

3.2 The DfE (Department for Education) notified the council at the end of March of the allocations for 2022/23 and 2023/2024.

2022/23	2023/2024	Total
£962,737	£732,295	£1,695,032

This funding is intended to either support an increase in SEND provision or to improve the quality of current SEND provision.

3.3 Members previously approved (March 2021) the following allocation of SEND capital funding (2021/22):

£200,000	Development of a specialist ASD sixth form
£600,000	Build at Springwell School to ensure that children with Profound Multiple Learning Disabilities can access appropriate provision
£200,958	Catcote new build to increase places (total cost of the build was funded through prudential borrowing, Basic need funding and SEND capital)

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed to allocate the following to existing programmes of work (as set out above) due to an increase in costs over the last year. The increase in costs mirror a national picture in relation to rising costs.

ASD Sixth Form to be developed at former Throston Library site	£106, 937	The quote for the development of the 6 th form was undertaken before supply costs had significantly increased. The council's building team have recently reviewed the quote and costs have been quoted as £306,937. This is an increase of £106,937 from an original quote. It is important that this work is implemented as this allows for more space to be used for 11-16 year old pupils at the Catcote main site on Catcote Road.
Catcote Academy new places build	£46,574.89	Additional costs incurred after Sport England objection therefore scheme needing to be amended.
Springwell build	£55,000	Additional costs incurred due to fire compartmentalise survey findings undertaken within the build (these are estimated costs as not received formal quote yet)
Total	£208,511.89	

- 4.2 There continues to be significant pressure on SEND provision and the current provision in Hartlepool is struggling to meet the needs of these children due to a lack of additional places. This is further compounded by being a small authority and only having two special schools. We are currently working with schools to review our inclusion approach and it is anticipated that we can increase the number of SEND children able to attend mainstream however this will take time to implement. We also acknowledge that there will always be children whose needs are best met in specialist provision.

- 4.3 Ongoing work with schools is taking place to track the numbers and needs of children with SEND to ensure that provision is in place to meet these needs.
- 4.4 It is proposed that the remaining funding £1,486,520.11 supports the development of enhancing mainstream provision to meet SEND needs. The current gaps in provision include:
- Moderate Learning Difficulties for secondary aged children
 - ASD for primary age children

We are currently working with schools to identify options to deliver this enhanced provision. It is expected that this additional provision will need additional accommodation however at this point there are no costs. These costs will be brought to committee when identified.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is a significant risk that children and young people with SEND will have to access education outside of Hartlepool. There is a need to continually review SEND provision in Hartlepool to mitigate this risk.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The HNCPA 2022 -24 have been received from the Department of Education and need to be spent on increasing and improving SEND provision for children and young people. The details of the schemes can be found in section 4.1. A contingency allowance will be held to ensure that there is no overspend on the allocations received.

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The SEND Code of Practice requires local authorities to ensure that provision is available to meet children's needs.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Discussions in regard to SEND provision is regularly discussed in:
- Parent Carer Forum
 - Schools Forum
 - Inclusion review which has included all partners and parents
 - Requests for Expressions of Interest for enhanced SEND provision in schools has been circulated to all headteachers and CEOs of academy trusts

9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)

- 9.1 All children with SEND are supported to access provision that meets their needs therefore there are no specific child and poverty implications within this report.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)

- 10.1 All children with SEND are supported to access provision that meets their needs therefore there are no specific equality and diversity implications within this report.

11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 There are no staff considerations.

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 Information on the asset management implications are contained with the main body of this report.

13. ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.1 Environment, sustainability and climate change considerations are reviewed within each scheme of work and progressed as required.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 For members to approve the allocation of High Needs Capital provision allocations as set out in section 4.1
- 14.2 For members to approve officers to explore options for the development of further provision and obtain costs for these works. To present to committee at a later date.

15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 Our vision is for children and young people to attend schools that meet their needs in Hartlepool. In order to achieve this vision we need to provide

appropriate high quality provision. The proposals within this report will allow us to do this.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning,
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Sign Off:-

Director of Resources and Development ☒

Chief Solicitor ☒

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

21 June 2022



Report of: Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services

Subject: AMENDMENT TO GOLDEN FLATTS / LYNNFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non-key decision.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To seek approval of the Children's Services Committee to amendments to the Instrument of Government of the Federation of Golden Flatts and Lynnfield Primary Schools in accordance with the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended by the School Governance (Constitution and Federation) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The school governance regulations referred to above establish the overall framework for the governance of maintained schools. In 2014 and 2015 all maintained schools in Hartlepool were re-constituted in line with changes introduced by these regulations.

3.2 Each school's constitution is set out in an Instrument of Government which establishes the size of the governing body and identifies the number of governor's in each governor category. The term of office for each category of governor is determined by the governing body for a period between one and four years, although the majority of governors are appointed for a period of four years. Governing bodies are encouraged from time to time to review their constitution to ensure that it is still fit for purpose and supports the effective governance of the school.

- 3.3 In October 2018, following a formal process that was approved by the Children's Services Committee, the two schools, Golden Primary School and Lynnfield Primary School took the decision to come together as a federation with a shared leadership structure and a single governing body.
- 3.4 At that time it was agreed on a governing body of 17 comprising 10 Co-opted Governors, 4 Parent Governors, the Executive Headteacher, 1 Staff Governor and 1 Local Authority Governor (the latter two being the maximum allowable in these categories under the governance regulations). Whilst the 2014 (Amendment) Regulations encouraged governing bodies to reduce in size, the new Federation decided on a total 17 in order to accommodate all governors from both schools who wanted to remain involved in taking the Federation forward. The intention was to review the situation after a period of consolidation.
- 3.5 After a period of three and a half years the Federation is now well established and the schools have developed effective collaborative working practices across a range of disciplines. The governing body has seen a number of changes since its formation and although it has retained a strong core of experienced governors it is currently carrying a number of vacancies. It has been difficult in particular to recruit new parent governors despite concerted efforts to do so through the normal nomination process and also by the schools directly targeting parents who they think may be interested. Several Co-opted Governors have also recently stepped down and, following a review of current governor skill sets to ensure that the governing body still retains appropriate levels of expertise, it was decided to reconstitute with a more streamlined governing body.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed to reduce the governing body from the current 17 to 13 with the removal of two Parent Governor positions and two Co-opted Governor positions. This will bring the Federation closer in line with the numbers on governing bodies of most of the remaining maintained schools. Two Parent Governor places would be retained which meets the minimum requirements of the governance regulations. A copy of the revised Instrument of Government is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no specific risks identified. The governing body has assessed its current skills sets and believes that it is able to maintain the appropriate level of expertise required to support the schools.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial considerations.

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The proposed re-constitution meets the requirements set out in the governance regulations in relation to minimum and maximum numbers within each governor category. The proposed reduction in size is in line with DfE guidance towards creating more streamlined and dynamic governing bodies.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The proposal has been agreed by the Federation's governing body.

9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY

- 9.1 None

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 None

11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 None

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 None

13. ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.1 None

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 To approve the revised Instrument of Government for the Federation of Golden Flatts and Lynnfield Primary Schools.

15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 In the interest of improving the effectiveness of the governing body.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None

17. CONTACT OFFICER

17.1 Ann Turner
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Children's and Joint Commissioning Services
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Sign Off:-

Director of Resources and Development ☒

Chief Solicitor ☒

INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT

FEDERATED GOVERNING BODY OF GOLDEN FLATTS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND LYNNFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL



1. The name of the Federation is: Golden Flatts Primary School and Lynnfield Primary School
2. The names and categories of schools in the Federation are:
 - Golden Flatts Community Primary School
 - Lynnfield Community Primary School
3. The name of the governing body is "The governing body of Golden Flatts and Lynnfield Primary Schools"
4. The governing body shall consist of:
 - a. 2 parent governors (1 from each school)
 - b. 1 LA governor
 - c. 1 Staff governor
 - d. 1 Executive Headteacher
 - e. 8 Co-opted governors (including the Head of School from Golden Flatts Primary School and the Deputy Headteacher from Lynnfield Primary School)
5. Total number of governors 13
6. The term of office of all categories of governor is FOUR years (with the exception of the Executive Headteacher, Head of School, Golden Flatts and the Deputy Headteacher, Lynnfield Primary School)
7. This instrument of government comes into effect on 1st September 2022
8. This instrument was made by order of Hartlepool Local Authority on ...

A copy of the instrument must be supplied to every member of the governing body.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

21st June 2022



Report of: Director, Children's and Joint Commissioning Services

Subject: MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY MODEL

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 For information only

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Children's Services Committee with an outline of the main principles and objectives of the Mockingbird Family Model and an update on the implementation of Hartlepool's pilot constellation. It will also set out details of the funding already received from the Department for Education and the financial implications of ongoing funding for the model and its potential expansion.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Mockingbird is a global award winning and pioneering programme led by The Fostering Network in the UK which aims to deliver sustainable foster care. It is an evidence-based model structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides.

3.2 Mockingbird is delivered by The Fostering Network in partnership with 62 fostering services across the UK. The programme nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community.

3.3 The key innovation with Mockingbird is the appointment of a Hub Home Carer who supports six to nine satellite families as part of a network known as a constellation. The Hub Home Carer will be an experienced foster carer but their role will be very different to that of a typical mainstream carer. They will:

- Have two empty beds for planned and emergency sleepovers for children and young people living in the constellation;

- Provide 24 /7 support and mentoring to satellite families;
- Plan and host regular social events for all the families in the constellation;
- Host and support contact with siblings and birth families;
- Attend and coordinate training for carers in the constellation.

3.4 Mockingbird has been evaluated several times since it first arrived in the UK in 2015. The most recent evaluation conducted in 2020 by the Rees Centre at Oxford University identified the impact of Mockingbird as follows:

- The Mockingbird programme brought an increased sense of normality to children in care by creating an 'extended family', reducing bureaucracy, and providing more opportunities for them to form friendships through social activities.
- Most children and young people taking part in Mockingbird described having adults around them who they could trust.
- While there was no statistically significant improvement in placement stability there was improved continuity of care as children would either have sleepovers or move into the care of a foster carer they already knew in the event of a placement breakdown.
- Improved foster carer retention, peer support and wellbeing with fewer de-registrations and resignations among those supported within Mockingbird.
- Children and young people who had siblings in a Mockingbird constellation were much happier with the frequency and quality of family time they were able to spend with them.
- Increased transition of foster placements from short-term to long-term because of the additional support available through Mockingbird.
- Households participating in Mockingbird were less likely to have an unavailable placement than households who did not participate. They were also more likely to agree to care for larger sibling groups or take on the care of complex children and young people.
- Mockingbird was seen to have an added benefit on key processes and concerns in fostering including safeguarding and assistance with sibling assessments and permanency plans through having additional input from the hub home carer and sometimes the liaison worker.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 Having received pump prime funding from the Department for Education and support from the Fostering Network, Hartlepool Borough Council has committed to implementing a pilot constellation, which it is hoped will be up and running by December of 2022 at the latest.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The risk of Hartlepool Borough Council not progressing with the implementation of the Mockingbird Model would impact upon the Council's

ability to deliver on its sufficiency duty for children in our care. The model is widely recognised as delivering an effective, sustainable fostering offer for children and young people and reflects the Council's commitment to delivering continuous improvement in services to children in our care.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 In 2021 Children's and Joint Commissioning Services successfully applied to the Department for Education for pump prime funding of £53k towards the initial costs of implementing the Mockingbird programme in Hartlepool. This will fund the dedicated capacity of the Supervising Social Worker for 12 months.
- 6.2 The cost of the Home Hub Carer will be met by the budget allocated to pay foster carer allowances.

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 During the consultation process questions have been raised by colleagues from Human Resources, Legal and Payroll about the nature of the Hub Home Carer role and whether or not their status would effectively be one of employee rather than volunteer, as is usually the case with foster carers. This will be resolved as the work to develop the policy, procedures and processes for Mockingbird are completed.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Extensive consultation events and briefings have already taken place with our foster carers and connected carers and there is considerable interest among them in being part of a Mockingbird constellation either now or in the future.
- 8.2 Stakeholder analysis has been completed and engagement work undertaken with the following groups and agencies:
- Children's social care teams;
 - Fostering Panel;
 - Children's Commissioning
 - Children in Our Care and Care Leavers Council;
 - Departmental Managers Meetings;
 - Virtual School;
 - Finance Team, HR and Legal Services.
- 8.3 Engagement with carers, children and young people and relevant stakeholders will continue as the project develops.

- 8.4 In accordance with the Fostering Network's procedures, an Implementation Working Group has already been set up which will oversee all aspects of the Mockingbird programme in Hartlepool. It includes the Mockingbird Lead, the Head of Service for Children in Our Care and Care Leavers, the Fostering Manager, Safeguarding Manager, Independent Reviewing Officer and Head of the Virtual School.

9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)

- 9.1 The Mockingbird Model will support the health and wellbeing of children in our care. Good quality care and good transitions to adulthood are key to reducing likelihood of future poverty.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)

- 10.1 One of Mockingbird's core aims is to create constellations made up of foster carers and children and young people from a variety of backgrounds who are in need of differing levels of support. There is considerable evidence to suggest that Mockingbird constellations can adapt in order to promote cultural relevancy and meet the specific identity needs of children and young people in innovative and flexible ways. This would include providing a range of social activities which reflect the diversity of satellite families for example, or looking for opportunities to bring together satellite families within a constellation in order to meet children's cultural needs.

11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 There are no additional staff considerations arising from this report.

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 There are no asset management considerations arising from this report.

13. ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.1 Attempts will be made to form constellations of carers who are living within walking distance of one another which will reduce the need for foster carers to make journeys by car to facilitate sleepovers.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and to give consideration to the potential benefits of Mockingbird, its long-term sustainability and scope for expansion in order to improve the experience of children in our care and foster carers as part of our fostering offer.

15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 The Fostering Service is required to fulfill its statutory responsibilities to children looked after by the local authority and provide regular reports to the Children Services Committee to enable the Committee to satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.
- 15.2 Children's Services Committee has an important role in scrutinising the activities of the Fostering Service to ensure that performance in this area is robust. It is important that the Committee has an understanding of developments in fostering and of the investment and commitment required in realising the potential benefits of national initiatives like Mockingbird.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Ott, E., McGrath-Lone, L, Pinto, V., Sanders-Ellis, D. and Trivdei, H. (2020) *Mockingbird programme Evaluation Report*. London: The Department for Education.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/933119/Fostering_Network_Mockingbird.pdf

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Sign Off:-

Director of Resources and Development ☒

Chief Solicitor ☒