

## Scrutiny Review - Planning & Scoping Document

### What is the Purpose of the Review?

- *Specify exactly which Outcome(s) the review is examining?*
- *Also being clear what the review is not looking at*
- *What is the Scrutiny Review seeking to achieve?*
- *Where possible refer to value for money issues of service cost, service performance and/or customer satisfaction.*

### Scrutiny review is seeking to:

1. Review and understand the underlying data that relates to the funding and performance of the maintained nurseries in North Northamptonshire.
2. To understand the value for money of the 4 maintained nurseries from 2017- 2022.
3. To understand the service cost and service structures of the 4 maintained nurseries.
4. Explore the local offer of the 4 maintained nurseries and the outcomes for those children accessing the maintained nursery provision.
5. Engage with and explore the views of schools who provide the onward destination for children leaving the nurseries.
6. Understand and learn from parents and carers of children accessing the 4 maintained nurseries.
7. Understand the wider funding arrangements of the maintained nurseries including any additional funds that the nurseries secure, and the additional outcomes delivered.
8. Make recommendations to the Schools Forum and the council regarding future proposals for the funding of the maintained nursery supplement.

<p><b>What are the Criteria for Selection?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Why has this particular topic been considered to be a priority issue for scrutiny?</i></li> <li>• <i>Which of the principle criteria promoted by the Centre for Public Scrutiny does it satisfy?</i></li> </ul>	<p>The distribution of the Maintained Nursery Supplementary fund is considered a priority for a scrutiny review for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is an historic and significant disparity of funding identified by NNC for the 4 maintained nurseries.</li> <li>2. The local authority receives the Maintained Nursery Supplementary Fund based upon the numbers of children participating in the universal free entitlement however they have not distributed the fund to the maintained nursery against these criteria.</li> <li>3. The item is of significant community concern as the settings support children by promoting their best start in life – including preparation for early education.</li> <li>4. The issue is of significant to Children/Parents &amp; Carers/Partners/Stakeholders.</li> <li>5. A focused scrutiny review is likely to add value to the performance of maintained nurseries and promote efficiencies/savings?</li> </ol>
<p><b>What are the Indicators of Success?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What factors / outcomes will demonstrate that this Scrutiny Review has been a success?</i></li> </ul>	<p>This review</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aims to tackle issues of direct relevance to local people and seeks to understand the reasons for the apparent inequity in funding across the 4 nurseries.</li> <li>2. Aims to consider the outcomes of children attending (or who have attended) the nurseries and determine if the delivery of outcomes is proportionate to the funding of the nurseries.</li> <li>3. Will consider how nurseries can adapt to deliver early years provision that meets the needs of their communities and supports a local and inclusive agenda through a strong start in life.</li> <li>4. Will arrive at clear proposals to deliver ‘future proofed’ tangible recommendations for equitable, outcome improvements for children accessing maintained nursery provision across the communities of NNC.</li> </ol>

<p><b>What Methodology / Approach is to be followed?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What types of enquiry will be used to gather evidence.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Following a structured and proportionate review process, which is likely to involve the active consideration of evidence, direct representation(s), a review of financial, performance and risk data to arrive at an objective opinion against some Key Lines of Enquiry;</i></p>	<p><b>Key lines of enquiry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are the outcomes of children proportionately increased/improved because of higher levels of funding?</li> <li>- Are children more/better prepared for school where nurseries receive higher/pupil levels of funding?</li> <li>- Are the staffing structures equitable across the maintained nurseries?</li> <li>- Is the 'local offer' consistent and/or proportionate to the needs of the local community.</li> <li>- How have maintained nurseries adapted their offer/structure as a result of the maintained nursery supplement?</li> <li>- Are staffing : pupil ratios equivalent across settings?</li> <li>- Where settings access additional funds from the local authority (other sources) is this activity monitored/recorded separately?</li> <li>- What has been the impact since 2017 of reducing/increasing budgets on the 'offer' and the outcomes for children?</li> <li>- Is the funding being applied in accordance with the requirements and expectations of the funder (i.e. application of DSG)?</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential enquiry types</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk top finance and data reviews</li> <li>- Visits to the 4 maintained nursery schools</li> <li>- Evidence and information gathering from the destination schools of children leaving the maintained nurseries</li> <li>- Feedback from children and parents</li> <li>- Feedback from Stakeholders</li> <li>- Feedback from School Forum members</li> <li>- Findings of the Internal Audit Investigation</li> </ul>
<p><b>What specific resources &amp; budget requirements are there?</b></p> <p><i>What support is required for the review exercise?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>specialist staff</i></li> <li>• <i>any external support</i></li> <li>• <i>site visits</i></li> <li>• <i>consultation</i></li> <li>• <i>research</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead officers identified to support in coordinating activity including data and performance management, site visits and developing and administering surveys</li> <li>- Consideration for external independent support to facilitate engagement and review sessions</li> <li>- Internal audit review of maintained nursery funding</li> <li>- Independent review of Special educational needs at the 4 maintained nurseries</li> <li>- Review of Children's Trust Contract(s) with any of the maintained nurseries.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Are any Corporate Risks associated with this Review?</b> <i>Identify any weaknesses and barriers to success</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insufficient resources to support the review appropriately (people)</li> <li>- With any review of this nature there is a risk of creep in scope</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who will receive the review conclusions and any resultant recommendations?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be confirmed but it is likely that the outcome will be of interest to School Forum, Executive and Full Council.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What is the Review Timescale?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Identify key meeting dates and any deadlines for reports or decisions.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timescale requires discussion and agreement by the Scrutiny Commission</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who will lead the Review Exercise?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Identify a nominated:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Elected Member</i></li> <li>- <i>Lead Officer</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Nominated Leads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A lead elected member that is not an executive member – TBC</li> <li>- AnnMarie Dodds, Executive Director for Children’s Services</li> </ul> <p>Other officers likely required to contribute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heads and Chairs of Governors of the 4 Maintained Nurseries</li> <li>- Democratic Services – TBC</li> <li>- Early Years Finance - Lead officer</li> <li>- AD Education</li> <li>- AD Partnership and Commissioning</li> <li>- Finance</li> <li>- Audit</li> <li>- Communications</li> <li>- Former NCC Finance Officers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Media Interest / Publicity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Communications Plan</i></li> <li>• <i>Do we need to publicise the review to encourage community involvement?</i></li> <li>• <i>What sort of media coverage do we want? (e.g. Fliers, leaflets, radio broadcast, press release, etc.)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish a proportionate communications plan (external and internal) to support the review process.</li> <li>- Will this review be subject to a press embargo? No, community involvement should be encouraged</li> <li>- Who is the lead communications contact? TBC</li> <li>- Who is the designated spokesperson for the Scrutiny Review (Elected Member &amp; Officer)?</li> </ul>

<b>Completed by:</b>  Date:	AnnMarie Dodds, Executive Director for Children's Services  17 May 2022
<b>Approved by Scrutiny Committee</b> Date:	Scrutiny Commission