

Locality Led Projects – Call 2

Identification of RAISE Locality Led Projects and Locality Led Project Identification Template Guidance Notes

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RAISE Locality Led Projects

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RAISE Locality Led Projects

Identification of RAISE Locality Led Projects

Purpose of Document

This document sets out the approach to identifying projects to deliver against RAISE Strategic Area Plans and provides guidance notes to assist with the completion of the template to identify RAISE Locality Led Projects. This document should be read in conjunction with the [RAISE Developing a Locality Strategic Area Plan](#) Guidance.

RAISE Programme Overview

The RAISE Programme is a whole community, place-based approach to tackling educational disadvantage in 18 localities¹ across Northern Ireland supporting the Department of Education’s vision that “Every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding”.

The RAISE Programme will help to deliver on the mission, set by the report ‘A Fair Start’ to ensure all children and young people regardless of background are given the best start in life.

Strategic Area Plans

Bespoke Strategic Area Plans for each locality identify what is needed to support delivery against the Strategic Objectives of the Programme and propose objectives and actions based on research and evidence of what works.

Each Strategic Area Plan sets out the context of each locality, including current provision and existing investment. The Strategic Area Plan identifies the key issues that underpin educational disadvantage within the locality, put forward proposals on what is needed to address the identified gaps and outline recommendations on how best to support the educational achievement of children and young people in that area.

The plan includes objectives and high-level actions that are consistent with the strategic objectives of the programme and based on the needs of the children and young people within the locality.

Strategic Area Plans demonstrate clear alignment between the overarching RAISE Programme Strategic Objectives of Raising Aspirations and Raising Achievement, the overarching Programme Intermediary Benefits and those identified at a locality level.

¹ Belfast has been sub-divided into four areas and therefore it is expected that four Strategic Area Plans will be produced.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

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

RAISING ACHIEVEMENT

- ✓ Raising standards with a focus on increasing literacy, numeracy and digital skills outcomes for all pupils;
- ✓ Reduce the gap between FSME and non-FSME pupils;
- ✓ Improve pathways for children which motivate and support learners at risk of exclusion, marginalisation and underachievement;
- ✓ Increase opportunities and empower education professionals through professional learning programmes.

RAISING ASPIRATIONS

- ✓ Increase the value of education to families and children;
- ✓ Increase pupil attendance, engagement, confidence and aspiration;
- ✓ Increase the proportion of school leavers going to positive destinations;
- ✓ Improve relationships between education settings and children and young people, parents and community;
- ✓ Build capacity within communities and increase collective impact through a whole community approach.

INTERMEDIARY BENEFITS

Further details on RAISE Strategic Area Plans can be found at the following link: [Developing a Locality Strategic Area Plan](#). Strategic Area Plans are published in the RAISE Programme section of the Department of Education website, [here](#).



RAISE Locality Led Projects

To deliver against the objectives and high-level actions set out in RAISE Strategic Area Plans, Locality Led Projects were identified through an open call for projects that closed on 6 October 2025. This second call invites further applications to meet a number of additional locality objectives.

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 are encouraged.

Application Process

Details of the call process will be published in the call notice for each locality. This will include the amount of funding remaining for the delivery of each Strategic Area Plan objective. This will be determined by the Department based on the amount of budget available in the call, the priority ranking and scale of each objective in Strategic Area Plan, and the type, frequency and intensity of the intervention likely to be required to meet the needs identified.

In order to propose a project for consideration by the Assessment Panel, organisations will be required to complete a Locality Led Project Identification Template. A specific template must be completed for each Strategic Area Plan objective. 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.

The form should be completed online and the link to the template will be published with each call for projects. Word limits apply in each section of the template so that the administrative effort for applicants is proportionate while ensuring that the key information is provided. This will help the Assessment Panel to understand your project and the outcomes that it will deliver. The Assessment Panel may seek urgent clarification from an applicant on the specific meaning of information submitted in a template but new and additional information will not be accepted.



In order to be eligible for funding, your organisation must:

- be legally able to operate in Northern Ireland;
- be independent and have a constitution or set of rules defining your aims, objectives and operational procedures;
- have a suitable management structure and appropriate financial controls; and
- comply with relevant legislative requirements in respect of employment, health and safety, discrimination and equality of opportunity.

If a request for funding is successful organisations may be asked for documentary evidence to support the above.

Funding is available for projects up to 31 August 2027.

The Assessment Panel will consider the balance of projects being supported in each RAISE locality to ensure that projects supported meet the needs identified in the Strategic Area Plan. It will also be necessary to consider the projects being delivered as Cross-Cutting Initiatives within your RAISE locality.

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 Assessment Panel scoring guidance is published on the DE website [here](#).

The panel will assess each template and allocate a score against the following criteria:

1. Alignment to the RAISE Programme Strategic Objectives, the objectives, benefits and needs within the relevant Locality Strategic Area Plan, addressing educational disadvantage, and additionality (Sections B and C)
2. Delivery Arrangements and Monitoring and Evaluation (Sections D and E)
3. Financial/Economic (Section F)

Criterion 1 will be allocated a score of up to 50, Criterion 2 will be allocated a score of up to 25 and Criterion 3 will be allocated a score of up to 25.

A project must score a minimum of 60 to pass the assessment. This includes minimum scores within each criterion as set out in the RAISE Assessment Panel Scoring Guidance.

In addition to this scored assessment, the panel will also consider the extent to which you have satisfied the following key questions with the information provided in the rest of the template:

- Does the proposal have clear objectives?



- Is the proposal supported by an appropriate evidence-based approach?
- Does the financial information provided demonstrate value for money and an effective approach to financial controls?
- Has the Declaration been completed and signed?
- Is the Proposal within the budget set for the locality objective?



Locality Led Projects Application Guidance Notes

Completing a Locality Led Project Template

These guidance notes are intended to assist organisations with the completion of the Locality Led Project Identification Template for projects under the RAISE Programme. The information provided will be used to assess and score your proposal in line with the process set out in the guidance notes for completing this application below.

ONLY INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE TEMPLATE WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR ASSESSMENT.

If you have any additional queries or need any assistance with completing the template, please contact the relevant Locality Co-Ordinator.

The form should be completed online and the link to the template will be published with each call for projects.

Guidance notes are provided for each section of the application for ease of reference.

Section A: Project Information

In this section you will be required to provide some basic information on the proposed project, who is bringing the project forward and the objective which the project will deliver against.

You will be required to select the appropriate RAISE Locality for which you are proposing a project from a drop-down list. You should also provide the title of the proposed project.

You should clearly demonstrate whether the proposed project is being brought forward by an individual organisation or a collaboration. You should list all of those involved in the proposed project. It is important that you only include the details of organisations who have confirmed their agreement to be involved in the application. If you are planning to work with other schools or voluntary and community organisations you must discuss and agree, with them, their involvement in the project before submitting your application. A lead organisation should be identified, and you should also indicate whether the lead organisation has experience of successfully delivering within the locality.

Contact details should be provided.



You will be required to select the specific objective from the relevant Strategic Area Plan which the proposed project will deliver against. These will be available to select from a drop-down list. Your application will be assessed against the objective you choose so it is important that you choose the correct objective at this stage.

Section B: Project Details

This section is broken down into several sub-sections to provide the assessment panel with a clear understanding of the need for your project and what it will deliver.

Project Description

- In this section you should insert a clear and concise description of your project to explain:
- what your project will do
- who the beneficiaries are
- what you will deliver (including the type of provision, number of sessions/interventions etc. and where the delivery will take place e.g. in schools or in the community)
- what the outcomes are that you expect to achieve.

You should also provide a brief outline of how the proposed project delivers against the relevant Strategic Area Plan Objective.

Project Need

In this section you should explain clearly why the project is needed and provide evidence to support the need. This could be as a result of the community engagement and consultation undertaken by the RAISE Team which informed the Strategic Area Plan for the locality. If there is research or statistical data that supports the need for the project, reference it in this section.

You should provide evidence of the demand for the service that you are providing. Include as much detail as possible, including the scale/projected number of participants who will benefit.

Children and young people are at the centre of the RAISE Programme and you should explain any participation of children and young people in the design of the project and opportunities they will have to inform and shape the project. The Department has published two relevant reports on engagement with children and young people and parents: [Final Reports](#).



Project Objectives

Insert the objectives for your project to explain exactly what outcomes you are expecting to achieve. The project objectives should be SMART i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound and must align with/contribute to the locality objective within the Strategic Area Plan that your project will deliver against.

- Specific – be clear on the focus of your project and the specific area for improvement.
- Measurable – how will progress be quantified?
- Achievable – the objective must be achievable.
- Realistic – the objective must be realistic, given available resources.
- Timebound – specify when the result will be achieved.

You should keep your project objectives focused. You must set out how you intend to measure and evaluate each objective in section E of the application.

Section 75

You should indicate any Section 75 groups that will benefit from the proposed project.

Educational Disadvantage

In this section you should detail how your project will raise achievement and address educational disadvantage. You should also reference how your proposed project will raise aspirations through a whole community approach to education. Please provide any evidence that you might have that your project has support from your local community. This does not have to include a new and specific consultation for your project. You could refer to the consultation undertaken by the RAISE team to develop the RAISE Strategic Area Plan and/or subsequent stakeholder consultation if appropriate. If you have undertaken any specific community consultation in relation to the project, include who you consulted with, how you consulted and when the consultation took place. Provide a summary of the feedback from any consultation.

Duplication

Is there any duplication between your project and services/projects/programmes provided by any other organisation(s) or in existence within the locality? If so, please provide details as this may be considered as displacement. Please explain how you have considered and addressed “displacement”. Displacement is defined as “the degree to which an increase in productive capacity promoted by government policy is offset by reductions in productive capacity elsewhere”.



Section C: Additionality

In order to maximise the impact and outcomes of investment in RAISE localities, it is important to demonstrate that the project is providing additionality i.e. it would not happen or would only partially happen without RAISE support. RAISE support can also be considered to be additional if an activity is undertaken on a larger scale, earlier, or to a higher standard.

Information in this section should include:

- the extent to which your organisation could fund the project without RAISE investment (include details of any budget you would have available to allocate to the project);
- if there are existing funding sources for this activity, why is RAISE funding required and how will it complement existing provision?
- will there be accelerated delivery or enhanced quality/quantity due to RAISE intervention?
- evidence that the amount of funding sought is the minimum needed to enable the project; and
- the extent to which the project would happen without RAISE support.



Section D: Delivery Arrangements

Project Timescales

Insert the proposed start date and completion date for your project. An Assessment Panel will consider applications in April/May 2026, and it is anticipated that successful projects will be notified by the end of May 2026. Letters of Offer will be agreed thereafter, with the expectation that the majority of projects will commence no later than September 2026.

Project Milestones

You should include key project milestones for your proposed project. **This should detail all activities and dates for the project lifetime.**

Capability to Deliver

In this section demonstrate that your organisation has a clear plan and the capability to deliver this project through a whole community approach. This could involve collaboration with other organisations that have some of the skills needed to deliver the project or you managing the delivery of the project through another organisation with the necessary skills. You should describe your partnership working with a range of organisations in the development and delivery of your project, including collaboration between different sectors e.g. statutory agencies, community organisations, schools, research/academic bodies. It could also involve building the capacity of your organisation by developing existing staff to equip them with the necessary skills to deliver the project successfully. You should also demonstrate that your proposed delivery arrangements are the most effective and that you have considered other delivery options.

Information in this section could include:

- details of staff who will deliver the project – experience, qualifications etc.;
- evidence of successful delivery of similar projects (if appropriate) and what the outcomes were;
- alternative delivery arrangements that were considered;
- if the project is being delivered in partnership with another organisation an explanation of why the lead organisation was chosen; and
- evidence to support this being the most effective approach to delivering the desired outcome.



Project Risks

In this part you should outline the risks to the successful delivery of your project and how you plan to manage or reduce the potential impact of these risks. Please also address the risk of funding coming to an end by discussing how you would ensure that your project can demonstrate sustainability and leave a lasting legacy after funding ends, for example, by embedding the work into existing systems.

Section E: Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Please set out in the table provided how you intend to measure and evaluate the impact of your project, Example of project measurements are set out in Table 2 of the RAISE Evaluation Framework, they include:

- School assessment data
- School attendance data
- Pupil attitude surveys
- Bespoke surveys
- Other attendance data
- Number of interventions/sessions/workshops etc.
- Number of beneficiaries

This list is not exhaustive and you should detail what specific and relevant data you will collect.

You should detail what data you will collect. Every piece of data added should be added to the table on its own row and should be linked to one of the project objectives you set out in Section B.

It is important that you effectively measure your projects impact on the beneficiaries, and the extent that they are better off, in addition to the amount you will deliver and the quality of delivery.

You should ensure that it is clear for the Assessment Panel what data will be collected, what measurement tool or method will be used to collect the data, what the target is and the timescales for the collection of baseline and impact data.

Please ensure that you have a measurement and evaluation plan for **all** of the **objectives** you have set out in **Section B** .



In measuring progress and impact, it is often necessary to have a starting point or a baseline to consider change over time. Do you have baseline data (picture of where you are starting from)? Any pre and post- project questionnaires being used will need to be agreed with the RAISE Team if you are successful in advancing to the next stage.

It is important to bear in mind that all your outcomes need to be measurable (but the data does not necessarily have to exist already). Think about what the project plans to deliver.

- Can the action(s)/outcomes be defined?
- Can the action(s)/activity(ies) be measured?
- Do you hold data to allow the action(s)/activity(ies) to be measured?
- If not, does data exist somewhere else to allow monitoring?
- If data does not exist, can it be collected, by whom and in time?

The example in the table below details how you should set out your input in this section

What data will you collect to enable evaluation of the project?	What tool or method will you use to collect the data?	Target – what change do you expect to achieve?	Timescale: When will you submit the baseline data?	Timescale: When will you submit the Impact data ?	Project Objective (Link to the objective in Section 3)
<i>Example – Predicted/Actual GCSE grades of each individual pupil before and after the intervention</i>	GCSE grades will be supplied by partner schools	80% of participating pupils will improve by one predicted grade	March 2026	September 2026	LINK TO RELEVANT PROJECT OBJECTIVE
<i>Add additional rows as required</i>					

Section F: Financial Information

The information provided in this section will be used by the assessment panel to determine if your project demonstrates value for money and if you have an effective approach to budget management in place. **CAPITAL COSTS ARE EXCLUDED.**



Total Funding Requested

You should provide detail on the total amount of funding you are requesting for your project. The total amount **must not** exceed the specific budget allocated to the Locality Objective you have chosen, as set out in the Call notice. **If your request for funding exceeds the available budget your project will not be assessed.** Note that this may differ from the total budget for the locality.

Costed Workplan

Please provide a breakdown of all proposed expenditure in the Costed Workplan table. Break the costs down separately under each activity that makes up your project. You must explain how you have calculated the total cost for each activity, this includes:

- Staff Costs (Job Title, Number of Staff Hours allocated to the activity and Staff Cost per hour)
- Resource Costs (Broken down by type)
- Refreshment Costs
- Travel Costs
- Any Other Costs
- Cost per Sessions/Interventions/Workshops
- Number of Beneficiaries

An Example of how you should to set out your answer is set out in the table below:

Activity (One row per activity. Include all elements of cost for each activity.)	Total cost of the activity	Start Date	End Date	Project Objective(s) (Link to the objective in Section 3)
<p><i>Example – After school small group revision sessions</i></p> <p>After school small group revision sessions for 80 KS4 Pupils in 3 Post Primary Schools.</p> <p>Staff Costs = 20 sessions per group of four pupils x 20 groups = 400 sessions of 1 hour each. Hourly rate of £30 per hour x 400 sessions is £12,000</p> <p>Resource costs = Learning Materials for pupils £12 per pupil x 80 pupils = £960</p> <p>Delivered in school therefore there is no venue costs.</p>	£12,960	1 March 2026	30 June 2026	Link to relevant project objective
Add additional rows as required				
Total project cost	£12,960			



If the proposed project is to be supported jointly with another funding source please provide details in the other funding sources table.

The list below provides some examples of the type of expenditure that may be supported in order for you to deliver your project in line with the aims of the programme:

- Fees for facilitators/speakers involved in delivering the project
- Project staff salaries
- Promotional costs
- Rent and utility costs (or apportionment thereof, this will need to be explained and justified)
- Resource materials
- Travel costs
- Vehicle rental to deliver the project
- Venue Hire to enable project delivery
- Management fee (the Department will only consider Management fees up to a maximum of 10% of the total funding requested)

All costs provided should be directly associated with delivery of your RAISE project. This must be evidenced within your application. The cost of external evaluation should not be included.

Projects in receipt of funding for staff/administration costs through RAISE will be required to provide proof of hours. This can be in the form of a timesheet showing allocation of hours, calendar entries of hours worked on the project, or an official note briefly stating the activities and number of hours/days per week/month spent on your RAISE Project.

Time claimed through the RAISE grant must be additional to hours currently claimed from other funding sources. **RAISE will not reimburse hours which constitute double funding.** Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that these costs are not being covered from another source.

Funding is available for projects up to 31 August 2027. Projects must be delivered and full expenditure incurred by 31 August 2027 at the latest.

If you are unsure if your proposed spend is eligible, please contact your Locality Co-Ordinator for advice.



Financial Controls

For non public sector applicants, in the financial controls part of this section you should outline the management and financial controls to ensure that the activities will be delivered on time and within budget. You might wish to include information about your project management structures including who will be responsible for budget management and what systems will be in place to monitor expenditure against profiles.

Please provide details of any previous funding received from DE. Include the name of the project, year, budget awarded and amount spent against the budget.

Please provide details of any other funding that your organisation is currently in receipt of and any funding applications pending. This should include the funding source, period of time covered by funding, the amount of funding and the specific purpose for which it has been awarded. If your project is dependent on funding from another source, confirmation of the funding allocation will be required before RAISE funding is released.

Please specify the VAT status of your organisation. Does your organisation qualify for VAT relief? Is your organisation VAT registered? Include/exclude VAT in the budget headings depending on the status of your organisation.

Section G: Declaration

The declaration section should be completed by two people one of whom must be an office bearer i.e. a person who holds a formal position in your organisation. Templates will only be accepted with a signed declaration.

