

Subject: Education Improvement Programme funding Delegated Decisions report
Report of: Strategic Lead Education Challenge
Portfolio: Education, Inclusion and Skills

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of funding to enable delivery of the Education Improvement Programme pilot as agreed by Cabinet in September 2021. The pilot addresses regional gaps exacerbated by the pandemic that see North of Tyne pupils underperforming compared to their peers elsewhere in the country, with particular focus on pupils from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

The funding requests outlined in this paper seek to enable accreditation and training for education advisors who provide vital support for schools in our area, a mental health pilot to support all schools across North of Tyne, a development programme for serving school leaders across all three constituent Local Authorities, extension of an early literacy intervention with proven impact in our area and an approach to supporting better collaboration between curriculum leaders and local employers to enable between pathways to careers for our young people.

Recommendations

The Managing Director is recommended to approve/authorise:

1. Direct award of £80,000 for the accreditation and training of education advisors in North of Tyne
2. Procurement of a Mental Health in Schools pilot to a value of £110,000
3. Direct award of £14,000 for a development programme for North of Tyne school leaders
4. Direct award of £50,000 for a specific early literacy intervention
5. Procurement of a delivery partner to provide Careers Curriculum support to North of Tyne schools, to value of £72,000

1. Background Information, Proposals and Timetable for Implementation

The Education Improvement Programme was agreed at by North of Tyne Cabinet on 22nd September 2021, where Cabinet approved funding of £967, 800 for a pilot Education Improvement programme, with authority delegated to the Managing Director for implementation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, Inclusion and Skills and delegated authority to Managing Director and Chief Finance Officer to sign off amendments to the programme if required once delivery has commenced.

This report seeks authorisation from the Managing Director for activity in the Education Improvement Programme that warrants either a Direct Award, or seeks to fund activity over £50,000

1.1 Accreditation and training of education advisors

Under the 'Recruitment and development' priority of the Education Improvement Programme, we seek to support the existing school improvement system to better help schools in our area. The Association of Education Advisors offer a unique accreditation and development programme, to enhance the capabilities of the local school support system and connect our education advisors to an international network of best practice.

The AOEA are the only organisation offering continuous professional development in the skills and knowledge of **supporting** and **advising** schools and colleges. They offer a national network of

independent education advisers in which knowledge and learning can be exchanged. They are also the only organisation offering accreditation for school support advisors. This is particularly helpful in the current climate, to build the credibility of existing staff supporting schools and headteachers across the North of Tyne.

The Education Advisors accreditation and development programme will train 36 North of Tyne advisors, 12 of whom will be serving school leaders across our constituent Local Authorities. An estimated 150 schools will benefit from the expertise developed on the programme.

The Managing Director is recommended to approve the direct award of £80,000 to the Association of Education Advisors for accreditation and training of education advisors in North of Tyne.

1.2 Mental health in schools pilot

School disruption due to COVID-19 has had significant impact not just on pupil's academic achievement but is set to have long tail of mental health repercussions. Evidence tells us that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately affected. We intend to identify a delivery partner through procurement to develop a local offer to support existing school support services to have uniformity and credibility, engaging in a global network of best practice. This evidence-informed approach to mental-health will also support staff retention and development, to the direct benefit of teaching staff, leadership, and pupils.

The specific call for this pilot will be determined by an expert group of practitioners and informed by an initial audit. An estimated 40% of schools engaging with a programme, around 43,000 pupils will benefit. Assuming a conservative 20% uptake, this would reach 10,750 pupils. This is based on informal initial conversations with The Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools.

An 'initial provision' audit will be completed ahead of procurement for this element of the project, as we know that there is much existing good practice and emerging work in all constituent authorities (for example, the work of North Tyneside's Children and Young People's Mental health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy, Northumberland's Be You programme and the work of Tyne & Wear Citizens). The audit will highlight best practice, areas for development, gaps in provision, and recommendations for the best way to invest in improving these areas. An expert working group consisting of LA representatives, in-school practitioners and mental health experts will in turn interpret the recommendations from the initial audit, which will form the basis of the procurement. This ensures a genuine understanding of existing provision to this pilot supports what is already in train.

The Managing Director is recommended to approve the procurement of a 'Mental Health in Schools' pilot to a value of £110,000.

1.3 Leadership development programme

Identifying a gap in the DfE's reformed National Professional Qualification suite, initial work has begun on the design of a leadership in education programme to support existing school leaders who are not pursuing executive headship.

Our constituent Local Authorities have co-developed the programme, ensuring the education priorities of each are represented in full (North Tyneside Newcastle Northumberland). Moreover, education officers at our constituent Local Authorities have included key elements from this project in their educational strategic priority setting for the coming academic year. This local leadership development programme will directly impact 24 schools over two years, with 24 headteachers and an additional 24 deputy headteachers leaders joining the programme.

The Managing Director is recommended to approve a direct award of £14,000 to Newcastle Research School, who already work with many of or school leaders across North of Tyne, to support this development programme.

1.4 Early literacy intervention

As part of the programme's focus on 'transition into school', we seek to extend an early literacy programme, building on successful implementation already in schools and Early Years settings across the North of Tyne. The Launchpad for Literacy early literacy programme is already successfully embedded in over 70 schools in North of Tyne and our Education Strategy Group has identified that extending this programme is our 'best bet' for improving early literacy in our area, alongside the successful implementation of DfE provision.

Launchpad for Literacy sits alongside the Curriculum and current good practice, giving a specific and targeted approach to: identifying and closing skill gaps; embedding speech and language interventions; ensuring progression for all and clarifying 'Quality First Teaching' creating a firm, broad-base of skill readiness for all aspects of literacy, including Phonics. The constituent LA Education Directors through the North of Tyne Education Strategy Group have noted that this specific programme has shown the most significant gains in early literacy. The programme can complement existing provision, such as the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) programme for children in Reception but takes a longer-term support approach and does not rely on pupils being removed from other lessons.

We seek to extend the Launchpad for Literacy programme to reach at least further 130 schools, meaning 260 members of staff and 4500 pupils would directly benefit. This is based upon several modelling conversations Launchpad for Literacy.

The Managing Director is recommended to approve a direct award of up to £50,000 to Launchpad for Literacy for a specific early literacy intervention in North of Tyne Primary schools.

1.5 Careers curriculum support

Wider work on the 'Careers Pathways' priority includes establishing a North of Tyne careers curriculum steering group, bringing together representatives from schools, academies, businesses, the LEP and other career support stakeholders, in addition to supporting secondary/high schools and colleges to engage with the NTCA Apprenticeships hub.

Having identified a gap in curriculum leaders engaging with local employers (at the Education Strategy Group) the programme seeks to better coordinate relationships between curriculum leads and local businesses.

We seek to deliver this by funding an existing organisation with strong links to both schools and local businesses to deliver a 'careers ambassador' service. This may be a member of their team delivering engagement sessions with curriculum leads and businesses, or indeed the delivery may be split across several members of their team. The procurement for this work will focus on the output - supporting curriculum leaders across 75 North of Tyne schools to engage with local businesses to develop their curriculum – rather than the delivery method. Soft market testing with organisations such as the Careers and Enterprise Company, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, Newcastle United Foundation and others indicate that this brief could be fulfilled at the price point proposed.

The Managing Director is recommended to approve the procurement of a delivery partner to provide Careers Curriculum support to North of Tyne schools, to value of £72,000

2. Potential Impact on Objectives

This pilot programme speaks to the very principles of the Education, Inclusion and Skills portfolio, representing an investment in the education of our 100,000 school-aged residents. We committed in our corporate plan to delivering targeted, bespoke interventions to help young people into work – this programme outlines a specific approach to prepare our young people for successful careers.

In July 2020, the North of Tyne Cabinet supported a Joint School Improvement Strategy, which acknowledged that a funding ask would be required to enable the ambitious outcomes identified, alongside the Education Challenge funding from Government. This programme is built on that strategy and addresses each of the agreed priorities.

3. Key Risks

3.1 Adding value and alignment with existing provision / policy

Care has been taken to ensure that the investments outlined in this paper do not duplicate existing provision, at a national and a local level. The Education Improvement Programme acknowledges investment from the DfE centrally and the work of a Teaching School Hub in Northumberland, where a suite of National Professional Qualifications are delivered locally. Two gaps in leadership development have been identified by the NTCA Education Strategy Group: professional development opportunities for serving school leaders who do not wish to undertake an Executive Headship, and professional development opportunities for education advisors – the teams currently supporting North of Tyne schools. These gaps have been addressed by the Local Leadership Development Programme and Education Advisors Accreditation and Training programme respectively. During development meetings, the Regional School Commissioner's office have agreed that these two programmes will complement the existing provision from DfE.

An early language programme Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) was funded for Primary schools by the DfE (registration closed 31st July 2021). This programme is notably different to the Launchpad for Literacy – though both can operate successfully in the same school. The Education Strategy Group has noted that the Launchpad for Literacy programme had the most impact in North of Tyne schools.

The careers curriculum coordination element of the Education Improvement programme does not focus on career guidance, rather bringing together local employers with the people in schools responsible for developing curricula. This is a distinct work stream which complements the good work already being undertaken in this space by the North East LEP, NU Futures and our own Apprenticeships Hub.

4. Financial and Other Resources Implications

Funding for this activity is proposed to come from the agreed Education Improvement Pilot budget, as part of the NTCA Recovery Innovation Fund and is broken down as follows:

- Direct award of £80,000 for the accreditation and training of education advisors in North of Tyne
- Procurement of a Mental Health in Schools pilot to a value of £110,000
- Direct award of £14,000 for a development programme for North of Tyne school leaders
- Direct award of up to £50,000 for a specific early literacy intervention
- Procurement of a delivery partner to provide Careers Curriculum support to North of Tyne schools, to value of £72,000

5. Legal Implications

The Interim Monitoring Officer's comments have been incorporated within this report. NTCA's proposed model of project delivery for the Education Improvement Programme is fully compliant with the new UK subsidy control regime.

6. Equalities Implications

6.1 This pilot will have positive impacts for groups experiencing protected characteristics, under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. Eligibility for the pupil premium is a characteristic of socio-economic disadvantage and can correlate with single parent status, for example. The elements of the programme addressing the Joint School Improvement Strategy priority of 'Closing the Gap' will specifically deliver the aims of the 2010 Equality Act: to advance equality of opportunity for all, especially for residents experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

7. Inclusive Economy Implications

7.1 An Education Improvement pilot programme speaks directly to NTCA's Employability and Inclusion priority. This work will develop interventions early, supporting long-term local economic resilience by strengthening our education system to improve outcomes for our pupils. This will ultimately lead to our young people moving into the good jobs our wider Education, Skills and Inclusion portfolio will provide.

7.1.1 Education Improvement will support the development of a future inclusive economy, addressing critical barriers early to reduce achievement gaps and support more of our young people to thrive in our school system and be better prepared for a successful life beyond it.

7.2 The Careers Pathways priority supports the Combined Authority's aspirations around 'good jobs' by building strong employer links with curriculum leaders in schools and colleges. This will support pupils to make connections between their learning and future employment, while assisting them to develop the skills employers in our region are looking for.

7.3 Much of the Education Improvement activity is focused on reducing existing inequity, targeting pupils from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. This is intended to improve the education experience for pupils eligible for Free School Meals, reducing the achievement gap for our most disadvantaged pupils, and improving the overall attainment rate compared to the rest of the country.

8. Climate Change Implications

There are no direct climate change implications for this report.

9. Consultation and Engagement

9.1 NTCA has worked with over 250 education professionals including school leaders, teachers, governors, teacher educators, trade unions, local and national system leaders to co-develop and test the priorities on which this work programme has been built.

9.2 This work programme has been directly co-developed with Newcastle City Council's Assistant Director: Education & Skills, Northumberland County Council's Director of Education and Skills, North Tyneside Council's Assistant Director for Education, with input from the Regional Schools Commissioner - North at the DfE. Wider local authority teams have fed into the programme via their Director of Education.

Schools, union and education stakeholder engagement has continued over the development of the programme and the incoming Teaching School Hub has been consulted.

10. Appendices

None

11. Background Papers

11.1 North of Tyne Education Improvement work programme Cabinet Paper

12. Contact Officers

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13. Glossary

DfE – Department of Education
LA – Local Authority

11. Sign-off

1) Portfolio holder Yes/No	2) Director/SMT Yes/No	3) Chief Finance Officer: Yes	4) Monitoring Officer: Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes