RAISE Portadown

Call for Locality Led Projects

RAISE
ASPIRATIONS & ACHIEVEMENT

Department of Education
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RAISE Portadown

Call for Locality-Led Projects

This document should be read in conjunction with the following:

- **RAISE Portadown Strategic Area Plan**
- **RAISE Locality Led Projects – Identification of RAISE Locality Led Projects and RAISE Locality Led Project Identification Template Guidance Notes**
- **RAISE Assessment Panel Scoring Guidance**
- **RAISE Evaluation Framework**

Introduction

The RAISE Programme is a whole community and place-based approach to tackling educational disadvantage in 18 localities[1] across Northern Ireland, supporting the Department of Education's vision that "every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding".

TransformED NI, a Strategy for Educational Excellence in Northern Ireland, outlines the Minister of Education's priorities in a comprehensive strategy for the transformation of teaching and learning in Northern Ireland. The RAISE Programme is the signature approach to tackling educational disadvantage in this regard and will complement existing school-based programmes.

The RAISE Programme's Strategic Objectives are:

- Raising achievement and addressing educational disadvantage; and
- Raising aspirations through a whole community approach to education.

The RAISE Programme helps to deliver on the mission set by the 'A Fair Start' report to ensure all children and young people regardless of background are given the best start in life. It aims to raise educational achievement and aspirations using a combination of Locality Led Projects and Cross-Cutting Initiatives.

A series of Locality Led Projects will be identified through an open call to deliver against the objectives and needs set out in the Strategic Area Plan for each RAISE locality. Cross-Cutting Initiatives will complement Locality Led Projects by responding in a strategic way to priorities common to several localities and bringing additional opportunities to communities around key themes.

[1] Belfast has been sub divided into four areas.

The RAISE Portadown Strategic Area Plan sets out the context for this locality and identifies the key issues that underpin educational disadvantage in the area, highlights potential proposals on how to address the identified gaps in provision and support the educational achievement of children and young people in the locality.

The Portadown Strategic Area Plan has been developed through a co-design process involving public engagement and creative approaches to give voice to organisations, children and young people and parents in the locality.

The Locality Reference Group has played a critical role in informing, shaping and developing this Strategic Area Plan on behalf of the locality. It was produced in accordance with the guidance on the development of a Strategic Area Plan which can be found here[2]. The Plan is owned by the locality and the Locality Reference Group.

The *RAISE Portadown Strategic Area Plan* is available here.

RAISE Portadown Locality

Whilst the Locality Reference Group has indicated that the RAISE Programme will benefit children and young people across Portadown, there are core SOA's within the Portadown locality where particular needs have been identified relating to educational underachievement. It is acknowledged by the Locality Reference Group that there will be a requirement first and foremost that the needs of children and young people that live within the identified RAISE SOAs must be prioritised.

RAISE Portadown is located within the District Electoral Area's (DEA's) of Portadown and is part of Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council. The Super Output Areas (SOAs) identified are - Annagh 2, Ballybay, Corcrain 1, Corcrain 2 and Tavanagh.

RAISE Portadown - Call for Locality Led Projects

Nine priority objectives have been identified within the RAISE Portadown Strategic Area Plan. These have been ranked and prioritised by the Locality Reference Group.

The Department of Education is now seeking proposals for Locality Led Projects to deliver against a number of the identified objectives. Further information is set out below.

[2] Developing a Locality Strategic Area Plan, Department of Education

RAISE Portadown has an available budget of **up to £401,803** which will be available to deliver Locality Led Projects over the next two years (up to end August 2027). Further funding may be made available at a later date.

For this call for Locality Led Projects, up to £310,000 is available to deliver projects against the first four objectives outlined in the Portadown Strategic Area Plan. The maximum amount available against each objective is outlined below. A future call for Locality Led Projects will seek to identify projects to deliver against additional objectives and address gaps.

Priority	Objective	Available Budget
1	**IMPROVE ATTENDANCE BY STRENGTHENING LINK BETWEEN HOME, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY**	Up to £80k
2	**LEARNING SUPPORT FOR KEY STAGE 2 & 3**	Up to £100k
3	**EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR PUPILS DISENGAGED FROM LEARNING**	Up to £50k
4	**SPEECH, LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION**	Up to £80k

Project proposals are invited from organisations with experience of successful working in the locality, schools serving those pupils who live within a RAISE locality or area identified within the locality's Strategic Area Plan (excluding independent and preparatory schools), early years providers, colleges and properly constituted community groups and voluntary organisations. Examples of which include Associations, Trusts, Companies limited by Guarantee, Community Interest Companies, Charitable Incorporated Organisations or Industrial and Provident Societies. Proposals from Churches will also be considered.

As one of the key objectives of the RAISE Programme is raising aspirations through a whole community approach to education, collaborative/ consortium proposals will also be welcomed.

Submitting a proposal for a Locality Led Project

To propose a Locality Led Project organisations will be required to complete a Locality Led Project Identification Template.

The *RAISE Locality Led Projects – Identification of RAISE Locality Led Projects and RAISE Locality Led Project Identification Template Guidance Notes* document is available here.

The template should be completed on the RAISE online platform via the following link:

https://raise.whole.school/project-bid-form/signup

Organisations will be asked to create an account on the RAISE online platform. This will allow access to the platform and the creation of a project proposal template. Organisations will be able to view all the project proposals they have created on the platform dashboard.

Organisations should regularly save any changes by pressing the save button at the bottom of the page. Completed project proposals must be submitted by pressing the submit button on the bottom of the page. Submitted project proposals can be viewed and edited up until the call deadline.

Organisations may also withdraw a submitted project proposal from consideration by the Assessment Panel by pressing the withdraw button at the bottom of the page. Pressing the withdraw button will not permanently delete the project proposal and it can be reversed by pressing the submit button again.

A project will deliver against one Locality Objective, and a specific template must be completed for each project proposal. Several proposed projects may be submitted against a Locality Objective. An organisation can propose multiple projects by completing the template for each proposed project.

Please note, within the RAISE Portadown Strategic Area Plan details have been included to outline what the Locality Reference Group feel might be potential solutions for the delivery of the objective within the locality. This is not exhaustive and there may be other evidence based approaches to deliver against a specific objective.

Each Locality Objective has been linked in the Platform to a specific RAISE Intermediary Benefit as set out in the Strategic Area Plan. When completing the template, organisations will have the opportunity to choose a number of secondary Intermediary Benefits which will also be addressed by the proposed project. Please note that evaluation data will be required for any additional Intermediary Benefits.

Careful consideration should be given to the scope of each objective to ensure full implementation, for example, in terms of the geographical area covered. The information provided will be used to assess and score your proposal in line with the process set out in the attached guidance notes for completing this application.

Consideration will be given to applications for projects on a multi-annual basis, up to 31 August 2027, however, the need and benefits of multi-annual funding should be set out clearly in the relevant sections of the template. In the case of multi-annual projects, letters of offer will issue for the lifetime of the project but will be conditional on the availability of funding each year and positive evaluation.

For any technical queries with the RAISE online Platform, please contact Wholeschool on 028 90 610220 or e-mail support@wholeschool.ie.

Assessment Process

All project applications will be assessed by a panel. The panel will include officials from the Department of Education and at least one external member with experience of education or locality-based programmes.

The *RAISE Assessment Panel Scoring Guidance* is available here.

Timescales

All project applications must be submitted via the online platform **by 2.00pm on 30 September 2025**. Late applications will not be accepted.

Appeals

This process does not include an opportunity for unsuccessful applicants to appeal the outcome of the call. The decision of the Assessment Panel will therefore be final.

Release of funding

On Wednesday 18 June 2025 two cases were granted leave and will proceed to a full Judicial Review hearing in September 2025. There may as a result be some impact on the delivery of the RAISE Programme and release of funding across localities. Whilst the Department can issue calls for projects to deliver against Strategic Area Plans, it has confirmed to the Court and the Applicants in those proceedings that it will not however award Letters of Offers, confirm or release any funding for projects in any locality until at least 30 September 2025.

Locality Co-Ordinator

The Locality Co-Ordinator for the Portadown locality will be available to offer help and advice throughout the call process and can be contacted at Helen.Donnelly@education-ni.gov.uk.