

## Executive Decision Making by an Officer with Delegated Powers

Decision to be taken by: *Siobhan Farmer, Director of Public Health*

Pursuant to an Authorisation from Cabinet:

Decision: To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities and the Executive Director for Corporate Resources to allocate the Local Authority Contain Outbreak Management Fund in order to deliver the objectives in the Local Outbreak Management Plan in accordance with the Council's standing orders and procurement legislation.

Taken by: Cabinet 27.01.21

Came into force: 04.02.21

On 28 September 2022, Peter Bungard, Chief Executive, delegated authority to the Director of Public Health to take the Delegated Decision in place of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health to whom authority was originally delegated by Cabinet on 27 January 2021.

Report title: Local Authority Contain Outbreak Management Fund allocation to Tackling Disadvantage across the Local Education System

<b>The decision</b>	<p>Having consulted with the Leader (in his capacity as portfolio holder for Public Health and Communities) and the Executive Director for Corporate Resources in accordance with a decision taken by Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021:</p> <p><u>DECISION</u></p> <p>To allocate £175,000 from the Local Authority Contain Outbreak Management Fund to initiatives aimed at reducing educational disadvantage.</p> <p>Such funding shall be managed through the Gloucestershire Education Forum who shall seek to galvanise the capacity and expertise of systems leaders in the local education system (namely, school leaders in maintained schools and academy/Multi-academy Trust schools) during the period January 2023 – December 2023. by encouraging them to them work with the council and a national school improvement expert to lead cross-system workstreams that will endeavour to reduce educational disadvantage.</p>
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<p><b>Background documents</b></p>	<p>Gloucestershire Living with Covid Plan  <a href="#">Living with COVID-19 in Gloucestershire - Gloucestershire County Council</a></p> <p>COMF Cabinet Paper  <a href="https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1608">https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1608</a></p> <p>Education Policy Institute report to Essex  <a href="#">EPI local authority analysis: Report for Essex Education Task Force - Education Policy Institute</a></p>
<p><b>Reasons for the decision</b></p>	<p>The Department for Health and Social Care required each top tier local authority to have a Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) in place and subsequently a Living with Covid Plan. The Department for Health and Social then allocated funding to top tier local authorities to implement such plans.</p> <p>The funding to which this report relates provides the resource investment to establish, develop and create the conditions for the momentum required around each levelling up focused workstream identified by the research and the Forum membership linked to the Education White paper. The future capacity will be via adoption and ownership of the workstreams by the education systems leaders and school to school working supported by the LA and the Forum.</p>
<p><b>Resource implications</b></p>	<p>The sum of £175,000 for the initiatives developed through the Gloucestershire Education Forum will be funded from the Local Authority Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) of £17.90 million that was allocated to Gloucestershire County Council from the Department for Health and Social Care in 2020/21 and 2021/22 for the purpose of implementing the Gloucestershire Local Outbreak Management Plan and subsequent Living with Covid Plan.</p>
<p><b>Who has been consulted?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Leader, Mark Hawthorne (the Public Health and Communities portfolio having transferred to the Leader since the Cabinet decision of 27 January 2021)</li> <li>• Executive Director for Corporate Resources</li> <li>• internal support services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Legal Services</li> <li>○ Finance</li> <li>○ Communications</li> <li>○ Strategic Procurement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### **What were their comments?**

- The Leader, Mark Hawthorne is in full support of this proposal. The Leader was consulted as they are currently holding the Cabinet portfolio for Public Health and Communities following the stepping down of the previous Cabinet member, Nick Housden.
- Executive Director for Corporate Resources is in full support of this proposal
- internal support services:
  - Legal Services: Drafting advice in connection with this report has been provided to the report's author.
  - Finance – no additional comments
  - Communications - no additional comments
  - Strategic Procurement - no additional comments

### **Background/Context**

A Cabinet decision was taken on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities and the Executive Director for Corporate Resources to allocate the Local Authority Contain Outbreak Management Fund in order to deliver the objectives in the Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) in accordance with the Council's standing orders and procurement legislation.

Education can have a transformative effect on the life chances of young people, enabling them to fulfil their potential, have successful careers, and grasp opportunities. As well as having a positive impact on the individual, good quality education and child wellbeing also promotes economic productivity and a cohesive society.

The Gloucestershire Education Forum is an education system strategic platform for the county where, for the first time, all stakeholders in the system are represented – the LA, the Regional Director, the CEOs of all multi-academy trusts who have a footprint in Gloucestershire, chairs of all county and area headteacher associations for all sectors, the Diocese of Gloucester and Clifton.

Following the establishment of the Gloucestershire Education Forum (GEF) in April 2022, a sub-group met and drafted proposals on how the GEF might work to build school to school improvement capacity across the system for our schools and children and young people.

Roy Blatchford CBE was appointed as independent chair and chaired his first meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Further to a series of visits the Diocese, trusts, schools and settings across the county, a working group has been drawn together to advance thinking and steams of work.

The Education White Paper of March 2022 set out a welcome ambition to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the education landscape in levelling up for all children in terms of the quality of education they receive. The Schools' Bill based upon the

White Paper has encountered challenge in Parliament and been hampered by a period of national political turmoil and changes of Secretary of State for Education.

This context is an opportunity for the Gloucestershire Education Forum to shape our future direction and deliver county-wide ambitions for our children and young people. There are circa 7,000 children and young people in each age cohort in the county.

The role of the Local Authority, with statutory powers, is:

- To champion and advocate for every child and young person, especially those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- To facilitate strong partnerships with and between individual schools
- To act as key player in the partnership work of shaping and leading wider system development.

Each school/trust is autonomous, accountable to different governance, and occupying a particular geographical and social context. That autonomy is important to recognize and respect. Equally, the LA promoting and facilitating working together - on behalf of the 7,000 in each age cohort - we can co-create the design of Gloucestershire's Education System over a period of time. In doing so, we can:

- deliver the best possible education for *all* children and young people: academic and skills success, and in their well-being to become confident 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens
- celebrate a school led system, where school leaders and governors come together in the best interests of their local communities and level up for their pupils and their wider communities.

The proposed funding will be used by the Director of Education for:

- Commissioning of 50 days of consultant time at £600 per day - £30,000
- Commissioning of the Education Policy Institute to undertake an independent research programme into the pre and post Covid educational disadvantage profile of the county to provide both key data to inform the work of the Forum sub-groups and more widely across the Education directorate to inform the workstreams of the Education Inclusion Strategy - £45k.
- Resource to support the development and roll out of dedicated sub-group workstream projects, including project management support communications and training/roll out events and school to school improvement working; school leadership and education consultant time. It is anticipated there will be a maximum of 5 workstreams at £20k per workstream - £100k

Education Policy Institute Research focus:

The focus will include post-Covid recovery in education and young people's mental health, and help track how well early years providers, schools and further education settings are supporting young people and closing the gap between the most disadvantaged and the rest. This is set within a wider context of economic recovery in the county and enabling families to get back into or remain in employment.

This report will provide the state of the disadvantage gap across multiple phases of education in Gloucestershire, and how this has changed over the past decade. For early years (end of Reception year) and key stage 2 (KS2, end of primary school), they will summarise the state

of the disadvantage gap in Gloucestershire prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic (2018/19).

Due to the disruption to education caused by this pandemic, national assessments were not carried out in 2019/20 in these phases. Therefore it won't yet be possible to estimate how the disadvantage gap in Gloucestershire has been impacted by the pandemic for early years or KS2. For key stage 4 (GCSE, KS4, end of secondary school) and age 16-19, there will be estimates of the gap in 2019/20 along with commentary on how to interpret these gaps in light of the markedly different approach to exam grading in 2022.

Further analysis will be provided of post-16 outcomes using publicly available local authority data.

In addition, the report will provide local comparisons within Gloucestershire, as well as selecting similar counties and local authorities from across England to provide more context on how well Gloucestershire enables disadvantaged pupils to achieve. These comparisons will be made for 2018/19 only given the national public exam context.

Analysis will also be provided of how Gloucestershire school performance has improved in recent years, in comparison with other schools with similar starting points nationally.

#### **Outcomes:**

- A whole county local education system level forum (maintained and academy schools jointly), that is empowered through a high calibre and influential independent chair with a national reputation, to galvanise whole system change regardless of governance status, including:
  - A south Cotswolds district pilot, leading to a county-wide project focusing on achieving every child in the county reading at their chronological age – A Year of Reading – the methodology and approach based on a tried and tested model in Essex to impact the most basic literacy tool: the ability to access the written word and through it the school curriculum.
  - A commitment to a 'maximising opportunity project' by the G7 Grammar School heads. The project will be modelled on the highest performing grammar schools for children with disadvantage in England to raise grammar school entry for students who attract Pupil Premium Funding to a minimum of 10% of the school population.
  - Education system leaders' agreement on the principles for the development of a trust-led system in Gloucestershire with the LA/ independent chair focusing on facilitating the system's provision and inclusion practices for vulnerable and disadvantaged students when the county is fully academised.
- All Education phase/sector independent research data for the county identifying education disadvantage, and perpetuated educational disadvantage to inform the targeted workstreams of the Gloucestershire Education Forum sub-groups. The specific focus of the workstreams will be tailored in response to the research outcomes.

### **Alternative options considered and why they were rejected**

The option **not** to allocate funds to tackling disadvantage in Education was considered by the Director of Education and rejected on the basis that the Gloucestershire Education Forum is ideally situated to lead the coordination of this work and ensure the delivery of the following strategies which have inclusion and reduction of disadvantage at the heart of their priorities:

- The SEND Strategy 2022-25
- The Education Inclusion Strategy 2022-25
- The Preparing for Adulthood Strategy
- The Post16 Education Provision Strategy

The Gloucestershire Education Forum has the buy-in and the national and local context that makes this forum and its activity vital to the LA's role as an influential stakeholder in the education and skills agenda of the county. It links to the key Council objectives of:

Levelling Up Our Communities:

- Working with local schools and academies to improve the quality of local education provision through the Gloucestershire Education Forum
- Continue to develop a comprehensive range of good quality, inclusive education, early years and care provision that meets the needs of all young people through sufficiency, school/setting improvement and safeguarding activity.

### **Risk Analysis**

The decision and, more particularly, the risk that the allocation of the funding won't contribute to tackling disadvantage in Education is considered low risk. The Gloucestershire Education Forum is an established partnership in which the Local Authority had a lead role.

There is a risk in respect of any grant award that it may contravene subsidy control regime requirements hence, for the purpose of mitigating such risk, the council has satisfied itself that: (a) the market would not provide the activities for which the grant funding is intended; (b) the proposed grants are payable on a broadly unconditional basis hence would not to meet the definition of a contract that would need to be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015; (c) the proposed grants are for small sums that will be given to truly local organisations (schools) only, hence they are unlikely to affect international trade and will therefore fall outside the scope of the subsidy control regime; and (d) the proposed grants will not result in more than £332,000 being given to any single beneficiary over three years, hence they are outside the scope of the subsidy control regime

**Equalities considerations**

A Due Regard statement has been completed for the LOMP.

The Director of Public Health and the Leader have read and considered the Due Regard Statement in order to satisfy themselves as the decision makers that due regard has been given.

**Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed? Yes**

*If 'Yes', please attached the signed Equality Impact Assessment.*

**Has any conflict of interest been declared by any Cabinet Member consulted on the decision?**

*The council's Monitoring Officer should be consulted, in the first instance, if any conflict of interest is declared by a Cabinet Member.*

**If any conflict of interest declared, was a dispensation granted by the Audit and Governance Committee of the Council?**

No

Date of dispensation:

**Does this decision report form or any supporting papers provided contain confidential or exempt information?**

*(Refer to Democratic Services Unit for advice if necessary)*

No

*If Yes, please provide details of document(s) that are confidential or exempt*

**Does this decision need to be published on the GCC website?**

*(Refer to guidance on "Executive Decisions taken by Officers").*

Yes

In coming to this decision I have given due and full regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") by reference to the law itself and also the relevant Equality Impact Assessment, which was/were prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

Having fully considered all available information, I have decided to reject any alternative options and take the recommended decision(s), for the reasons set out in this report.



Signed

*Siobhan Farmer, Director of Public Health*

Date 15.12.22

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(include relevant officer's contact details)