

EXECUTIVE BOARD – 21 JANUARY 2016

Subject:	Strategic Alliance - Activity Funding		
Corporate Director(s)/ Director(s):	Alison Michalska, Corporate Director for Children and Adults Pat and Sarah Fielding, Joint Directors of Education		
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Sam Webster, Portfolio Holder for Schools		
Report author and contact details:	Ceri Walters, Head of Commercial Finance 0115 8764128 ceri.walters@nottinghamcity.gov.uk		
Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Subject to call-in	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Reasons: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditure <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Savings of £1,000,000 or more taking account of the overall impact of the decision			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital
Significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Total value of the decision: £1.2m			
Wards affected: All		Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s): April 2015	
Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:			
Strategic Regeneration and Development			<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Planning and Housing			<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Services			<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy, Sustainability and Customer			<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs, Growth and Transport			<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults, Health and Community Sector			<input type="checkbox"/>
Children, Early Intervention and Early Years			<input type="checkbox"/>
Leisure and Culture			<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration			<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):			
This report proposes the formulation of a match funded budget that is designed to facilitate the development of a 'strategic alliance' across the City of Nottingham, providing clarity, focus and coherence, making the best use of resources available and engaging Teaching Schools, Multi-Academy Trusts, schools working in Trust arrangements and individual schools and academies to work together to improve overall education provision and outcomes for Children and Young People and reduce the gap in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils.			
Exempt information:			
None			
Recommendation(s):			
1 To approve the allocation of £0.600m from reserves in 2015/16 to develop a citywide strategic alliance and fund focussed educational improvement activities for 3 years, noting that Schools Forum agreed to match fund this activity (£0.600m) from the Statutory Schools Reserve (SSR) in April 2015, giving a total of £1.2m.			
2 To approve spend of £1.2m over 3 years on Education Improvement Activity on schemes agreed by the Education Improvement Board (EIB) and the Portfolio Holder for Schools, noting that this spend will adhere to the appropriate procurement procedures.			

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To align £0.600m from reserves to match fund the contribution from Schools Forum to support collaborative activity carried out by the Strategic Alliance.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

The London Challenge

- 2.1 A decade ago, parents were leaving inner London to avoid sending their children to local schools. Today, all pupils are more likely to perform better in the capital than anywhere else in the country. Much of this is down to the London challenge policy of school collaboration.
- 2.2 City challenge was distinctive in a number of ways. It was underpinned by a belief that the educational problems facing urban areas should be addressed at area level, and that Local Authority's (LA's), schools and academies need to work together to do this.
- 2.3 It aimed to improve educational provision and school performance across a broad geographical area, not simply in a specific group of participating schools. City Challenge focused on all aspects of the education system working strategically at area level and with LAs, community organisations, parents and pupils, and developing a range of specific school interventions which were closely focused on the intended outcomes of City Challenge. There was no single view of what schools needed to do to improve, all the interventions involved local solutions with key stakeholders centrally involved in the decisions. The various activities and interventions were characterised by:
- a belief that school-to-school collaboration has a central role to play in school improvement;
 - a recognition of the importance of school leadership and;
 - a data-rich approach to tackling issues and sharing learning.

The Nottingham Challenge

- 2.4 There is a growing consensus that there needs to be a city wide, all party 'strategic alliance' if the Council and its partners are to tackle the challenges faced in Nottingham.
- 2.5 Whilst the London Challenge provides a starting point for discussion, Nottingham's alliance has to be appropriate to local circumstances and will only work where there is the consent and active participation of the operational partnership formed by schools/academies in the area. The Council is encouraged by the discussions held with all key partners to collectively commit to the challenges faced in the City of Nottingham, and, given the breadth and depth of expertise across the City of Nottingham this is the right time to unleash the potential an alliance of this kind has to offer.

Cultural shift

- 2.6 A key aspect of the alliance will be to recognise that people, schools and academies, tend to thrive when they feel trusted, supported and encouraged. Success is also more often realised when participants have ownership and involvement in the changes rather than being 'done to'. It is important that this is not seen as an LA initiative and it is proposed that the Education Improvement Board (EIB), independently chaired by Professor Sir David Greenaway, and representing all key stakeholder groups in the city manage the Governance and leadership of the alliance and distribute the fund to an agreed range of activities and interventions.
- 2.7 In the first instance the alliance has agreed to focus upon securing improved outcomes in mathematics across city schools and academies.

- 2.8 The improvement activities will focus upon developing 'world class' and 'cutting edge' teaching and learning in mathematics (Early Years Foundation Stage – Key Stage 4). This will also include developing further strands to include:
- transition;
 - leadership;
 - subject knowledge and expert teaching;
 - mastery;
 - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM);
 - recruitment;
 - new technologies;
 - learning behaviours;
 - innovative learning environments and parental/community engagement.
- 2.9 The fund will then continue to enable the alliance to drive further focused strands of activity over the next 3 years. The work was launched at a City Head Teacher Conference on the 3 July 2015 hosted at Nottingham University's Jubilee Campus site.
- 2.10 Match funding the funds approved from the SSR will enable the development of a budget to support agreed activity.
- 2.11 This fund will initially be used to secure improvements in mathematics across the city. Once improvements have been secured the strategic alliance will agree the next priority according to the city's need.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Not providing the match funding was rejected as there are no other funding options available to support this activity, which means it wouldn't be possible for it to take place.

4 FINANCE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

- 4.1 This report seeks approval to spend £1.2m over the next 3 years to support a strategic alliance of activity on Educational improvement.
- 4.2 The fund of £1.2m is made up of:
- £0.600m from the LA's reserves, of which £0.300m was included as a carry forward from 2014/15; and
 - £0.600m match funding from the SSR approved by Schools Forum on 23 April 2015.
- 4.3 A separate reserve will be set up for the allocation of this fund.
- 4.4 Use of this reserve will align to the Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations 2014.
- 4.5 Activities/Projects required to support outcomes will be agreed by the EIB. Any procurement associated with the activities/projects agreed will undertake the appropriate City Council procurement process set out in the Financial Regulations.

5 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND INCLUDING LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 The current law in force in this area is the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2014. Spend from the SSR needs to align with the requirements of the Regulations.

6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COMMENTS (FOR DECISIONS RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE)

6.1 Not applicable.

7 SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Not applicable.

8 REGARD TO THE NHS CONSTITUTION

8.1 Not applicable.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

9.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No

An EIA is not required because the individual proposals are not yet formulated. Any decisions taken by the EIB will undertake an EIA.

Yes

10 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN WRITING THIS REPORT (NOT INCLUDING PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS OR CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION)

10.1 None

11 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THIS REPORT

11.1 Schools Forum – Strategic Alliance – Activity Funding – 23 April 2015

11.2 Department for Education - Schools and Early Years Financial Regulations 2014

12 OTHER COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE PROVIDED INPUT

12.1 Sarah Molyneux – Legal Service Manager & Solicitor