

Opportunity Areas

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Department for Education (DfE) announced the Opportunity Areas (OA) programme on 4 October 2016. Initially six areas were announced, namely: Derby, Scarborough, Blackpool, Norwich, West Somerset and Oldham. The areas have been highlighted due to their relatively low levels of social mobility as described in the Social Mobility Index published in January 2016. Within this index, Derby was placed 22nd from the bottom out of 324 areas nationally. In total, Derby will receive up to £6 million of funding over three years. In addition to this, the Department for Education (DfE) is now supporting this work in Opportunity Areas by developing an 'Essential Life Skills' programme over two years to enable children and young people aged 5 -18 years old to participate in regular extra-curricular activities. It is intended that children and young people will be able to participate in additional out of school activities such as sports, volunteering and social action projects. The funding has been calculated on the basis that it would pay for weekly participation in extra-curricular activities for up to 40,000 pupils in up to 12 per cent of schools in the Opportunity Areas. In Derby, this amounts to a two year grant of up to £800,000 in 2017-18 and up to £1.6 million in 2018-19.
- 1.2 Derby City Council has been asked to receive the Opportunity Area grant and the Essential Life Skills grant from the DfE on behalf of the local area and then to award it to providers in line with recommendations from the local Opportunity Area Board and DfE, and in line with public sector procurement rules. It is expected that all of the funding DCC receives from DfE would be awarded through the Opportunity Area programme.
- 1.3 This report outlines expenditure to date and also planned programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To support the work of the local Opportunity Area Board in improving outcomes for children and young people in the city and improving social mobility, and by doing so to:
- a) follow the final advice and recommendations of the Opportunity Area Board and DfE regarding the expenditure associated with all Opportunity Area grants which the council holds on behalf of the local area.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Opportunity Areas is a strategy targeted towards stakeholders and children and young people to promote social mobility. The city council is the fund holder on behalf of the local Opportunity Area Board which in turn advises the DfE. This was agreed at Council Cabinet in October 2017 and as such the Council is the accountable body. Failure to spend money in line with the final recommendations from the Opportunity Area Board and DfE would reduce support for the city's children and young people.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Opportunity Areas were announced by the Department for Education (DfE) in October 2016 with the initial six areas being identified as some of the most challenged when it comes to social mobility; a further six areas were announced in January 2017. The full list of twelve areas is: Blackpool, Derby, Norwich, Oldham, Scarborough, West Somerset (the first six), and Bradford, Doncaster, Fenland & East Cambridgeshire, Hastings, Ipswich and Stoke-on-Trent.

- 4.2 The areas were initially highlighted as being social mobility cold spots as defined in the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission's Social Mobility Index published in January 2016.

Analysis of the summary data in Table 1 below from the 'Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission's Social Mobility Index (January 2016) report would suggest that an emphasis on early years is required.

Table 1: summary of rankings showing Derby ranking from the 'Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission's Social Mobility Index (January 2016) report.

Stage of life	Derby ranking out of 324 nationally
Overall	303 rd
Early years	322 nd
Schools	283 rd
Youth (age 15+)	126 th
Adulthood	81 st

- 4.3 A number of initial stakeholder meetings were held within the city and this was narrowed down to a local Opportunity Area Partnership Board ('OA Board') being formed in spring 2017. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Derby is the Chair of the local Opportunity Area Board. The city council's Strategic Director of People Services is also a member of the Opportunity Area Board.

Meetings are attended by Department for Education officials including the Regional Schools Commissioner and two DfE officials from the Opportunity Area team.

- 4.4 The OA Board operates as an advisory board to the DfE. As part of this, Opportunity Areas are given prioritised access to a wider support package helping young people from nursery through to starting work. Some of this funding will be awarded directly by the Department for Education to providers who can support social mobility in the Opportunity Areas, but up to £6 million over three years (from April 2017) will be for the local Opportunity Area Board (OA Board) to make recommendations to the DfE on how this should be allocated. Derby City Council is holding this DfE grant on behalf of the local area and then to award it to providers in line with recommendations from the local Opportunity Area Board and DfE, and in line with public sector procurement rules. It is expected that all of the funding Derby City Council receives from the DfE through this grant would be awarded to the Opportunity Area programme. Between April 2018 – March 2020, Derby City Council will receive additional funding as recommended by the local Opportunity Area Partnership Board and approved by the DfE up to a maximum of £6 million (over the three years) and for the City Council to award this in line with such recommendations. This was agreed by Cabinet on 4 October 2017.

By working together with the DfE, the local OA Board has identified three principal priorities as being drivers for change to improve social mobility within the city. These are:

- increasing the number of children achieving a good level of development in the early years.
- Raising attainment in primary and secondary schools.
- Ensuring that children and young people benefit from a broad range of experiences throughout their schools lives.

Running throughout the work of the Opportunity Area are two further themes around improving the mental health for children and young people and helping to improve transitions.

Four sub groups of the local OA Board have been formed to help deliver the aims and develop work in addressing social mobility, namely:

- Early years, primary and home learning environment (Primary Strategy Group or PSG)
- Secondary Strategy Group
- Post 16 Strategy Group
- Broader Horizons

Each sub group reports back to the local OA Board and to date, three of the four sub groups have made recommendations to the local OA Board and the DfE to commission strategies to help deliver the aims. Following a compliant tendering process, contracts have been awarded for school improvement programmes around:

- English as an additional Language.
- Phonics.
- Primary mathematics.
- Key Stage 1 reading.
- Key stage 2 comprehension.
- Secondary English.
- Secondary mathematics.
- Secondary leadership.

- 4.5 The Broader Horizons sub group is led by a city business leader and is comprised of representatives from business, sport and leisure, education providers and the voluntary sector. The group is examining the city wide offer of school to business links and also the cultural, sports, arts and leisure offer to young people in the city. To support this aspect of work, the DfE has identified a city wide grant for the local Opportunity Area Board to consider. The grant is known as the essential life skills grant. It is intended that children and young people will be able to participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports, volunteering and social action projects. The funding has been calculated on the basis that it would pay for weekly participation in extra-curricular activities for up to 40,000 pupils in up to 12 per cent of schools in the Opportunity Areas.

In Derby, this amounts to a grant of up to £800,000 in 2017-18 and up to £1.6 million in 2018-19. Derby City Council is holding this DfE grant on behalf of the local area and to award it to providers in line with recommendations from the local Opportunity Area Board and DfE, and in line with public sector procurement rules. It is expected that all of this money would be awarded to the Essential Life Skills programme. The Opportunity Area Board, in conjunction with the Department for Education, will determine how best to allocate this grant and the city council will do so in line with these recommendations and in line with city council public sector procurement rules. This was agreed by Cabinet on 4 October 2017.

- 4.6 The Broader Horizons Group, Opportunity Area Board and the DfE have agreed the Essential Life Skills funding should be allocated in three ways:
- a) up to £400,000 in grants of up to £24,999 for leisure, arts, sports and cultural organisations to apply. These organisations will work with schools on out of school activities, and especially targeting the most disadvantaged children and young people.
 - b) Up to £1,000,000 to be directed to school and Derby College budgets based on the percentage of children and young people on their roll in the January 2017 census and who were aged 5-18 years and eligible for the pupil premium. In the case of Derby College, this was based on the percentage of their current Year 12/13 cohorts who were in receipt of the pupil premium when they were in school. This was agreed by Cabinet in April 2018.
 - c) Up to £1,000,000 to be awarded as a grant for leisure, arts, sports and cultural organisations to apply. These organisations would then work with schools on out of school activities, and especially targeting the most disadvantaged children and young people.

4.7 In addition, the Opportunity Area Board and DfE have agreed to:

- a) award up to £250,000 in grants of up to £24,999 to schools and stakeholders to undertake joint work around science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics.
- b) To develop city wide support for special educational needs co-ordinators in schools (SENCo's) and to offer a peer review for all schools in the city around special educational needs and disabilities.
- c) To undertake a series of pilot projects around speech, language and communication which may lead to a city wide strategy around this.
- d) To recommend to Cabinet for the development of secondary phase strategies around targeted student support and family engagement.
- e) To encourage the four sub groups to develop further proposals around improving the mental health of the city's children and young people, family engagement, business links, improving opportunities for young people at points to transition to help reduce young people who are not in employment / education or training.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None. Engagement in the Opportunity Areas enables more resources to come in to the city in supporting children and young people achieve better educational outcomes and improve social mobility.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Olu Idowu, Head of Legal Services Alison Parkin – Head of Finance
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The Opportunity Area grant and the Essential Life Skills grant are specific grants from the DfE and all funding allocations contained within this report are to be funded from the grant.

As part of the accountable body status the Council will adhere to the funding conditions of the grant.

Legal

- 2.1 Subject to compliance with the Contract Procedure Rules and procurement legislation in the award of grants and contracts, as applicable, there are no immediate legal considerations arising from the report. Support and assistance from the legal and procurement services will be required to give effect to any ensuing authority.

Personnel

- 3.1 None arising from this report.

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- 4.1 None arising from this report.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Any activity in the city needs to take into account the Equality Act and ensure that activities are accessible and inclusive to all. In addition, equality needs to be a key monitoring strand of the grant monitoring form to make sure that the organisations delivering the programs are working to equality and diversity.

Health and Safety

6.1 None arising from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

7.1 None arising from this report.

Property and Asset Management

8.1 None arising from this report.

Risk Management and Safeguarding

9.1 Failure to spend money in line with the final recommendations from the Opportunity Area Board and DfE would reduce support for the city's children and young people.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 This report supports the Council priority outcome of 'Enabling individuals and communities, and Raising achievement and skills'.