



CABINET

Subject Heading:

Approval to proceed with Havering's Healthy Child Programme procurement and to delegate authority for deciding the procurement route

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Gillian Ford, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care Services

ELT Lead:

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Policy context:

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide a range of public health services for children and young people aged 0-19 years.

The Healthy Child Programme 0-19 contract supports Havering Council to meet the Resources Theme priority of "enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council" in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027.

Financial summary:

The Healthy Child Programme 0-19 contract is fully funded through the ring-fenced Public Health Grant. The lifetime value of the current contract is approximately £23.5 million. For the future contract (starting on 1st April 2027), there is an intention to increase investment, with an estimated lifetime value of approximately £29 million over the 7-year contract term.

Is this a Key Decision?

Yes:

(a) Expenditure or saving (including anticipated income) of £500,000 or more

(c) Significant effect on two or more Wards

When should this matter be reviewed?

11th March 2026

Reviewing OSC:

Resources

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council **X**

SUMMARY

Havering Council has a statutory duty to commission public health services for children and young people aged 0–19 years old. The 0–5 element of the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) is led by the health visiting service through the five mandated health assessment visits. The 5–19 element is led by the school nursing service, which includes delivery of the mandated National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP).

The current HCP contract is due to end on 31st March 2027, and the Council must commence procurement for a new contract. This paper seeks Cabinet's permission to begin this procurement and to delegate authority for deciding the final procurement route to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing and the Strategic Director of Resources, with oversight from the Procurement Gateway Review Group.

The new 7-year contract is expected to include additional investment, with an estimated lifetime contract value of £29 million, reflecting increased population demands particularly amongst the school-aged cohorts.

A Key Executive Decision paper will be presented to Cabinet to make the decision about the contract award.

The intended outcome of this paper is to ensure a compliant, timely procurement that secures a sustainable and high-quality HCP services for Havering's children, young people and families, while enabling the selection of the most appropriate procurement route based on thorough assessments and best value.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is asked to give permission for the following decisions to:

1. Proceed with the procurement of the Havering Healthy Child Programme.
2. Delegate authority on the decision regarding contract procurement route to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing, Strategic Director of Resources and with oversight from Procurement Gateway Review Group.

REPORT DETAIL

Background to Healthy Child Programme

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 set's out local authorities' statutory responsibility for commissioning public health services for children and young people aged 0-19 years¹.

The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) aims to bring together health, education and other main partners to deliver an effective programme for prevention and support through health visiting (0-5 years) and school nursing (5-19 years) services. The universal and targeted public health support provided by these services are crucial for improving the health and wellbeing of all children and young people.

Current and Future Contract – Provider and Financial Overview

As outlined in Havering's 'Happy Healthy Lives' Integrated Starting Well Plan, the Council wants to ensure that all children and young people are "Well", with access to the support available through the HCP.

North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) holds the current HCP contract for the provision of health visiting and school nursing services in Havering. The current contract is due to end on the 31st March 2027, other key information is summarised in Table 1.

The new contract will commence on the 1st April 2027, with an estimated value of £29 million over the 7-year contract term. This is expected to include additional investment to reflect increasing numbers and needs of school-aged children. This investment is critical, given the significant changes in the size and needs of the 0–

¹ [Healthy child programme: health visitor and school nurse commissioning - GOV.UK](#)

19 population in recent years and the expectation is that service pressures will remain throughout the future contract term².

The school nursing service plays a significant role in early intervention, promoting physical and emotional wellbeing, the early identification of health needs and helping children and young people navigate major transitions such as starting school and advancing into adulthood. Investing in the school nursing service is essential to strengthen the public health offer and ensure every child and young person receives the support they need to thrive.

Table 1: Havering's Healthy Child Programme overview – current contract

	Havering Healthy Child Programme
Contract Holder	NELFT
Contract Length	5 years
Optional Extension	2 years (approved by Cabinet December 2024)
Start Date	1 st April 2020
End Date	31 st March 2027 (including extension)
Current annual contract value	£3,642,620 Previous service uplifts agreed in 2020/21 and 2024/25 (total value - £180,620 ³)
Lifetime contact value	Approximately £23,500,000

Procuring the Future Contract - Provider Selection Regime

The Provider Selection Regime (PSR) came into force on 1st January 2024. The PSR is a set of rules for procuring health care services in England by organisations termed relevant authorities including local authorities⁴.

To enable a timely decision on the most appropriate route to market and subsequent contract award using the PSR, the following activities will be completed within the indicative timeline below:

- **February/March 2026** – Develop the Procurement Strategy.
- **March/April 2026** – Submit the Procurement Strategy to the Procurement Gateway Review Group for approval.
- **May 2026** – Undertake pre- procurement governance, including the key decision on the route to market (to be made by the Director of Public Health).
- **June 2026** – Commence the procurement process ahead of contract award.

² [Havering-JSNA-Demography-Chapter-2026-Executive-Summary.pdf](#)

³ <https://democracy.havering.gov.uk/documents/s78099/63.%20FINAL%20ONKD%20Report%20-%20Healthy%20Child%20Programme%20-%20BPs%20reviewed%20MA%20SIGNED%20V2.1.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/the-provider-selection-regime-statutory-guidance/>

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

Proceed with the procurement of the Havering Healthy Child Programme.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 set's out local authorities' statutory responsibility for commissioning public health services for children and young people aged 0-19 years. Therefore, we must proceed with procuring the Healthy Child Programme, to ensure that new contractual arrangements are in place in good time prior to the end of the current contract, 31st March 2027.

Advice will be sought via the Procurement Gateway Review Group to ensure that the final choice of procurement route is appropriate and in line with PSR requirements.

Delegate authority on the decision regarding contract procurement route to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing and with oversight from Procurement Gateway Review Group.

A decision needs to be made about the route for procurement and the contract award. This decision must be made promptly to allow sufficient time to complete the necessary processes in line with the PSR requirements.

Due to the upcoming local elections, there is likely to be a delay in papers being brought before Cabinet in which the determined procurement route can be presented for approval. To maintain an achievable timeline for re-procurement, early Cabinet approval for the procurement coupled with delegation of authority of the decision on the procurement route will enable officers to undertake the required governance and actions as soon as the preferred route is identified.

Other options considered:

Present recommended procurement route during later Cabinet meeting

Any delay in presenting the decision to Cabinet may adversely affect the procurement timeline.

As there are no further extension options within the existing contract, it is essential that the new contract is awarded and mobilised before 1st April 2027 to ensure compliance with the statutory responsibility for the provision of the Healthy Child Programme.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is asked to give permission to proceed with the procurement of the Havering Health Child Programme and to delegate authority for the decision regarding the contract procurement route to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing, Strategic Director of Resources and with oversight from Procurement Gateway Review Group.

It is anticipated that this will be a 7-year contract (5+2 years), which is due to commence 1st April 2027 with an estimated value of approximately £29 million over the full contract term. This is an anticipated increase of £5.5m on the existing contract cost of £23.5m and reflects planned investment in the school nursing service to enhance support for the children and young people in the borough. This investment has been deemed necessary due to the significant changes in the size and needs of the 0–19 population in recent years. The exact cost of the new contract won't be known until the procurement process has completed. There will be an opportunity for the final contract cost to be considered as part of the governance processes undertaken in order to award the contract.

The funding for this contract will be from the ringfenced Public Health grant which currently stands at £13.3m per annum of which current commitment to the HCP contract is £3.642m. If the new annual contract cost accounts for a greater proportion of the Council's Public Health Grant than is currently the case, there will be a need to review non-mandatory spend currently funded by the grant.

Legal implications and risks:

The Council has the power to procure the contract under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which allows the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

The Council also has a general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual can do, subject to any statutory constraints on the Council's powers. None of the constraints on the Council's s.1 power are engaged by this decision.

The Council is a best value authority and has a duty to secure continuous improvement. The recommendations in this report are in accordance with this duty. Or the reasons set out above the Council may agree to procure the contract with the recommended delegation as to procurement route.

Human Resources implications and risks:

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

The Council seeks to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all in all situations. There are no concerning equalities and social inclusion implications and risks associated with this decision.

An EqHIA (Equality and Health Impact Assessment) is usually carried out and on this occasion, this is not required. An EqHIA was conducted when the current Healthy Child Programme contract was awarded. This will be reviewed and updated ahead of the decision to award the new contract.

Health and Wellbeing implications and Risks

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 the Council is responsible for improving and protecting the health and wellbeing of local residents. Havering Council is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all residents.

There are no health and wellbeing implications directly related to this decision. However, the Healthy Child Programme contract will positively impact the health and wellbeing of families in Havering.

The health visiting service is the only universal offer for pre-school children and provides, as a minimum, five developmental contacts between pregnancy and 2½

years of age to assess the health and wellbeing of both mother and child. The school nursing service supports the health and wellbeing of school-aged children.

Both services include elements that the Local Authority is mandated to deliver. In addition, they play a vital role in promoting health and wellbeing, preventing ill health, enabling early identification of emerging needs, and ensuring timely and appropriate support and intervention.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Supplier will minimise the impact on the environment by:

- a) Eliminating the need for one use plastics
- b) Ensuring that all waste is correctly recycled
- c) Utilising public transport when this fits with Infection Protection Control measures
- d) Employing locally wherever possible to reduce the environmental impact of travelling to work
- e) Employing digital solutions to reduce the need for manual recording and disposable materials

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.