



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 31 July 2018

To the Mayor and Members of the Cabinet

Funding decisions associated with the Opportunity Area Programme and update on progress

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Nuala Fennelly	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This paper sets out progress since the publication of the Doncaster Opportunity Area Delivery Plan in January. It requests approval for 2 specific elements of spend that have been agreed in principle through the Opportunity Area (OA) Partnership Board but were not covered by the February Cabinet Report and it asks that decisions on future spending be delegated to the Director of People and Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Schools.
2. Since publication in January we have made good progress, the partnership board have approved 6 business cases with a total financial value of £1.81m. Of this £1.45m is covered by the February Cabinet Report. We are well placed to deliver on our year one commitments but have more planning to do to finalise our year two and three plans.
3. We have also seen stakeholder engagement increase, from an already high base, over the last 5 months. We have established a number of governance groups to take forward the work on priority 1, and a secondary heads group to lead on priority 2 and elements of 3. The existing working groups for priorities 3 and 4 have been refreshed to ensure membership is appropriate.
4. The delivery plan sets out four priorities and three cross cutting themes. For each of these sets areas it commits to short term and longer term activities. Each priority within the delivery plan is led by a working group or steering group made up of local stakeholders and the programme is governed by a partnership board into which all the working groups report. The partnership board has been established by DfE in partnership with the Council and is responsible for making decisions relating to the Opportunity Area Programme. Clearly all major spending decisions need to also be agreed by Cabinet. All this sits in the context of delivering the commitments set out in the delivery plan.

5. The time pressure on the programme in terms of the relatively short duration of the programme and a desire to maximise impact means the Partnership Board are agreeing activity on a rolling programme, rather than on an annual basis. This offers greater flexibility, enabling emerging information, for example the success of early phase work, to be taken into account. It will however generate a significant number of funding proposals at regular intervals that would need to be agreed by Cabinet. This is likely to put pressure on valuable Cabinet time. To avoid this we are requesting that decision making be delegated on the principles set out in this report. This will enable timely decision making across the programme and manage potential resource pressures in the programme team and the Council associated with the production and clearance of multiple Cabinet Reports.

EXEMPT REPORT

6. NA

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - a) Note the progress made to date;
 - b) Agree to grant fund Partners in Learning for an additional £178k on top of the £300k agreed in February;
 - c) Agree that organisations who are successful through the essential life skills bidding process can be grant funded, to amounts in excess of £50k;
 - d) Agree that decisions around future grants from this fund be delegated to the Director of People in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Schools;
 - e) Agree that reporting on progress comes through the Doncaster Growing Together Programme, plus termly update reports to Cabinet Member and inclusion in wider scrutiny agenda item on school performance;
 - f) Agree that the Opportunity Area Programme Manager engage with communications colleagues to ensure success stories from the programme and shared.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

8. The Doncaster Opportunity Area Delivery Plan sets out an ambitious agenda to improve social mobility for the children and young people of Doncaster by reducing the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children at primary school; improving the performance of the borough's secondary schools, helping Doncaster's young people to find the right academic and vocational routes to the careers they aspire to; and taking active steps to help the most vulnerable, to access opportunities that will support them in and out of education.

BACKGROUND

9. In February Cabinet agreed to accept the Opportunity Area funding and approved spending plans associated with the first year of the programme (£1.45m).
10. In addition to the essential life skills funding of £2.75m, the Opportunity Area Programmes brings with it £6m of funding which will be transferred through to the Council, in quarterly instalments. The assumption is that this funding will be used to deliver the activities and ambitions in the plan. £450k is profiled for 2017/18 and £1m of essential life skills is profiled for 2017/18. The annual profile of funding for the Opportunity Area and Essential Life Skills funding streams is included in table 1 below.

Table 1

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Opportunity Area ¹	£450,000	c£3.5m	c£2m
Essential Life Skills	£1,008,267.22	£1,750,199.70	0
total	£1,458,267.22	£5,250,199.70	£2,000,000

11. In addition to these dedicated funds national programmes are also being focussed on OAs. This includes the Teaching and Leadership Fund and the Strategic School Improvement Fund. This funding will go to national providers who will deliver training to teachers in schools in the borough, this is managed nationally so the Council will not be required to commission this provision.

PROGRESS TO DATE

12. Since publication in January we have made good progress, the Partnership Board have approved 6 business cases with a total financial value of £1.81m. We already have activity underway in schools, Partners in Learning are delivering a literacy programme in 15 schools in Doncaster, funded through the Strategic School Investment Fund and Expect Youth are delivering 5 coaching and mentoring pilots at primary schools, alternative provision and a youth club setting. We are well placed to deliver on our year one commitments but have more planning to do to finalise our year two and three plans, as set out below. The full list of projects approved to far is as follows:

- £1m to Expect Youth to deliver an Essential Life Skills programme comprising a summer activity programme, combining food and activities and the development of a menu of Essential Life Skills enhancing activities targeted at disadvantaged children and young people across the borough. These activities will be delivered in part through Expect Youth partners but also through organisations who have been selected through a grant bidding process. This process was launched on the 25th of May and will close on 25th June. More details on the grant tender process are included below. The summer activity planning is well advanced.
- £478k to Partners in Learning. At primary this will fund a School Improvement Professional to help 25 of the schools in more challenging circumstances improve, in part by supporting them in accessing the wealth of continuous professional development available in the borough. A leadership of teaching and learning development programme targeted at 15 schools. A maths strategy, encouraging local take up of the breadth of maths support available through the local maths hubs; and at secondary this will fund a curriculum review for each school focussing on a subject of their choice carried out by headteachers and senior leaders of education from two partnered schools.
- 40k to Expect Youth to deliver coaching and mentoring pilots, these combine coaching and mentoring with access to enriching activities designed to increase non-cognitive skills like resilience, these pilots started in April and are already providing valuable learning which will help with implementation of a wider roll out of the programme.
- £100k to develop an open data careers advice website, building on the work led by Uscreates, a research, insight and service design organisation. This work is going

¹ The 2018/19 and 2019/20 figures are estimates, DfE will be confirming the 2018/19 figure in the New Year, the total transferred to DMBC from the OA line will be less than £6m as there are some central costs around for example evaluation that have been taken out at source.

out to competitive tender shortly.

- £5k to the Council to survey young people about the quality of careers advice they have received. This will ensure that young people's views directly inform our implementation efforts. It will also enable us to measure how far we have made a difference over the lifetime of the programme.
- £187k to fund a Careers Hub, building on the existing Careers and Enterprise Company funded Education Advisers, who are currently working with Doncaster schools to help them improve their careers advice and build strong links with local businesses.

13. The majority of this activity was covered in the 6 February 2018 Cabinet Report, or is spend does not require Cabinet approval. There are however two areas where we need Cabinet approval to proceed. The first of these is the grant fund to Partners in Learning, who the partnership board agree to fund £478k in total. £178k more than had been formally approved through Cabinet, so this paper seeks approval to grant fund Partners in Learning the additional £178k. The spend relates entirely to commitments made in the delivery plan as set out above. The reason for the increase in the funding is that this covers activity in years 2 and 3 of the programme as opposed to just the first year as originally modelled.

14. The second relates to the results of the essential life skills grant tender process, £450k is currently allocated to grant funded to successful organisations, with each organisation receiving between £30k-£110k. There is an additional £1.75m of essential life skills funding available and if we receive enough bids of a high enough quality we may propose to the Partnership Board that we use some of this funding on these bids, although this would need to be agreed. We do not know at this point in time who the successful bidders will be, but through EY we have been encouraging bids from the voluntary community sector and we have put in place targeted funding allocation for grants of between £15k - £30k specifically for this sector. Through the specification we will be encouraging local providers or providers who can evidence they already have experience of delivering in Doncaster and relationships with Doncaster schools, we will also be encouraging collaboration and sustainability and ensuring we have coverage across the whole of the borough. The full application guidance for the bidding process is included at Annex A. On the assumption that some organisations will successfully bid for over £50k we are seeking approval to grant fund to these organisations, including the £450k already allocated and potentially some proportion of the £1.75m that remains unallocated currently.

FORWARD PLANNING

15. The exact detail of what we plan to fund in years two and three of the programme is yet to be finalised, but the delivery plan sets out clearly what needs the priorities are and the activities that support them. Table 2 below sets out an estimated profile of expenditure although this will be subject to change. This funding will be distributed through: grants, some of over £50k; competitive tendering and some will be spent within the Council. Under normal circumstances a report would need to go to Cabinet every time we wanted to grant fund over £50k. Through this report we request that this decision making is delegated.

16. Table 2

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	TOTAL
PRIMARY	32670	492050	492050	964,720
SECONDARY	63,020	720,000	445,000	1,175,000
CAREERS	10000	442000	265000	717000

VULNERABLE	60,000	1516000	710000	2286000
SUPPORTING THEMES AND PPM	40,000	265960	135000	440960
TOTAL	236,040	3,663,960	2,000,000	5,900,000

17. It is worth being aware that there are national programmes that also contribute to these priorities so the funding set out here is only a part of the story, and this accounts in part for the discrepancy across the priorities, at primary and secondary there is Strategic School Investment Funding, and Teaching and Learning Investment Funding for a wide range of training activity. The Careers and Enterprise Company provide funding for Careers Advisors and a virtual wallet for schools to spend on careers education advice and guidance support from a menu of activities. There is less national funding available through DfE for the vulnerable theme.
18. The approach to determining how to allocate funding will be as follows, in the main, wherever possible we will go out to competitive tender. This ensures transparency of process and helps ensure we acquire the best quality service at the best price and is in line with wider Council procurement policy. However we recognise that this will not always be possible, due to time or resource constraints and on these occasions we may seek to run grant tender processes. This brings greater competition, and a formal decision making process but will ultimately lead to a grant being paid, as opposed to a contract signed. Where timing is more constrained or there is clear favourite provider, for example were a contract to be extended for a further year, we may choose to directly grant fund. All these decisions will be taken jointly between the Director of People and Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Schools.

PROPOSED REPORTING AND ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNICATIONS

19. Despite having delegated decision making it will remain crucial that the Council and its elected members are consulted and informed as the programme develops. To ensure this takes place we propose:
- continuing to report through the Doncaster Growing Together programme;
 - providing termly updates to the Cabinet Member, including a range of performance information including spend to date; and
 - inclusion in wider scrutiny agenda item on school performance.
20. Cabinet reporting offers an opportunity to publicise successes, as Cabinet Reports are published documents. To ensure that Opportunity Area activity is properly communicated and successes shared with key stakeholders through all relevant channels the Opportunity Area Programme Manager will regularly engage with Council communications colleagues.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

21. The delivery of a large national, but place based programme through a Local Authority spending structure brings challenges associated with a dual approval process, coupled with a desire to get activity implemented as quickly as possible. The potential approaches to tackling this are set out below.
- Develop annual plans and get them signed off in parallel, this is effectively what we did with the first years funding. This was more straight forward for year one as the amount of funding was less so decisions were only required across a small proportion of the programme. This becomes more challenging in years two and

three as decisions are required across the whole programme, and waiting for this annual programme to be developed and approved is likely to lead to delays. On this basis this option was ruled out.

- Seek approval on a termly basis, another option would be to seek cabinet approval on a termly basis, this would lead to shorter delays than an annual basis but would inevitably bring some degree of delay, which would be suboptimal in such a short programme. On this basis this option was ruled out.
- Seek approval against defined parameters in advance and delegate detailed decision making to an appropriately senior level, below full Cabinet sign off. This is the recommended option.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

22. The delegation of decision making against the parameters of the Delivery Plans and the parameters set out in this paper offers the maximum flexibility to the programme to deliver quickly, without placing undue burdens on Cabinet time and the associated reporting structures. The proposed reporting processes offer an approach to keep the Council, Cabinet and Councillors informed, ensuring alignment with the ambitions of the Council.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

23. There are significant synergies between the Council's key outcomes and the Opportunity Area priorities. These are summarised in the table below.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>Ultimately the successful delivery of the ambitions set out on the OA delivery plan should lead to a more skilled workforce, through the successful implementation of the Post 16 review, and greater links between the worlds of work and education facilitated through Careers Hubs.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	<p>The Essential Life Skills programme and the Children's University will promote extra-curricular activities that cover, sport and physical activity, arts, crafts and culture. Our coaching and mentoring pilots for vulnerable young people will also promote these enriching activities with the mentoring providing the influence to encourage participation.</p>

	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>The Opportunity Area programme sits within the living strand and if successful will have a significant impact in both primary and secondary schools. It will: improve the recruitment and retention of young people into Doncaster schools; as mentioned in the living strand it will encourage extra-curricular activities; improve the career professional development available to Doncaster schools, driving up the standards of teaching and of leadership of teaching; encourage the development of non-cognitive skills; support schools in ensuring the careers education advice and guidance they receive is of the highest quality to ensure young people make the right choices post 16 and It will encourage greater collaboration across Doncaster schools.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>Through priority 4, that focuses on supporting the most vulnerable we anticipate a whole family focus, in recognition that many vulnerabilities in children stem from their families.</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>The rationale for siting the OA Programme Manager in the Council is to ensure that the OA programme is fully connected with the wider work of the Council.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

24. There could be a risk that the work of the Opportunity Area becomes disjointed from the work of the Council. We have mitigated this by embedding the Opportunity Area programme within Doncaster Growing Together and actively seeking to identify and manage dependencies between the two programmes. The Opportunity Area programme is a standing item on the Education Leadership Group, to ensure Heads of Service are aware of the programme and have an opportunity to help shape it. The programme manager is actively developing links with colleagues across the Council.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials NJD Date 8/6/18.]

25. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the Council with the general power of competence, allowing the Council to do anything that individuals generally may do. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives an Authority power to purchase goods and services.
26. Any grant funding to Partners in Learning must be provided under a funding agreement to ensure all liabilities and claw back imposed on the Council from the DfE grant are incorporated into the funding agreement with Partners in Learning and should only be entered into when the Director is satisfied that the obligation in the finance procedure rules have been complied with. Any other funding given should also comply with these obligations.
27. Essential Life Skills grant funding of £450k is to be awarded as part of the life changes bidding process as described in paragraph 20. At this point in time the recipients of the grant funding are not known. The bidding process will determine who is eligible for grant funding and in what amounts. The funding must be provided under a funding agreement prepared to ensure all liabilities and claw back imposed on the Council by essential life skills are flowed down into the funding agreement with the recipients and should only be entered into when the Director is satisfied that the obligation in the finance procedure rules have been complied with.
28. The essential life skills grant funding could increase by up to £1.75m provided that the Council receive sufficient bids of high quality. As referred to above the grant funding would be subject to a funding agreement and the Director being satisfied that financial procedure rules have been complied with.
29. Further specific legal advice will be given throughout the life of the project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials SB Date 8/6/18]

30. Funding of up to £8.76m will be received from the DfE in the form of a Section 31 non-ring fenced grant, £6m for the Opportunity Area Programme and £2.76m for the essential life skills programme, and under the grant determination we are required to confirm at the end of each financial year that the funding has been properly expended. The funding has / will be received in instalments as agreed through the delivery plans with the first payments of the Opportunity Area and essential life skills programme funding having been received in October 2017 (£0.1m), January 2018 (£1.04m) and May 2018 (£0.8m). The indicative Opportunity Area funding profile for 2018/19 (£3.5m) and 2019/20 (£2m) shown in the report covers the overall programme however elements of this funding will be retained centrally by DfE for expenditure on elements such as programme evaluation, therefore the final grant the Council will receive will be

less than the totals shown.

31. The grants to be made from the essential life skills bidding programme, as outlined in the report, require Cabinet approval, as they may have a financial value greater than £50k, as covered under financial procedure rule E14. This report proposes to delegate the decision making of this to the Director of People and Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Schools for this purpose. Appropriate funding agreements will also be required, as outlined in finance procedure rules E15-E16. These grants will be made from the 2018/19 allocation for the Opportunity Area and essential life skills programmes with the remaining funding allocations still to be confirmed by the partnership board, which will also include programme lead and support costs, with the final spend profile for 2018/19 to be agreed with DfE.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials MLV Date 06/06/18]

32. There are no specific HR implications related to the content of this report for the council. There may be HR implications for organisations who are given grants depending on how they are using the money but this will be for them to consider. If there are HR implications for the council arising from specific elements of the Opportunity Area delivery plan and any other associated delivery plans these will be addressed at the appropriate time through the relevant governance arrangements.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials PW Date 07/06/18]

33. Any requirements for new, enhanced or replacement technology to support the delivery of the Opportunity Area delivery plan will need to be considered by the ICT Governance Board (IGB). This includes the proposal to develop an open data careers website and any technology requirements to support the proposed careers hub.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials CW Date 07/06/18]

34. Learning outcomes and health outcomes are intrinsically linked. On the whole, investments in improving learning outcomes should also improve health outcomes. Evidence shows that education, training and employment are key socio-economic factors in determining health status (Marmot, 2010). Programmes that focus on reducing the gap in educational attainment between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children are likely to impact positively in reducing long-term health inequalities in Doncaster. The Doncaster Growing Together Programme sets out wide ranging ambitions for the borough, across living, learning, caring and working streams of activity. Again this holistic approach highlights the linkages between health and learning, as shown through the close links between the learning strand of activity and the caring and living strands. The health impact of this programme will need to be monitored in the course of its implementation, and public health can provide the appropriate advice in assessing the health impact.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS (RM 8/6/18)

35. The Opportunity Area programme's explicit aspiration is to narrow the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children and young people and to support the most vulnerable. Improving the equality and inclusivity of the education system sits at the heart of the programme. On this basis the programme should have a disproportionately positive impact on protected groups. We will carry out an equality impact assessment on major activities to ensure there are no unexpected negative impacts on protected groups.

CONSULTATION

36. In drafting this paper we have consulted Nuala Fennelly and taken advice from finance and legal colleagues. Outside of the Council we have engaged DfE officials and the Opportunity Area Partnership Board chair.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Social Mobility Opportunity Area Programme Report to Cabinet 6 February 2018: <https://doncasterintranet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=131&MId=2641&Ver=4>

37. REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Robin MacNeill, Opportunity Area Programme Manager
Email: robin.macneill@doncaster.gov.uk

Damian Allen
Director of People (DCS/DASS)