

## OFFICER DECISION RECORD 1 FORM

This form should be used to record Officer Decisions in Excess of £100k (but below the key decision threshold), or where required by Financial, Contract or other Procedure Rules or following formal delegation from Cabinet or a Cabinet Member or a Council Committee.

Decision Reference No: 2021011

**BOX 1**

**DIRECTORATE:** Learning &  
Opportunities

**DATE:** 30<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**Contact Name:**  
Robin MacNeill  
Opportunity Area Programme Lead

**Tel. No.:** [REDACTED]

Saul Farrell  
Programme Manager – Doncaster OA

**Subject Matter:** Releasing Funds for Priority One of the Doncaster Opportunity Area

**BOX 2****DECISION TAKEN**

To approve the funding envelope for two Priority One projects (Challenge Partners and the OA25) delivered by the Doncaster Opportunity Area. In so doing, to release the funding in accordance with the series of business cases approved by the Opportunity Area Partnership Board.

**BOX 3****REASON FOR THE DECISION**

In line with the government's commitment to a fourth year of the Opportunity Area programme, Doncaster OA has been allocated funding of £1.44m to develop and expand the delivery of projects which meet the four priorities of the *Doncaster Opportunity Area Delivery Plan (2017-2020)*. Strategically, Doncaster Council has publicly committed to working in partnership to deliver these objectives and in so doing, also contribute towards all the key objectives espoused in the Learning Theme of the borough plan (2017-2021), *Doncaster Growing Together* as well as the emergent 2030 Education & Skills Strategy. Therefore, this decision has been undertaken with an awareness of and regard to the local and national strategic context.

At the July Opportunity Area Partnership Board (attended by the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster), approval was given to the following business cases:

### **The OA25 School Improvement Programme (Value: £123,060)**

We are re-commissioning a continuation of the OA25 Programme with a focus on intensive support for six of the borough's primary school facing the most entrenched challenges. This will include provision for the continuation of the Lead School Improvement Practitioner post, hosted within Partners in Learning. Wider, systemic support will still be given to the other 19 schools participating in the programme (many of which demonstrated substantial improvement during the first year). The specific objectives of the project are as follows:

- 1. To strengthen and sustain a culture in Doncaster schools which will utilise the best available evidence to challenge inequity and reduce educational disadvantage; (Tiers 2 and 3)**
- 2. To support schools in the most challenging circumstances to overcome barriers to effective leadership and teaching;** to understand and address systemic and organisational barriers so that schools can access and implement the most effective, evidence informed practices to improve leadership and teaching. **(Tier 1)**

The funding shall be allocated as follows:

Expenditure item	Costs
School Improvement Lead Practitioner	£65,160
Networks/Communities of practice	£9,900
Bursaries for group 1 and 2 schools to continue accessing training and evidence informed CPD	£12,000
Funding for action plans in group 3 schools (£5,000 x 6 schools)	£36,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£123,060</b>

### **Challenge Partners (Value: £62,500)**

We have funded a group of 15 schools, led by three trusts including Exceed Learning Partnership, to set up and then collaborate in a hub, as part of the national 'Challenge Partners Network'. Participating in the hub includes a developing collaborative action plan for the school (In the first year, this has focussed on teaching and assessment); receiving CPD from the Challenge Partners network and participating in a peer review with other schools in the network from outside Doncaster. The Year Four proposal involves expanding this to a further five schools and running the programme again, with a continuation of the focus on reading; a new focus on oracy and a focus on subject specialism. There will also be a renewed focus on ensuring sustainability beyond the formal conclusion of the Opportunity Area Programme in 2021.

Costs		Income	
OA paid subscriptions	£25,000	Hub school improvement funding	£4,000
Action plan funding	£22,500	CPD offer into wider system	£5,000

NLE / LLE / Admin support	£24,000		
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>£71,500</b>	<b>Total income</b>	<b>£9,000</b>
<b>Total funding (Costs – Income)</b>			<b>£62,500</b>

**Total Value: £185,540**

These projects have the over-arching focus of improving teaching, learning and attainment in primary schools in Doncaster, in line with the Opportunity Area’s Priority One – *‘Building solid foundations for all children’*. The success of the first year of both Challenge Partners and the OA25 gives compelling justification for the continuation of both projects. For example, attainment in RWM for disadvantaged pupils in OA25 schools has increased by +4pp since 2018 and by +11pp since 2017 (compared to an average change of +1pp since 2018 for schools nationally and -1pp for schools in Doncaster). Consequently, we are seeking to extend these projects in the fourth year of the Opportunity Area and in so doing, develop them further to meet the needs of the borough’s primary schools.

Both projects shall be delivered throughout academic year 2020-2021 (September 2020-August 2021).

Cabinet have explicitly agreed that decisions around future grants from the Opportunity Area fund be delegated to the Director of Children’s Services in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Schools.

**BOX 4**

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

The Opportunity Area Programme was developed based on detailed analysis of the available performance data, extensive consultation with professionals and engagement with Doncaster children and young people.

The proposals in this note align explicitly with the commitments in the published Doncaster Opportunity Area Plan. The delivery approach was determined based on analysis of the available organisations strengths and weaknesses. Specifically, that the sector-led Challenge Partners Programme remained legible and popular with schools, with delivery ‘in locality’ ensuring sustainability and the development of a model which would specifically extend long beyond the conclusion of the Opportunity Area. Furthermore, the selection of Partners in Learning, as the Local Teaching School Alliance, will allow for continuity with the 2019-20 OA25 Programme and for quality in delivery.

**BOX 5****LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the local authority the power to do anything that individuals may generally do.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 the Council must exercise its functions as a local education authority with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Section 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty upon a Local Authority to make arrangements with a view to improving the well-being of children in the authority's area so far as relating to physical and mental health and emotional well-being, protection from harm and neglect, education, training and recreation, the contribution made by them to society and social and economic well-being.

Suitable funding agreements should be entered into with the funding recipients, which should be in compliance with the funding agreement for Opportunity Area programme funding received from central government.

Legal should be consulted in relation to the completion of appropriate documentation.

**Name: Nichola Varty    Signature: [REDACTED]    Date 8th September 2020.**

Signature of Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services (or representative)

**BOX 6****FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The cost of these decisions detailed within the main body of the report will cost £185,560 and is to be funded in full from the Social Mobility Opportunity Area Grant.

The Doncaster Opportunity Social Mobility Area are to receive an additional £1,44m funding from the DfE during the 2020-21 academic year as announced in July 20 in the form of a Section 31 non-ring fenced grant and as such sufficient grant remains to pay for this decision.

A cabinet report was approved on the 31st July 2018 to agree to the delegation of decision making on this area to the Director of Learning Opportunities & Skills and Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Schools.

**Name: Stephen Boldry                      Signature: [REDACTED]                      Date: 09/09/20**

Signature of Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director of Finance (or representative)

**BOX 7**

**OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Assistant Director (or representative)

**ANY IMPLICATIONS SENT TO DEPARTMENTS SHOULD GENERALLY BE SUBMITTED AT LEAST 5 WORKING DAYS IN ADVANCE TO ENSURE THESE CAN BE GIVEN THE RELEVANT CONSIDERATION.**

**BOX 8**

**EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:** (To be completed by the author).

In taking this decision, the decision makers (in this case, the OA Programme Team) have given full consideration to their duties under Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 and have determined that there are no substantial implications relating to the fulfilment of these duties posed by the taking of this decision. Both projects shall be offered on an equal access and opportunity basis for the schools and staffing selected to participate and reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate to enable practitioners to access both programmes.

**BOX 9**

**RISK IMPLICATIONS:** (To be completed by the author)

There is a risk that without taking this decision the local authority will not be able to meet requirements of the Delivery Plan in that we will fail to deliver on the ambition of the Education & Skills Commission, and the intent of the Social Mobility Opportunity Area.

**BOX 10**

**CONSULTATION**

These proposals were developed in consultation with the Partnership Board and Council colleagues leading on school improvement at primary.

**BOX 11**

**INFORMATION NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

Please redact personal contact details but the rest of the document can be published in full.

Name: Robin MacNeill Signature ██████████ Date: 30.08.2020

Signature of FOI Lead Officer for service area where ODR originates

**BOX 12**


**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Please confirm if any Background Papers are included with this ODR YES/NO

(If YES please list and submit these with this form)

**BOX 13  
AUTHORISATION**

Name: Riana Nelson

Signature: 

Date: 14/09/2020

Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills

Does this decision require authorisation by the Chief Financial Officer or other Officer

YES/NO

If yes please authorise below:

Name: Debbie Hogg

Signature: 

Date: 30/09/20

Director of Corporate Resources

Consultation with Relevant Member(s)

Name: Nuala Fennelly Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: Councilor for Children Young People and Schools

(e.g. Mayor, Cabinet Member or Committee Chair/Vice-Chair)

Declaration of Interest YES/NO

If YES please give details below:

**PLEASE NOTE THIS FORM WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE IN FULL UNLESS IT CONTAINS EXEMPT OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.**

Once completed a PDF copy of this form and any relevant background papers should be forwarded to Governance Services at [Democratic.Services@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@doncaster.gov.uk) who will arrange publication.

It is the responsibility of the decision taker to clearly identify any information that is confidential or exempt and should be redacted before publication.