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Dear Stakeholder,

## **RAISE PROGRAMME UPDATE – CALL TWO FOR LOCALITY LED PROJECTS**

I am writing to provide you with an update on the RAISE Programme and to draw your attention to the publication of some important information.

### **Locality Led Projects – Call Two**

Today I am delighted to advise that the second call for Locality Led Projects is now live. RAISE Strategic Area Plans for all 18 localities have been published previously and are available on the Department of Education's website. Other information on the call for Locality Led Projects can be found [here](#).

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](#).

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 appropriately 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 are encouraged.

All project applications must be submitted via the online platform **by 22 April 2026, 12 noon**. Late applications will not be accepted. Please note that all project proposals require the provision of a costed workplan and must not exceed the budget stated for each objective.

I would be grateful if you could share this information with your networks.

### **RAISE Home School Community Connections – Call for Locality Led Projects**

Twelve of the RAISE localities prioritised objectives in their Strategic Area Plan to improve links between home, school and community. While these objectives broadly covered the links between home, school and community there was limited consistency across the plans as to the specific roles, what the focus would be and how they would be delivered. When considering the RAISE Strategic Area Plans, the Assessment Panel and subsequently the RAISE Programme Board noted that a more strategic approach may lead to better outcomes. The Minister of Education agreed that these objectives should be held back from Call One to determine the most appropriate way forward. The Department is now seeking proposals to enhance links between home, school and community, to deliver against the relevant objectives in those localities. Details can be found [here](#).

### **RAISE Programme Update**

I would also like to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on the wider delivery of the RAISE Programme.

As you will be aware the Department has been involved in a Judicial Review in relation to the RAISE Programme. The judgment, which was delivered on Friday 12 December 2025, dismissed legal challenges to the Department's methodology for allocating funding under the RAISE programme. Subsequently the Department has been served with two Notices of Appeal. The timeline for the Appeal process has been agreed and the Appeal will be heard on 28-30 April 2026, with a judgment expected in the Autumn 2026.

Letters of notification issued to all applicants to the first call for Locality Led Projects in early December 2025. Following the Judicial Review judgment, the team began working with the lead organisations of the projects, advancing to the next stage of the process, to agree the terms of the letters of offer. Following detailed work and engagement the terms of the letters of offer have been agreed with the majority of organisations. A total of 65 projects from the first call will advance to delivery.

Work continues in relation to the Cross Cutting Initiatives with the **Reading with AI Project**, engaging 114 schools, in the final third of the research phase of the project, with a final report to be provided to the Department in July.

The **Holiday Revision Support Programme** is in delivery, some 60 schools provided a revision support programme during the Halloween 2025 holidays, and more than 100 schools have expressed an interest in providing a revision support programme over the Easter 2026 holidays.

Officials are working to develop **Literacy and Numeracy / Transitions Support Programmes** with over 290 schools have expressed an interest in this initiative.

The **Online Science of Learning Programme**, is progressing. The Classroom Excellence Programme, delivered in partnership with Evidence Based Education, will provide over 4,000 teachers with access to research and practical tools to enhance teaching and learning in their classrooms. Over 200 primary schools have signed up to the initiative.

Officials have worked with worked Gael Linn to support a programme focused on Irish language called **Scoil Spreagtha** which has now commenced and is operational. Work is ongoing to progress the remaining Cross Cutting Initiatives and we will keep stakeholders updated on progress.

Finally, the **Alternative Education Models** pilot and research cross cutting initiative includes research into alternative models of education and a small-scale pilot in two RAISE localities testing potential approaches. Queen's University, Belfast, have been appointed to take forward the research element of this Cross Cutting Initiative and work is now underway. Development of the two small scale pilots is also taking place with key stakeholders in the Lisburn and Derry / Londonderry RAISE localities, as both included related objectives within their respective Strategic Area Plans.

### **Information Sessions**

In December 2025 the RAISE team hosted three feedback sessions, based on the learning gleaned from the first call for Locality Led Projects. These were positively received and we have agreed to host two further information sessions to provide information for those considering bringing forward proposals for Locality Led Projects. The details of these sessions are set out below:

#### **RAISE Home School Community Connections**

Date: 23 March 2026

Time: 9.30am – 11am

Link will be sent out once registered

Register Here: [RAISE Home School Community Connections - Online Session](#)

#### **Call 2 for Locality Led Projects**

Date: 26 March 2026

Time: 3.30pm – 5pm

Link will be sent out once registered

Register Here: [RAISE Call 2 Locality Led Projects - Support Session](#)

The RAISE Team and I look forward to continuing to work with you as we move forward with this next phase of the Programme.

Yours sincerely,



**CLAIRE MCCLELLAND**  
**RAISE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR**