



Officer Decision Record – Key Decision

Key decisions taken by an officer are subject to the 5 day call in period from circulation to Members, and therefore the decision will be released for implementation following the call-in period and no call in being received

1. Cabinet date and copy resolution this key decision relates to

Start for Life Programme previously received Cabinet approval on 16th November 2022.

This decision relates to the continuation and extension of the programme into the Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies period (April 2026 to March 2029), which is covered by the existing Cabinet resolution as follows

1. That the sign up for the programme and the commitment to deliver the minimum offer required, as per the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care guidance, be endorsed.
2. That the Director for Children's Services be authorised to accept the funding allocation as per the offer and criteria for delivery.
3. That the Director of Children's Services be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, the responsibility for delivery and implementation of the programme.
4. That the Assistant Director for Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) be authorised to execute all legal documentation arising.

2. Subject and details of the matter (to include reasons for the decision)

To approve the continuation of delivery arrangements for the Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies programme in North East Lincolnshire for the period April 2026

to March 2029, in line with national Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) guidance.

From April 2026, all local authorities will receive Best Start Family Hubs funding, with previously funded authorities, including North East Lincolnshire, also receiving Healthy Babies funding.

The confirmed Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies grant funding for North East Lincolnshire totals £1,588,700 in 2026/27, £1,668,200 in 2027/28 and £1,692,700 in 2028/29, as set out in the final funding allocation issued by the Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care.

This funding is broadly consistent with previous programme allocations and reflects a continuation and expansion of the existing Family Hubs and Start for Life programme, with additional funding incorporated for children with additional needs and Healthy Babies priorities such as perinatal mental health, parent-infant relationships and infant feeding.

The programme will continue to be delivered within the available grant envelope. Delivery has been reviewed across all strands to ensure the programme remains sustainable within the confirmed funding.

This includes a review of the Parent-Infant Relationship offer, where delivery has been refined to ensure it remains financially sustainable while continuing to meet national expectations and local need. The revised approach has been agreed with both the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Public Health, ensuring continued system leadership and oversight across health and early help partners.

In addition to the main programme funding, the local authority will also receive a small, separate allocation to support EYFS profile assessment activity (£7,400 in 2026/27 and 2027/28, and £6,200 in 2028/29). This funding supports the local authority role in working with early years settings to ensure consistent and accurate EYFS assessments, including moderation and quality assurance activity.

This decision enables the council to continue delivering an established, well-performing programme that provides integrated early help, prevention and support for families from pregnancy through early childhood.

The programme has been successfully delivered since 2022, with strong outcomes, positive feedback from families and partners, and assurance from DfE. Continuation ensures there is no disruption to services, commissioned provision or partnership delivery.

3. Decision being taken

That the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, approves the Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies programme for the period April 2026 to March 2029, including:

- Ongoing delivery through Family Hub buildings and the wider Family Hub network
- Continued partnership working with health, early years, education, VCSE and commissioned providers
- Maintenance of existing commissioning and delivery arrangements where appropriate
- Use of national grant funding in line with grant conditions and local governance requirements

4. Is it an Urgent Decision? If yes, specify the reasons for urgency. **Urgent decisions will require sign off by the relevant scrutiny chair(s) as not subject to call in.**

No – this is not an urgent decision.

5. Anticipated outcome(s)/benefits

- Continuity of high-quality, accessible support for families, babies and young children.
- Continued focus on prevention and early help, reducing escalation to statutory services over time.
- Ongoing delivery of parenting support, perinatal mental health, infant feeding and home learning environment offers.
- Sustained multi-agency working through Family Hubs and the extended network of community venues.

- Continued alignment with national expectations and local strategies.
- Avoidance of service disruption or loss of experienced staff and partners.

6. Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer when making the decision (this should be similar to original cabinet decision)

Do nothing - This would result in loss of access to national Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies funding and would disrupt established services, partnerships and provision for families. This option would undermine progress made since 2022 and is not considered viable.

7. Background documents considered (web links to be included and copies of documents provided for publishing)

Business Case – Service Statement: *Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies* (April 2026)

DfE / DHSC non-statutory guidance: *Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies: guidance for local authorities* (April 2026 to March 2029)

Previous Cabinet reports and decisions relating to Start for Life and Family Hubs

8. Does the taking of the decision include consideration of Exempt information? If yes, specify the relevant paragraph of Schedule 12A and the reasons

No

9. Details of any conflict of interest declared by any Cabinet Member who was consulted by the officer which relates to the decision (in respect of any declared conflict of interest, please provide a note of dispensation granted by the Council's Chief Executive)

None Declared

10. Monitoring Officer Comments (Monitoring Officer or nominee)

The decision is consistent with the will and expectations of Cabinet. Any terms and conditions of the external funding and the completion of funding agreements and ancillary documentation can be supported by legal officers.

11. Section 151 Officer Comments (Deputy S151 Officer or nominee)

The full cost of delivery of the Best Start for Life programme will be met from within the grant allocation. Grant allocations have now been notified for 3 years any costs in excess of the grant would need to be met from within the service’s existing budget envelope to avoid a pressure.

12. Human Resource Comments (Head of People and Culture or nominee)

HR implications for employees are likely to be positive as this proposal will result in continuing employment relationships. If additional resource is required, this will be supported through the use of fixed-term contracts in the normal process.

13. Risk Assessment (in accordance with the Report Writing Guide)

Key risks include:

- Delivery risks associated with maintaining workforce and partner capacity
- Financial risk of non-compliance with grant conditions
- Reputational risk if services are disrupted or delivery assurance requirements are not met

These risks are mitigated through established programme governance, clear delivery plans for each workstream, regular performance and financial reporting, and continued engagement with partners and funding departments.

14. Has the Cabinet Tracker been updated with details of this decision?

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15. Decision Maker(s):

Name: Ann-Marie Matson

Title: Director of Children’s Services

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 17th June 2026

16. Consultation carried out with Portfolio Holder(s):

Name: Councillor Samuel Grice

Title: Portfolio Holder for Children and Education

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 17th June 2026

17. If the decision is urgent then consultation should be carried out with the relevant Scrutiny Chair/Mayor/Deputy Mayor

Name:

Title:

Signed:

Dated:

Key Decisions are defined in the Constitution as:

A decision (whether taken collectively or individually by members) which is likely:

- (i) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.

A decision will be considered financially significant if:

- (i) in the case of revenue expenditure, it results in the incurring of expenditure or making savings of £350,000 or greater;
- (ii) in the case of capital expenditure, the capital expenditure/savings are in excess of £350,000 or 20% of the total project cost, whichever is the greater

In determining whether a decision is significant in terms of its effect on an area comprising two or more wards, consideration shall be given to:

- (i) the number of residents/service users that will be affected in the wards concerned;
- (ii) the likely views of those affected (i.e. is the decision likely to result in substantial public interest)
- (iii) whether the decision may incur a significant social, economic or environmental risk.