

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Council Meeting</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>6 October 2020</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Leader and Champion
Outcome	Establish key relationships with Government, agencies and potential strategic partners
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>N/A</b>
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to present correspondence for Members' consideration.

**2.0** The following are listed:

### **2.1 Partner Contributions to Knockagh Joint Committee**

Correspondence has been received from Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in relation to the financial contribution sought from partner Councils towards the upkeep of the Knockagh Memorial.

Council is invited to consider the financial contribution recommended by the Joint Committee:

- 2015-2019 £1000 per annum
- 2020 onwards £2000 per annum

Attached:

- Correspondence Partner Contributions Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
- Knockagh Joint Committee Minutes 27th November 2019

### **2.2 Newry Mourne & Down District Council, Marie Ward, Chief Executive, correspondence dated 4 August 2020**

At a Meeting of Newry Mourne & Down District Council held on Monday 3 August 2020, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

*"That this Council supports the need for greater localised information from the Department of Health regarding localised outbreaks of COVID positive cases in the area. In the wake of the suspected localised outbreak in the Rowallane area, had local representatives' access to more specific information, a downturn in footfall and containment of anxiety in non-affected regions may have been prevented.*

*Therefore, this Council calls on the Department of Health and Public Health Agency to provide DEA specific information or to provide a helpline for Councillors to reduce this from happening to other areas going forward".*

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have asked that the Department of Health and the Public Health Agency enable Councils across Northern Ireland to have some way of gaining more localised information.

Members of Newry, Mourne and District Council unanimously agreed to this Motion and urge your Council to support it.

**2.3 Northern Ireland Housing Council, correspondence dated 10 September 2020**

The Minutes of the Northern Ireland Housing Council Meeting held 13 August 2020 and September Bulletin are attached for information.

**2.4 Launch of the “Engage Programme” To Support Children And Young People As They Return To School, correspondence dated 23 September 2020**

Correspondence has been received from Department of Education, informing of the launch of the “Engage” programme.

The wellbeing of children and young people remains a primary concern and as routines within school are being established, taking into account the changing nature of the Covid-19 landscape, this important programme will provide an extra level of support to schools to manage pupil’s learning as they begin their educational journey again this autumn.

Copy correspondence attached.

**3.0 It is recommended** that Council consider the correspondence.

Ref: TC/ab/LH

Date: 20 January 2020



Sent via email to:

[Jacqui.Dixon@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:Jacqui.Dixon@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)  
[David.Jackson@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](mailto:David.Jackson@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)  
[david.burns@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:david.burns@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

Dear Chief Executives

**Re: Partner Contributions to Knockagh Monument Joint Committee**

Following the Local Government Reform of 2015, the Knockagh War Memorial and surrounding areas were transferred to Mid & East Antrim Borough Council, having previously been under the guardianship of former Carrickfergus Borough Council.

In consultation with the other County Antrim Councils, the Knockagh Joint Committee was established, comprising of two representatives from Mid & East Antrim Borough Council; Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council. Its primary purpose is to oversee the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of the County Antrim War Memorial at the Knockagh and to review and agree the programme for the Annual Service of Remembrance.

Located on an elevated site at the Knockagh, overlooking Greenisland, the County Antrim War Memorial stands at 110 feet high and was initially built in 1924 to commemorate those from County Antrim who had fallen in the Great War. It now also commemorates those who lost their lives in the 1939-1945 War. Refurbishment works were undertaken to the monument in 2019/20, paid for by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

At the first meeting of the Knockagh Joint Committee following the Local Government Elections, amongst other issues, Members considered the matter of financial contributions. The Joint Committee has recommended that contributions be sought from partner Councils towards both the upkeep of this significant County Antrim War Memorial and the costs of the Annual Service of Remembrance.

There was considerable discussion of the level of contributions to be requested, resulting in the recommendation of £1,000.00 per annum for the first four years of the new Council structure ie 2015 - 2019 being £4,000.00 per Council, with an increased contribution of £2,000.00 per annum from 2020 onwards, reflecting the reduced number of County Antrim Councils following RPA. (Prior to 2015 each of the eight Councils contributed £1,000.00 annually.)

Please reply to:

Head Office  
The Braid  
1-29 Bridge Street  
Ballymena BT43 5EJ

Ballymena Office  
Ardeevin  
80 Galgorm Road  
Ballymena BT42 1AB

Carrickfergus Office  
Museum & Civic Centre  
11 Antrim Street  
Carrickfergus BT38 7DG

Larne Office  
Smiley Buildings  
Victoria Road  
Larne BT40 1RU

Planning Office  
County Hall  
182 Galgorm Road  
Ballymena BT42 1QL

Chief Executive  
Anne Donaghy

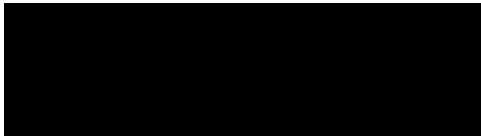
Tel: 0300 1245 000

[www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk)

I have attached the draft minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2019 for your information and I would ask that you place this matter before your Council for consideration of the financial contribution suggested by the Joint Committee. Perhaps you would advise me in due course of the outcome of your Council's decision and, if your Council is content to make a financial contribution, an invoice for same will be duly issued.

If you have any queries on this matter, please contact my office.

Yours sincerely



**Anne Donaghy**  
**Clerk & Chief Executive**

*Enc*



**MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Knockagh Monument Joint Committee Meeting  
held on Wednesday, 27 November 2019 at 2.30pm in the Dry Arts Workshop,  
The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena**

**Present:** Cllr R Foster  
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council;  
Cllr U Mackin  
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council;  
Cllr J Palmer  
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council;

**In Attendance:** Mrs L Kennedy  
Director of Corporate Services, Mid & East Antrim Borough  
Council;  
Mrs L Hunter  
Democratic Services Manager, Mid & East Antrim Borough  
Council;  
Ms R Hosseini  
Committee Administration, Mid & East Antrim Borough  
Council.

ITEM	MINUTE	ACTION
1	<p><b>WELCOME AND APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR</b></p> <p>Mrs Kennedy welcomed those present.</p> <p>The late commencement time was noted.</p> <p>Mrs Kennedy noted that no Chair had been appointed to the Committee. In line with the Committee Terms of Reference, the Chair was to be a Mid and East Antrim (MEA) Council Elected Member. As no MEA Members were present, Mrs Kennedy sought direction on how to proceed.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr Palmer, seconded by Cllr Foster, it was</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> That Cllr Mackin chair today's Meeting.</p> <p>Mrs Kennedy reminded Members that there was normally a Committee Meeting held each year both prior to and after the event to commemorate the Battle of the Somme. The meetings were technical in nature and discussed the format of the events, any significant anniversaries/commemorations and also the maintenance, restoration work and the wider views of the other County Antrim member Councils.</p>	

## 2 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ms A Donaghy, Mr A McClelland, Mr P Mawhinney, Cllr S Ross and Cllr I Wallace.

## 3 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 3 MAY 2018

Tabled and previously circulated: Minutes of Meeting held on 3 May 2018.

Those present agreed to note the Minutes.

LK

## 4 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Tabled and previously circulated: Terms of Reference.

Mrs Kennedy advised that Draft Terms of Reference had been circulated in 2016. Members' attention was drawn to the background of the Knockagh Monument and the Committee, the Committee objectives, membership, meeting frequency and Development Fund.

Cllr Palmer advised that he felt it was beneficial for the Committee to meet twice a year, including April/May time for planning for the Somme Commemoration.

Mrs Kennedy remarked that she would circulate the Committee Terms of Reference to the four Committee Member Councils.

LK

## 5 RESTORATION WORK COMPLETED

Mrs Kennedy advised that, at the last Committee Meeting held in May 2018, Members had considered repair work which was required at the Monument. Heritage Lottery Funding and other avenues of support had proved unsuccessful, however, due to the significance of the monument and its exposed location, it was considered important to proceed with the work, which had been completed prior to Remembrance Day 2018. Work undertaken included new facing, removal of graffiti/grime, repointing, concrete repairs and inscription re-rendering, restoration and patching work.

Cllr Foster commended the high quality of workmanship and those present concurred.

Mrs Kennedy advised that the infrastructure for lighting had been added to the site with the cost covered by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, however, the budget was not currently available to power the lights. Consideration was being given to lighting options and, in the interim, short-term lighting for significant events could be facilitated by hiring a generator.

Cllr Foster referred to the monument at Scrabo and it was suggested

that Officers liaise with Ards and North Down Borough Council regarding the lighting of the tower and air traffic/aviation red warning lights.

LK

## 6 FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Mrs Kennedy advised that, in the legacy Carrickfergus Borough Council, each member Council contributed £1,000.00 each year to a Knockagh fund. Since the amalgamation of Councils in 2015, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council had not sought any payments from Councils.

Cllr Foster noted that Knockagh Monument was a County Antrim War Memorial and Cllr Mackin acknowledged the willingness of Committee member Councils to contribute in the past.

Mrs Kennedy suggested that the annual Committee member Council payment of £1,000.00 per annum be reinstated and the money ring-fenced. She confirmed that there was no dedicated Knockagh fund at present and any recently required works had been paid for by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

Cllr Palmer was of the opinion that member Councils should be contributing to a Knockagh fund on an annual basis. He suggested that all Member Councils make up the four years (2015-2019) £1,000.00 per annum contributions (ie £4,000.00 per Council) and continue to contribute £1,000.00 per annum moving forward. It was agreed that Mrs Kennedy would email each of the Committee member Councils so that consideration could be given to the funding situation and proposals.

LK

Discussion ensued, following which Cllr Palmer proposed that all Councils should contribute £1,000.00 per annum for the four years (2015-2019) (ie £4,000.00 per Council) and then increase contributions to £2,000.00 per annum from 2020 going forward in order to reflect the merger of the Councils.

LK

## 7 CAR PARKING PROVISION AT MONUMENT

Mrs Kennedy remarked that car parking at the monument proved challenging. Council had enquired regarding purchase of a field for car parking purposes but the current land owner did not wish to sell, however, was amenable to hiring the field to Council during events for car parking purposes.

Cllr Foster queried if the land was private or adopted and if a portion of the land could be gated. Mrs Kennedy agreed to report back in this regard and it was also agreed that she would investigate possible use of solar powered/battery back-up CCTV.

LK

Cllr Foster requested that an attendant be present at the bottom of the Monument at future events in order to alleviate traffic congestion.

LK



Cllr Foster queried if provision could be made for a hook system on the wreaths in future, similar to that used at Ballyclare, given the windy conditions at the Monument.

LK

After Members' discussion, it was agreed that the next Knockagh Monument Joint Committee Meeting would be held on 30 April 2020 in Carrickfergus Town Hall at 2.30pm. A representative from the Royal British Legion would be invited.

LK

The Meeting terminated at 3.18pm

Mrs L Kennedy	LK
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Marie Ward  
Chief Executive



Comhairle Ceantair  
an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin  
Newry, Mourne  
and Down  
District Council

Our ref: C/098/2020

4 August 2020

Mr David Jackson  
CEO  
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council  
Council HQ  
Cloonanvin  
66 Portstewart Road  
Coleraine  
BT52 1EY

Dear Mr Jackson

**Re: Information regarding Localised outbreaks of COVID Cases**

At a Meeting of Newry Mourne & Down District Council held on Monday 3 August 2020, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

***"That this Council supports the need for greater localised information from the Department of Health regarding localised outbreaks of COVID positive cases in the area. In the wake of the suspected localised outbreak in the Rowallane area, had local representatives' access to more specific information, a downturn in footfall and containment of anxiety in non-affected regions may have been prevented.***

***Therefore, this Council calls on the Department of Health and Public Health Agency to provide DEA specific information or to provide a helpline for Councillors to reduce this from happening to other areas going forward".***

During discussion Members expressed concern at misinformation, rumour and speculation regarding recent localised outbreaks of positive COVID cases within the District and the effect this was having on people and local businesses in hampering recovery and economic growth due to fear.

Members agreed it was essential that as elected representatives they needed to know exactly where clusters were occurring to prevent uncertainty and fear within communities.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have asked that the Department of Health and the Public Health Agency enable Councils across Northern Ireland to have some way of gaining more localised information.

Oifig an Iúir  
Newry Office  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry BT35 8DJ

Oifig Dhún Pádraig  
Downpatrick Office  
Downshire Civic Centre  
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road  
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

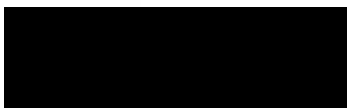
0330 137 4000 (Council)  
council@nmandd.org  
www.newrymournedown.org

Ag freastal ar an Dún  
agus Ard Mhacha Theas  
Serving Down  
and South Armagh



Members of Newry, Mourne and District Council unanimously agreed to this Motion and urge your Council to support it.

Yours sincerely



**Marie Ward**  
**Chief Executive**



Minutes of the 471<sup>st</sup> Meeting  
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council  
Conference Call via Webex  
Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 10.30 am

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The Officers joined the Meeting at 10.50 am

**Present:**

Ald Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough (Chair)
Cllr Anne Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Vice Chair)
Cllr Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough
Cllr Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Ald Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Ald John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Ald Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Cllr Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough
Cllr Michael Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District
Ald Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City

**In Attendance:**

Clark Bailie	Chief Executive (NIHE)
David Polley	Housing Division (DfC)
Judith Woodburn	Housing Division (DfC)
Elma Newberry	Assistant Director (NIHE)
Karly Greene	Head of Research & Equality Services (NIHE)
John Gowdy	Business Manager (NIHE)
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (NIHE, Secretariat)

**Apologies:**

Cllr Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	None.	

<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>To adopt the Minutes of the 470<sup>th</sup> Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020</b></p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor N Mathison, seconded by Alderman A Bresland and resolved, that the Minutes of the 470<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p><b>4.0</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b></p> <p><b>4.2</b></p>	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b></p> <p><u>Item 4.2 – Adaptation Performance and OT waiting times and assessments</u></p> <p>It was reported that a joint presentation by representatives from the Department of Health &amp; Social Services and the Housing Executive would be re-arranged for a future meeting to revisit and monitor the Adaptation Performance and OT waiting times and assessments.</p> <p><u>Item 9.0 – NI Water</u></p> <p>A presentation by representatives from NI Water to be re-arranged for a future meeting in relation to wastewater capacity issues.</p> <p>NOTED: Members were asked to submit a list of questions to the Secretary on the current waste water capacity issues within their areas, in order to be forwarded to Mr Des Brown from the Water Service in advance of the meeting.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>All Members</b></p>
<p><b>5.0</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b></p> <p><b>5.2</b></p> <p><b>5.3</b></p>	<p><b>The Housing Executive’s Board Bulletin Board Meeting – Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020</b></p> <p>Mr Bailie reported on the Housing Executive Board’s deliberations as follows:-</p> <p><b>Update on COVID-19</b></p> <p>Mr Bailie gave Members a brief update on the current situation within the Housing Executive and the impact of its services, due to COVID-19 operating as normal as possible.</p> <p><b>Corporate Risk Register (COVID-19)</b></p> <p><b>Finance Report as at 31 May 2020</b></p>	

<b>5.4</b>	<b>NIHE Community Safety Strategy 2020-2023 and summary responses received from the public consultation exercise</b>  The Board had approved the updated Community Safety Strategy 2020-2023 'Working Together for Safer Communities' and associated Action Plan which had both been revised to take account of comments received as part of the 2019/20 public consultation.  Mr Bailie offered Members a future presentation on this Strategy.	<b>Secretary</b>
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Extension of Queens Quarter Housing Ltd (QQH) – Dispersed Intensively Managed Emergency Accommodation (DIME) and Housing Management facility (Contract Variation) including associated housing support requirements</b>  The Board had approved the paper (which is subject to funding). It was noted that there is currently insufficient funding for all the required homeless measures in phase 2 in the current £3.3million allocation. The extension of these activities will require confirmation of further funding from the Department for Communities (DfC).	
<b>5.6</b>	<b>Wellington Street, Lurgan</b>  The Board approved to award a contract for multi elemental improvement works to 31 dwellings located at Wellington Street, Lurgan,	
<b>5.7</b>	<b>CT071 – External Cyclical Maintenance Tender</b>  The Board approved the award of contract for External Cyclical Maintenance Works in Housing Executive properties to successful contractors, subject to government guidance and for period of 12 months subject to the guidance on COVID-19 at point of award.	
<b>5.8</b>	<b>CT079 - Kitchen Replacement Tender</b>  The Board approved the award of contract for Kitchen Replacement Works in Housing Executive properties to successful contractors, subject to government guidance and for period of 12 months subject to the guidance on COVID-19 at point of award.	
<b>5.9</b>	<b>CTU324 - Double Glazing Replacement Scheme - South Region</b>  The Board approved the award of contract for Replacement Double Glazing Windows in Housing Executive properties to successful contractors, subject to government guidance and for period of 12 months subject to the guidance on COVID-19 at point of award.	

<p><b>5.10</b></p> <p><b>5.11</b></p> <p><b>5.12</b></p> <p><b>5.13</b></p> <p><b>5.14</b></p> <p><b>5.15</b></p> <p><b>5.16</b></p>	<p><b>Office Cleaning Services and Washroom Services - Approval to award a contract to Aramark Ireland Holdings Ltd</b></p> <p>It was reported that the Board had approved the award of a contract to Aramark Ireland Holdings Ltd (Aramark) for Office Cleaning Services. This contract will also provide Washroom Services. The contract will be for the period September 2020 to March 2023 with an option to extend for up to 24 months.</p> <p><b>Supporting People Programme-Annual Report 2019-2020</b></p> <p>The Board had approved the 2019-2020 annual report for the Supporting People Programme. The Department for Communities Social Housing Policy and Oversight Division requires the Housing Executive to prepare and submit a detailed annual report by June of each year. This is in line with the Operational Level Agreement between the Department for Communities and the Housing Executive.</p> <p><b>Undeveloped Land Schedule 2019-20</b></p> <p>Approval had been given by the Board on the Undeveloped Land Schedule 2019/20 and the classification of sites to be transferred to Housing Associations, retained for future use, declared surplus to requirements for disposal and reclassified as existing open space.</p> <p>Other papers were noted by the Board, as follows:-</p> <p><b>Update on TIU Recommendation 3.4 (b) / DfC IM 12: Major Adaptations (MAPD)</b></p> <p>The Strategy for delivering fixed electrical inspection programme and the commencement of a procurement competition for electrical contractors to support DLO</p> <p><b>Update on provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Framework</b></p> <p><b>Supporting People Programme Update</b></p> <p><b>DfC Final Report – (1) Inspection of GDPR Arrangements (2) Inspection of Procurement Arrangements in Housing Services Division</b></p> <p><b>Other Matters Arising from the Board Bulletin</b></p>	
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<p><b>6.0</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Issues, Department for Communities</b></p> <p>Mr David Polley and Mrs Judith Woodburn gave Members an update on the Department for Communities Housing Issues:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Newbuild starts</li> <li>• Co-ownership</li> <li>• Programme for Social Reform</li> </ul> <p>Mr Cooper stated that the ‘New Decade, New Approach’ has to be formed by the Programme for Government, which unfortunately is not being progressed. In response Mrs Woodburn explained that the Department can seek Ministers approval to progress certain areas, but added that the investment requirement for the Housing Executive structure would require Reform with Executive agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy</li> </ul> <p>In response to Mr Coopers question, Mrs Woodburn undertook to confirm the 20 proposals in response to the Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy, if this will be put it out for Consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers</li> <li>• Supporting People Delivery Strategy</li> <li>• Homelessness Strategy</li> <li>• St Patrick’s Barracks, Ballymena</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that the above item should be removed from the list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation of the Private Rented Sector</li> </ul> <p>In response to Mr Mathison’s question, Mr Polley explained that due to the impact of the COVID emergency consideration is being given to extend the ‘notice to quit’ pilot period to 12 weeks and an announcement on the Ministers decision, will be made in the near future.</p> <p>Whilst Mr Mathison welcomed the protections that were provided were for people that are struggling financially, but subsequently in cases where there are severe anti-social behaviour he felt that there should be exceptions to this rule.</p> <p>Mr Polley undertook to provide Mr Mathison with the consultation document January 2017 titled ‘Private Rented Sector in Northern Ireland Proposed for Change, for his information.</p>	<p>I</p> <p><b>J Woodburn</b></p> <p><b>Mr Polley</b></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing Housing Supply</li> <li>• Affordable Warmth Scheme</li> </ul> <p>Mr Polley informed Members that the capital budget for the Scheme was confirmed at £12m. Councils have been informed that funding is available to allow 44 referrals per council per month from August has been secured. Mr Polley highlighted that some Councils are not engaging with the scheme, due to staffing issues in councils (e.g.furlough) and ongoing Covid concerns which poses a threat to full delivery of the Scheme.</p> <p>Several Members asked for clarification on their individual Councils status and Mr Polley undertook to give an update on each Council at next month’s meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIHE Rent Scheme</li> <li>• Welfare Reform Mitigation payments</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that the above item should be removed from the list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Investment</li> <li>• Tackle the maintenance backlog for NI Housing Executive properties</li> <li>• Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework</li> <li>• Options to remove historical debt from the NIHE and exclude it from having to pay Corporation Tax</li> <li>• Long term rent trajectory</li> <li>• Affordability of social rents</li> <li>• Fresh Start Agreement</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that the above item should be removed from the list.</p>	<p><b>D Polley</b></p>
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<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation by John Goudy on the Housing Executive’s Draft Older People’s Housing Strategy 2020/21 – 2025/26</b></p> <p>Members received a presentation on the Housing Executive’s draft Older People’s Housing Strategy 2020/21-2025/26. (Copies of the Slide are appended to these Minutes – Appendix A).</p> <p>It was noted that the percentage of older people within Northern Ireland’s population will perpetually increase over the next 25 years. Subsequently, there will be implications for the types of services that the Housing Executive will deliver alongside increasing social and healthcare pressures.</p>	
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	<p>This draft Older People’s Housing Strategy has been developed to ensure the evolution is response to the projected growth in the number of older people in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Housing Executive need to consider the dynamics of change in the population need and to promote active housing stock management. This approach would benefit older people and other members of the community through ensuring that people live in homes best suited to their needs.</p> <p>It is also important that they explore flexible housing solutions, which allow people to transition from one type of housing to another in later life, as their circumstances dictate. These solutions can range from being able to ‘age in place’ with the assistance of adaptations to the home and/or care support, to helping to downsize to other accommodation, including sheltered housing and extra-care housing. The collaboration of a number of service providers will be essential to create places where older people feel safe and connected to their community, helping to prevent loneliness and isolation.</p> <p>The draft Strategy is set out under the following four key themes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for the future</li> <li>• Promoting and Maintaining Dignity</li> <li>• Providing Housing Advice for Older People</li> <li>• Promoting Participation</li> </ul> <p>Agreed - Members should forward any comments on the Consultation document to the Secretary, in order for a corporate response to be compiled.</p> <p>Noted: Closing date for response to this document is Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> September</p>	<p><b>All Members Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>8.0</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation on Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy 2020-2025</b></p> <p>Elma Newbery and Karly Greene gave Members a joint presentation on the Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy 2020-2025. (Copies of the slides are appended to these minutes – Appendix B).</p> <p>The Irish Traveller community is long established in Northern Ireland and its history and traditions stretch back many years.</p>	

	<p>However, Irish Travellers are also among the most disadvantaged and marginalised people living in Northern Ireland and can face multiple deprivations in relation to health and well-being, housing, education, racism, mortality and discrimination.</p> <p>The Housing Executive supports the right for everyone to have access to decent adequate housing. The Strategy sets out how we plan to provide Irish Travellers with access to good quality, culturally appropriate housing accommodation which fosters a sustainable, vibrant Traveller community and promotes inclusion, a sense of belonging and security.</p> <p>The Strategy proposes a number of key actions and includes an implementation plan laying out a work programme over the next five years to achieve these. The Strategy's four objectives, are as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop a Traveller Specific Accommodation Needs Assessment;</li> <li>• To provide safe and culturally appropriate accommodation for Irish Travellers to reside and travel to;</li> <li>• To support the Irish Traveller community to remain in their accommodation of choice through easily accessible housing services;</li> <li>• To create mechanisms that foster good relations for the Irish Traveller community.</li> </ul> <p>Agreed - Members should forward any comments on the Consultation document to the Secretary, in order for a corporate response to be compiled.</p> <p>Noted - Closing date for response to this document is Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September.</p>	<p><b>All Members Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>9.0</b></p>	<p><b>Social Housing Development Programme Housing Starts and Completions</b></p> <p>Members noted the report.</p>	
<p><b>10.0</b></p>	<p><b>The Housing Executive's Scheme Starts June &amp; July 2020</b></p> <p>Members noted the report.</p>	

<p><b>11.0</b></p> <p><b>11.1</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>Joint Board/Housing Council Workshop</b></p> <p>Members were reminded that following comments from Mrs Grehan, the Chair of the Housing Executive Board had suggested a joint workshop with the Housing Council regarding the SHDP, New Build and any other issues of mutual interest.</p> <p>Noted: that the joint workshop will take place on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September at 10.00 am in the Housing Centre Boardroom or alternatively via Webex.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>12.0</b></p>	<p><b>Date and Venue of Next Meeting – 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 10.30 am.</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the meeting could possibly be held in Ardeevin, Ballymena for those who wish to attend the meeting in person. It was recognised that other Members may prefer to continue to participate through the video/conference call facility.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p>

The Meeting concluded at 12.30 pm.



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## **SEPTEMBER HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN**

The Northern Ireland Housing Council met on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 10.30 am in the Ardeevin, Ballymena or via Conference Call.

For Information, a report of the attendance is undernoted:-

### **Members Present**

Ald Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough (Chair)
Cllr Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Ald Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Cllr Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Ald John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Ald Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Ald Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Cllr Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough
Cllr Michael Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

### **Members Apologies**

Cllr Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Vice Chair)
Cllr Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough

The Housing Council's considered various routine items at the Meeting, followed by detailed discussions on the undernoted matters:-

The Chief Executive gave a verbal update on **Housing Executive's Business from the August Board Meeting**, which included the following items:-

- Update on Housing Executive work during COVID-19
- CT055 Planned Maintenance Procurement Strategy
- Supporting People Programme Update
- Supporting People Services greater than £500k for approval
- Homelessness Strategy 2017/2022 - Year 3 Annual Report
- Tenancy Fraud Update
- Community Safety Strategy Action Plan Update August 2020
- Land Acquisitions & Disposals Quarterly Update - August 2020
- Scheme for the Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings Annual Report 2019-20
- Complaints Annual Performance 2019/20

Members then received an update from Paul Price and David Polley Department for Communities, on the **Departments' Housing Top Issues** to date, which included:-

- Social Newbuild starts
- Co-ownership
- Programme for Social Reform
- Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy
- Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers
- Supporting People Delivery Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Regulation of the Private Rented Sector
- Increasing Housing Supply
- Affordable Warmth Scheme – A detailed discussion took place on this issue.
- NIHE Rent Scheme
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Investment
- Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework
- Options to remove historical debt from the NIHE and exclude it from having to pay Corporation Tax
- Long term rent trajectory
- Affordability of social rents
- Review of the Design Guide for Travellers' Sites in Northern Ireland

Members received the following presentations:-

- Presentation by Dr Steve Blockwell, Northern Ireland Water on Waste Water Capacity Issues;
- Presentation by Paul Isherwood, Director of Asset Management (NIHE) on ARTES Project.

Once the minutes of the meeting are ratified at the October Meeting, they can be accessed on the Housing Council website: [www.nihousingcouncil.org](http://www.nihousingcouncil.org)

The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> October at 10.30 am in the Boardroom, the Housing Centre, Belfast.

Should you require any further information or have any questions regarding the content.

**Contacts**

**Chair**

Alderman Tommy Nicholl MBE

[Ald.nicholl@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:Ald.nicholl@midandeantrim.gov.uk)

Mobile: 07970012520

**Secretary**

Kelly Cameron

The Housing Centre

2 Adelaide Street

Belfast BT2 8PB

[Kelly.cameron@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:Kelly.cameron@nihe.gov.uk)

Tel: 028 95982752

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# **ENGAGE PROGRAMME**

## **GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS**

**23 SEPTEMBER 2020**

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## Executive Summary

### Programme Aim

1. *To limit any long-term adverse impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on educational standards by supporting pupils' learning and engagement on their return to school through provision of high quality one to one, small group or team teaching support in every school in Northern Ireland.*

### Overall Budget

2. The overall budget for Engage in the 2020/21 financial year is c. £11.2m (i.e. up to the end of March 2021). Further funding, estimated to be in the region of £4.8m, will be required to allow the programme to continue for the remaining 3 months of the 2020/21 academic year (April-June 2021).
3. **Therefore, whilst it is anticipated at this stage that the Engage programme will run throughout the full duration of the upcoming academic year, and schools should plan on that basis, it should be noted that the additional funding needed to facilitate this is subject to Executive agreement.**

### Schools with FSME of 28% or higher

4. **Almost 400 schools with approximately average levels of Free School Meal Entitlement or higher (a minimum of 28% of pupils) will be provided with funding to support additional teaching resource during the 2020/21 academic year.**
5. The entitlement for each individual school falling into this category will be calculated according to the number of pupils enrolled (based on data from latest available School Census in October 2019).
6. The table below provides a breakdown of the enrolment bands which these schools have been grouped into, along with associated funding entitlements.

**Table 1 – Schools with free school meal entitlement of 28% or higher**

Enrolment Band	Funding Allocation (2020/21 financial year)	Number of Primary Schools	Number of Post- Primary Schools
0-85	£5,090	47	1
86-200	£12,724	94	4
201-1000	£25,448	159	80
>1000	£50,896	0	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>97</b>

### Schools with FSME below 28%

7. All other primary and post-primary schools with Free School Meal Entitlement below 28% will also receive funding to provide **substitute teacher** days during the 2020/21 school year in order to deliver a programme to support pupils to engage with learning.
8. Again, the allocation available to each school will be dependent on pupil enrolment levels (drawn from the School Census in 2019).
9. The remaining 492 primary schools and 96 post-primary schools, with below average free school meal entitlement, will be grouped into three bands according to enrolment size and allocated funding equivalent to either 20, 30 or 45 substitute cover days to support delivery of the programme in the 2020/21 financial year. Note that this has been calculated as 30, 45, or 60 substitute cover days across the full 2020/21 academic year –subject to funding for the final 3 months April-June 2021.

**Table 2 – Schools with free school meal entitlement below 28%**

<b>Enrolment Band</b>	<b>Funding Allocation (2020/21 financial year)</b>	<b>Number of days equivalent sub cover days (2020/21 financial year)</b>	<b>Number of Primary Schools</b>	<b>Number of Post-Primary Schools</b>
0-200	£3,600	20	300	3
201-500	£5,400	30	160	9
>501	£8,100	45	32	84
<b>Total</b>			<b>492</b>	<b>96</b>

10. In this way, the Engage programme is both targeted at those schools with the highest concentrations of disadvantage but also provides universal support across all primary and post-primary schools in recognition of the wider impact of Covid-19.
11. Details of individual allocations due to each primary and post primary school have been published alongside this guidance. To find out what additional resource your school is entitled to for the 2020/21 financial year, refer to the following link on the DE website [www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/engage-programme](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/engage-programme).

### Evaluation

12. Schools will be required to use a distinct electronic accountability tool entitled *Engage Planner* which will capture a range of key information in respect of where the focus of programme lies, how the resources are being used and an evaluation of impact.

13. The emphasis in evaluation will be the impact on pupils' attitudes to and dispositions for learning and pupils' progress in learning. Evidenced-based judgements of the programme by schools will then inform further development of interventions.
14. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has been commissioned to provide an overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme and its impact on the children/young people in primary and post-primary schools.
15. The ETI evaluation is not an inspection programme.
16. Plans submitted by schools, within the Engage Planner, will be vital to enable each school to evaluate for itself the effectiveness and benefit of the interventions which they choose.

## Section 1 - Engage Programme – Background and Rationale

1. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, schools were closed to pupils for normal teaching as of 20 March 2020. This disruption has been felt by all families and pupils.
2. Whilst schools responded by maintaining distance learning through a combination of online support and hard copy learning packs, supported by parents in the home, it is recognised that this is no substitute for quality professional teaching in a school based environment. Put simply, pupils learn more when they are at school.
3. It is also acknowledged that there have been disparities in motivation and engagement throughout the lockdown period - many children have not had the opportunity for home learning to the same extent as others. Lack of routine, parental support or access to appropriate ICT for some will all have been contributory factors to any 'lost learning'. This period may also have added to feelings of isolation and anxiety thereby negatively affecting children's emotional and mental health.
4. If left unchallenged, this period of prolonged school closures has the potential to have a long lasting and profound impact on our children and young people in a variety of ways, not least on their learning and achievement. This is likely to be exacerbated for those pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who, prior to the health emergency, were already experiencing barriers to education due a range of different factors. Bespoke interventions such as the Digital Devices Scheme and the Wellbeing in Schools initiative have already sought to tackle some of the above mentioned issues arising from Covid-19.
5. Crucial gains have been made over recent years in terms of 'narrowing the gap' in attainment<sup>1</sup>. Research indicates that there is a risk those gains could be significantly impacted upon by the period of lockdown which has the potential to increase the attainment divide even further<sup>2</sup>. In order to minimise this risk and protect system wide improvements as far as possible, on 30 June 2020 the Executive agreed to make £12m available from the Covid-19 response fund in support of a suite of interventions over the Summer 2020 period and beyond.
6. The funding secured included support for:

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<sup>1</sup> [Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2018/19](#) (statistical bulletin published by the Department of Education 12 August 2020)

<sup>2</sup> [Home Schooling in Northern Ireland During the Covid-19 Crisis](#) (Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement report published May 2020)

- a) primary schools to purchase online software designed to support incoming year 7 pupils with literacy and numeracy during 2020/21 (c. £0.25m);
  - b) interested primary schools to run Summer Schools on a voluntary basis during July/August 2020 targeted at year 5, 6 and 7 pupils (c. £0.5m); and crucially
  - c) primary and post primary schools to provide appropriate support for those children and young people who need it most and create the conditions to allow them to re-engage with education purposefully and sustainably throughout the 2020/21 academic year, namely the 'Engage' programme (c. £11.2m).
7. As schools reopen to all pupils, it is appreciated that schools will need time to take stock; to assess the needs of pupils, to plot a way forward in terms of adapting and implementing the school's curriculum and timetable of activities, and to help pupils settle back into school life so they are ready and able to learn.
  8. Some pupils will have coped and engaged well with remote learning activities, whereas others may return to school demotivated and require support to engage and move on with learning.
  9. It is evident that schools will need additional resource to ensure that their pupils can receive the support they need. The Engage programme seeks to provide all primary and post primary schools with access to extra teaching resource. The level of funding will be determined and allocated to schools based on set criteria.
  10. The Engage programme has been designed with a range of key stakeholders and reflects the outcome of consultation and engagement with sectoral bodies, experienced school practitioners and Trade Union Side. Further detail on the thinking behind the programme as well as how it may be delivered and managed in a practical sense is set out in subsequent sections.

## **Budget**

11. The overall budget for Engage in the 2020/21 financial year is c. £11.2m (i.e. up to the end of March 2021). Further funding, estimated to be in the region of £4.8m, will be required to allow the programme to continue for the remaining 3 months of the 2020/21 academic year (April-June 2021).
12. **Therefore, whilst it is anticipated at this stage that the Engage programme will run throughout the full duration of the upcoming academic year, and**

**schools should plan on that basis, it should be noted that the additional funding needed to facilitate this is subject to Executive agreement.**

## Section 2- Outline of Engage Programme

### Programme Aim

13. *To limit any long-term adverse impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on educational standards by supporting pupils' learning and engagement on their return to school through provision of high quality one to one, small group or team teaching support in every school in Northern Ireland.*

### What is 'Engage'?

14. Given the unique circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, **all** primary and post primary schools in Northern Ireland will receive funding (to varying levels) through the Engage programme to provide additional teaching resources. More detail on the funding methodology is provided later in this section.

15. Through the Engage programme qualified teachers will provide child centred one to one, small group or team teaching support within school to those pupils identified by schools as most benefiting from additional support following the Covid-19 period of lockdown.

16. There is extensive evidence<sup>3</sup> of the positive impact of high quality one to one and small group teaching as a support strategy for learning, *particularly* after a period of missed schooling. Support delivered by qualified teachers is likely to have the highest impact.

17. **The Engage programme will focus on supporting pupils to be motivated and engaged to learn.** It will be linked to the cross curricular skills, thinking skills and personal capabilities at the core of our curriculum and focussed on those areas where pupils would most benefit from additional teaching, practice and feedback.

18. The programme will complement and enhance the existing work of schools (such as extended schools, special education needs and/or nurture provision particularly the Nurture Approach in Education Programme) to provide support for pupils to engage with learning following the Covid-19 period of lockdown.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition/>



19. In some schools, the one-to-one, small group and team teaching could provide opportunities to further embed a whole school approach to nurture and provide pupils with a learning experience to develop social, emotional and behavioural skills and encourage success at school and with peers.
20. It will also help develop pupils' resilience and capacity to respond more confidently to challenges and support the positive promotion of the health and well-being of pupils.

### **What will 'Engage' look like?**

21. The programme is aimed at pupils of **all** abilities identified by school as those who would benefit most from additional support to engage with learning following the Covid-19 lockdown period. This will include consideration of any EOTAS pupils for which schools retain responsibility.
22. There is no prescriptive or suggested ideal model for what the programme delivery should look like or specific parameters for schools to follow, such as an exclusive focus on particular groups of pupils, year groups, or particular subjects.
23. Schools are encouraged to explore creative and innovative approaches in deciding how to utilise the additional teaching resource to address pupil needs. There are extensive opportunities present in the curriculum to allow for this, for example, to develop and strengthen the capacity of children and young people to be more independent, more self-regulating and more resilient learners.
24. Schools know their pupils best and will have autonomy and flexibility to use their professional judgement to decide upon relevant priorities and which pupils and year groups will participate in the programme. So too, the content and structure of programme delivery will be based on each school's unique circumstances and assessment of particular needs.
25. Normal formative assessment approaches within the classroom setting will be the most useful way of identifying individual pupil learning needs and those pupils who will benefit from programme support. That approach will retain an emphasis on making pupils feel confident and secure in what they already know while supporting engagement with learning.
26. It is widely recognised that Covid-19 and its response may have impacted on the social and emotional health and well-being of children, schools may feel that an element of the Engage programme should focus on supporting the pastoral or holistic needs of children to enable them to engage in learning.

27. **Fundamentally, it is for schools to decide how to best utilise Engage programme funding within the aim and objectives of the programme in order to maximise positive outcomes for those children and young people with the greatest need, and to tailor associated provision accordingly.**
28. **It is important to remember that the Engage programme is designed to motivate, support and enable children to engage with learning through the provision of additional teaching resource – the funding allocated is therefore not to be used to facilitate any Covid-19 related social distancing requirements or to cover sick or other leave absence of normal classroom teachers.**
29. Nor is it permitted to use the funding to purchase other resources such as computer equipment and software, transport for field trips, or visiting speakers etc –**it is for qualified teachers only**. See also Section 3 '*Financial Arrangements*'.

### **Programme Objectives**

30. In designing and implementing the Engage programme, schools should take into account the objectives of the intervention as follows:
- *To provide an appropriately differentiated programme of child centred one to one, small group and/or team teaching support to pupils of all abilities who schools identify as those who would benefit from additional support to engage with learning following the Covid-19 period of lockdown.*
  - *To support pupils to increase their confidence, engagement, motivation to learn and to develop the tools and skills they require to become independent learners.*
  - *To develop and enhance pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the key cross-curricular skills of Using Mathematics, Communication and Using ICT.*
  - *To support and enhance pupils' development of the whole curriculum thinking skills and personal capabilities.*
  - *To develop pupils' understanding of how they learn (meta-cognition) and their self-knowledge about explicit strategies and behaviours for learning to help build positive mind-sets, coping skills and resilience.*

- *To complement and enhance the existing work of schools (such as extended schools, special education needs and/or nurture provision) to provide support for pupils to engage with learning following the COVID-19 period of lockdown.*

31. Schools are encouraged to personalise or 'contextualise' the above objectives in order to reflect the particular needs and circumstances of the school and its pupils.

## **Outcomes**

32. In line with the programme aim to limit any long term adverse impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on educational standards, there are no specific targets for the Engage programme in terms of system wide improvement of Key Stage or examination outcomes.

33. It will be for individual schools to identify intended outcomes and the particular success criteria for the Engage programme in line with their own specific objectives, as well as the associated measures (formal/informal, qualitative/quantitative as appropriate) to evaluate the effectiveness of their approach and the impact of the resource.

34. Whilst it is anticipated that this may reveal improvements in such things as building pupil confidence, increasing levels of motivation and engagement, enhancing pupil attitudes to learning, encouraging school creativity and innovation as well as assessing individual pupil progress in learning, this will be determined at school level.

35. Also see Section 5 *Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation*.

## **Contingency Planning**

36. Whilst delivery of the Engage programme would ideally take place within a school environment, we must remain cognisant of the potential for further school closures at a future stage.

37. Any such decisions affecting schools will be guided by science and the latest public health advice. If however we are faced with that eventuality during the 2020/21 academic year, schools will need to consider contingency planning for how Engage may be delivered on a remote basis or through a blended learning approach according to the particular context at any given time.

38. At the outset of the pandemic, a commitment was given by the Department that all staff would continue to receive normal pay and all NISTR bookings

honoured. We anticipate that the same would apply in the event of a second wave and therefore schools will be committed to continuing to pay any Engage teachers (recruited or NISTR) even if it is not possible for them to deliver the programme in a school setting.

39. Further guidance which will assist schools in planning for such a scenario is available within the following DE circulars and ETI guidance:-
- a. [2020/05: Guidance for Schools on Supporting Remote Learning](#) (published 5 June)
  - b. [2020/06: Curriculum Planning 2020/21](#) (published 23 June)
  - c. [ETI Continuity of Learning Guidance for Schools](#) (published 26 June)

### **What allocation will my school receive?**

40. School closures and Covid-19 have affected the whole community. For example, key workers may not have had the time or opportunity to provide as much learning support for their children as they would have wished.
41. The consequences of the pandemic will be far reaching—for all children—therefore **every** primary and post-primary school in Northern Ireland will be provided with funding to provide additional teaching resource.
42. We know however that the impact of time out of school and potential for lost learning may be particularly acute for those pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. For that reason, the Engage programme will provide the greatest level of support and funding to schools with higher concentrations of disadvantage, measured by levels of pupils with a Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME).
43. The distribution of funding methodology for the Engage programme has been designed in recognition of this context.

### **Schools with FSME of 28% or higher**

44. **Almost 400 schools with approximately average levels of Free School Meal Entitlement or higher (a minimum of 28% of pupils) will be provided with funding to support additional teaching resource during the 2020/21 academic year.**
45. The entitlement for each individual school falling into this category will be calculated according to the number of pupils enrolled (based on data from latest available School Census in October 2019).

46. The table below provides a breakdown of the enrolment bands which these schools have been grouped into, along with associated funding entitlements.

**Table 1 – Schools with free school meal entitlement of 28% or higher**

Enrolment Band	Funding Allocation (2020/21 financial year)	Number of Primary Schools	Number of Post-Primary Schools
0-85	£5,090	47	1
86-200	£12,724	94	4
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>1000	£50,896	0	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>97</b>

47. In total, this element of Engage is expected to support the provision of circa 300 additional teachers (FTE) across the system.

#### Schools with FSME below 28%

48. All other primary and post-primary schools with Free School Meal Entitlement below 28% will also receive funding to provide substitute teacher days during the 2020/21 school year in order to deliver a programme to support pupils to engage with learning.

49. Again, the allocation available to each school will be dependent on pupil enrolment levels (drawn from the School Census in 2019).

50. The remaining 492 primary schools and 96 post-primary schools, with below average free school meal entitlement, will be grouped into three bands according to enrolment size and allocated funding equivalent to either 20, 30 or 45 substitute cover days to support delivery of the programme in the 2020/21 financial year. Note that this has been calculated as 30, 45, or 60 substitute cover days across the full 2020/21 academic year –subject to funding for the final 3 months April-June 2021.

**Table 2 – Schools with free school meal entitlement below 28%**

Enrolment Band	Funding Allocation (2020/21 financial year)	Number of days equivalent sub cover days (2020/21 financial year)	Number of Primary Schools	Number of Post-Primary Schools
0-200	£3,600	20	300	3
201-500	£5,400	30	160	9
>501	£8,100	45	32	84
<b>Total</b>			<b>492</b>	<b>96</b>

51. In this way, the Engage programme is both targeted at those schools with the highest concentrations of disadvantage but also provides universal support across all primary and post-primary schools in recognition of the wider impact of Covid-19.

52. Details of individual allocations due to each primary and post primary school have been published alongside this guidance. To find out what additional resource your school is entitled to for the 2020/21 financial year, refer to the following link on the DE website [www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/engage-programme](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/engage-programme).

### **How should additional teachers be sourced?**

53. In line with the desire for schools to retain autonomy with decisions relating to the Engage programme, schools will manage the recruitment process for teachers. This will involve either employing/hiring teachers on a “fixed-term” basis or drawing down the resource from the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register (NISTR). More detail is provided at Section 4 ‘*Management Arrangements*’.

54. Schools should manage NISTR engagements and/or recruitment processes in line with existing policy and guidance, for example [‘EA’s Teaching Appointments Scheme for Controlled Schools’](#) and [TNC Circular 2016/01 on the ‘Appropriate Use of NISTR’](#).

55. Before engaging a teacher, the school needs to ensure they are clear on the duration and end date for the post and the reason for the post. This will facilitate the process of bringing the post to an end when funding ceases.

### **Irish Medium sector**

56. We are aware of the particular needs of the Irish Medium sector including the availability of teaching supply with the necessary Irish language skills. There may be the potential to apply flexibility to programme arrangements for IM schools should it be required including consideration of the use of newly trained teachers and potential for the use of student teachers however safeguarding issues must be part of any school’s considerations. This will be kept under review

## Section 3 - Financial Arrangements

57. There is **no application process** for schools to follow in accessing relevant funding for the Engage programme.
58. The level of funding for schools has been determined by the Department using criteria based on FSME levels and enrolment banding (explained in Section 2 '*Outline of Engage Programme*').
59. Information about the amount of funding due to each individual school in the 2020/21 financial year is available here [www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/engage-programme](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/engage-programme). The funding will be allocated directly to school LMS accounts via the Education Authority. Schools should manage the recruitment process on the basis that the resources being made available now (i.e. September 2020) should be spent in full by the end of March 2021.
60. **Before that funding can be released, schools should be aware that there are certain conditions attached to Engage programme monies. Please refer to Section 5 '*Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation*' which explains the associated accountability requirements.**
61. Further funding to support the Engage programme is anticipated to be made available for the subsequent 3 months up to end of June 2021—however, as already noted in Section 1, this is subject to the outcome of the budget process including Executive agreement.
62. Schools will be advised of any additional allocation in respect of the 2021/22 financial year in due course. Schools should note that the programme is not expected to extend beyond 30 June 2021 and so any further funding subsequently made available should be spent within the specified time period.
63. **For the avoidance of doubt, Engage funding cannot be used on anything else other than teaching resource. As already highlighted, Engage funding is being made available to provide additional teaching resource to support pupils to engage with learning – the funding allocated is therefore not to be used to facilitate any Covid-19 related social distancing requirements or to cover sick or other leave absence of normal classroom teachers.**

### Tracking Expenditure

64. Specific finance codes have been established which will enable school spend on the Engage programme to be tracked accordingly. These are set out below. Any queries on the use of these codes should be directed to EA Finance.

## Engage Programme

NISTR Code	EI (I for Indigo)
DE Function Code for Teacher Hours	7840
The above codes are mapped to EA Function Code	80184

## Other Funding Streams

65. It will be possible for schools to use other funding streams to supplement delivery of the Engage programme. For example, core LMS funding allocated via the Common Funding Formula (includes *Targeting Social Need* allocation specifically to support disadvantaged pupils or those at greatest risk of underachievement).
66. Additional earmarked funding made available through the Extended Schools (ES) programme can also assist with meeting pupil needs arising from Covid-19. Whilst, in line with existing policy, ES funding cannot be used to employ or maintain teachers to deliver curriculum based provision during the normal school day, it can however be used for a wide variety of other purposes e.g. health and well-being activities; language support, homework clubs and other learning activities outside of timetabled school hours; enhancing the learning environment; programmes for parents and wider community etc.
67. If schools need further advice or clarification in respect of the Extended Schools programme and use of related funding in 2020/21, you should speak to ES personnel in the EA's Community & Schools Team. Contact details are included at Section 6 '*Help and Support*'. Guidance is also available on the [Northern Ireland Extended Schools Information System](#).



## Section 4 - Management Arrangements

68. The recruitment of teachers, either on a fixed-term basis or sourced from NISTR, is a decision for schools in line with assessed school and pupil needs and the availability of sufficient budget coverage.
69. Schools will have flexibility to manage the recruitment process as they see fit and how, in turn, that additional resource will be used within the school. For instance, it will be possible to backfill a post to allow a current teacher to be released to deliver Engage programme support.
70. **Schools may wish to engage teachers directly or, where part-time hours are involved, they may wish to engage a teacher in tandem with another local school.**
71. **It is important to note however that it will not be possible to recruit Classroom Assistants with Engage resources – the programme is designed to support the provision of qualified teachers only.**
72. Schools should also be aware that the funding levels for the Engage programme have been calculated on the basis of costs associated with the M3 spine point on the teacher pay-scales. Whilst this has been used to calculate the amount that a school will receive to fund additional teaching resource, **this is indicative only. It is up to schools to decide which teachers to employ, at what rate, their working pattern and for what period of time - i.e. should schools employ a teacher/s who is/are above this pay point, then any shortfall will have to be met by the school from existing budgets.** Fair employment procedures require schools to determine objective and justifiable job criteria and to consistently apply those and appoint the best applicant on merit. To do otherwise may result in an equality challenge.
73. For those schools in a position to employ a teacher/s with the aid of Engage resources, there are a range of practical issues to be considered (e.g. statutory/legal requirements, contracts, terms and conditions, advertising of posts; interviewing, salary scales, timescales etc).
74. Further detailed advice has been developed by the Education Authority in the form of Frequently Asked Questions which controlled schools may find helpful. These FAQs can be found here [www.eani.org.uk/ea-staff-hub/hr-online/hiring-managers-recruitment-information](http://www.eani.org.uk/ea-staff-hub/hr-online/hiring-managers-recruitment-information). This link also includes information on the substitute teacher process, sample job descriptions and person specifications for both primary and post primary schools, as well as useful contact details in the event of any recruitment based queries.

Catholic maintained schools should seek advice on recruitment from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). See also Section 6 'Help and Support'

75. It is appreciated that the recruitment of staff can take time. Schools are reminded that Engage programme funding is not due to extend beyond June 2021. If there is any anticipated delay in recruiting, schools should plan/use resource accordingly in the relevant financial year to ensure full spend within the specified time period.

## Section 5 - Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

### Accountability

76. As already outlined in Section 2, there are no specific targets for the Engage programme in terms of system wide improvement of Key Stage or examination outcomes - the focus of the programme is to limit any long-term adverse impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on educational standards by supporting pupils' learning and engagement on their return to school.

77. It will be for schools to identify their own intended outcomes and associated success criteria and to monitor and evaluate the impact of the programme using internal assessment systems, including the use of teacher recording and observation to monitor the progress of pupils selected for support through the programme.

78. It will be necessary however for the Department to collate high level information about the use and impact of Engage resources for accountability purposes to enable determinations to be made around the effectiveness and value for money of the programme. It will also seek to provide assurances to the Minister of Education, Executive, Assembly, statutory bodies, families and wider community about the impact of significant investment of public funding.

### Engage Planner

79. **Schools will be required to use a distinct electronic accountability tool entitled *Engage Planner* which will capture a range of key information in respect of where the focus of programme lies, how the resources are being used and an evaluation of impact.** The system will be available for schools to log in and begin entering data from early October. In the meantime schools should assess needs and begin the process of establishing the most appropriate form of provision.

80. The emphasis in evaluation will be the impact on pupils' attitudes to and dispositions for learning and pupils' progress in learning. Evidenced-based judgements of the programme by schools will then inform further development of interventions.
81. The Engage Planner will be available on the Wholeschool School Development Planning platform which many schools already use and will be familiar with. The design and functionality of the Engage Planner is aligned to the [Targeting Social Need \(TSN\) Planner](#) also hosted on this system.
82. The *TSN Planner* introduced in 2018/19 enables schools to articulate how £77m of TSN resources made available each year are being used to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds or at greatest risk of underachievement.
83. Like the TSN Planner, the Engage Planner has been developed to assist schools in planning their teaching and learning and support offered to pupils for the year ahead, to monitor and record progress, as well as helping to promote and disseminate good practice. The Engage Planner has bespoke options included to reflect the specific aim, objectives, and characteristics of Engage programme funding. Schools can either choose from pre-populated drop down menus or can custom their own.
- 84. Above all, the Engage Planner has been designed with simplicity in mind and to avoid any unnecessary administrative burden on schools. It should therefore only take a few minutes to complete.**
85. Schools will complete the Engage Planner in 2 stages:
1. By end October 2020, completion of Sections 1 to 3 setting out the school's plans for the year ahead and showing how the school intends to use the additional teaching resource to meet the programme aim and the school's specific objectives.
  2. By end June 2021, completion of Sections 4 and 5 reporting the school's evaluation of the impact of the programme and next steps to sustain momentum after the Engage programme funding ends.
86. Further help and support on how to complete the Engage Planner, including an instructional video, is available on the application itself which schools can access via the icon on the My School dashboard on C2k.
- 87. Schools should note that completion of the Engage Planner is a mandatory i.e. relevant details must be entered on the Engage Planner by 31 October**

**2020. Resources will be allocated to school LMS accounts from the beginning of October. However, if the Engage planner is not completed by the agreed deadline, schools will be contacted and funding could be withdrawn if the Engage Planner is not updated.**

### **System Level Evaluation**

88. At system level, a Strategic Oversight Group will be established to monitor the outworking of the Engage programme and will include representation of senior staff from DE, EA, CCMS and other sectoral bodies. It is expected that the Strategic Oversight Group will also incorporate representation from schools to provide a practitioner viewpoint. Part of the Group's remit will be to ensure processes are in place to help identify where effective practice is observed through the Engage programme and disseminate more widely across schools.

### **The Role of the ETI**

89. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has been commissioned to provide an overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme and its impact on the children/young people in primary and post-primary schools.

90. The ETI evaluation is not an inspection programme.

91. Plans submitted by schools, within the Engage Planner, will be vital to enable each school to evaluate for itself the effectiveness and benefit of the interventions which they choose.

92. Through their relationships with their district schools, district inspectors (working in cooperation with EA and CCMS colleagues) will be responsive to guide and advise schools on drawing up their plans and associated success measures.

93. While drawing on school self-evaluations, the ETI will seek first-hand evidence, such as through sample interviews / meetings / workshops with principals, teachers and children/young people to obtain a richer picture of the effectiveness of the programme.

94. Evaluations should seek to identify the extent to which approaches adopted by schools are securing the programme's aims and objectives and the extent to which effective approaches are being shared, going forward.

## Help and Support

95. A range of help and advice is available to assist schools with regards to implementing the Engage programme.

96. In addition to the support offered by ETI as outlined in the previous section:-

- the Education Authority will work in collaboration with other education support bodies, to provide guidance and support for schools on implementation of the Engage programme. This will include Teacher Professional Learning webinars and advice from Link Officers;
- CCMS will also provide support to schools through the work of the Locality Teams -school leaders requiring support should contact their Education or HR Adviser or the Locality Leads (details below).

97. Should you be in any doubt about any of the information contained in this guidance, you can contact the relevant contact point, according to the nature of the query, as outlined below:

### Contact Points

#### Education Authority

- **EA – Link Officers**
- **EA Community & Schools Team (Extended Schools)** –see page 20 for contact details
  
- **EA Recruitment:**

**Email:** School Recruitment: [schoolsrecruitment@eani.org.uk](mailto:schoolsrecruitment@eani.org.uk); Online Recruitment System Administration Support: [onlinerecruitmentsystemadmin@eani.org.uk](mailto:onlinerecruitmentsystemadmin@eani.org.uk)

**Telephone: 028 9056 4301 then press:**

1. Headquarters/Corporate Recruitment
2. South West School Recruitment
3. North School Recruitment
4. East School Recruitment
5. Pre-employment Checks/Access NI
6. System helpdesk

- **EA Finance** –Telephone: 02825 661141

## CCMS

- **Locality Lead Officers**

- Locality 1 [geraldine.duffy@ccmsschools.com](mailto:geraldine.duffy@ccmsschools.com)
- Locality 2 [roisin.harbinson@ccmsschools.com](mailto:roisin.harbinson@ccmsschools.com)
- Locality 3 [mairead.harvey@ccmsschools.com](mailto:mairead.harvey@ccmsschools.com)

- **CCMS HR**

## DE

- Teachers Pay and Pensions Team
- Tackling Educational Disadvantage Team (monitoring and evaluation requirements) - email: [attendance@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@education-ni.gov.uk)

## Wholeschool (Engage Planner- **technical queries only**)

- Email: [support@whole.school](mailto:support@whole.school)

## **Other Useful Guidance**

- [EA Teaching Appointments Scheme for Controlled Schools](#)
- [TNC Circular 2016/01 – Appropriate Use of NISTR](#)

## **Annex A – Engage Programme FAQs**

The Education Authority's Frequently Asked Questions can be found here:  
[www.eani.org.uk/ea-staff-hub/hr-online/hiring-managers-recruitment-information](http://www.eani.org.uk/ea-staff-hub/hr-online/hiring-managers-recruitment-information).

## EA Community and Schools Team - Contacts

Jim Dunbar (Lead Officer)

[jim.dunbar@eani.org.uk](mailto:jim.dunbar@eani.org.uk)

T: 02890566296

M: 07970406478

Locality North: Deirdre Hasson

[deirdre.hasson@eani.org.uk](mailto:deirdre.hasson@eani.org.uk)

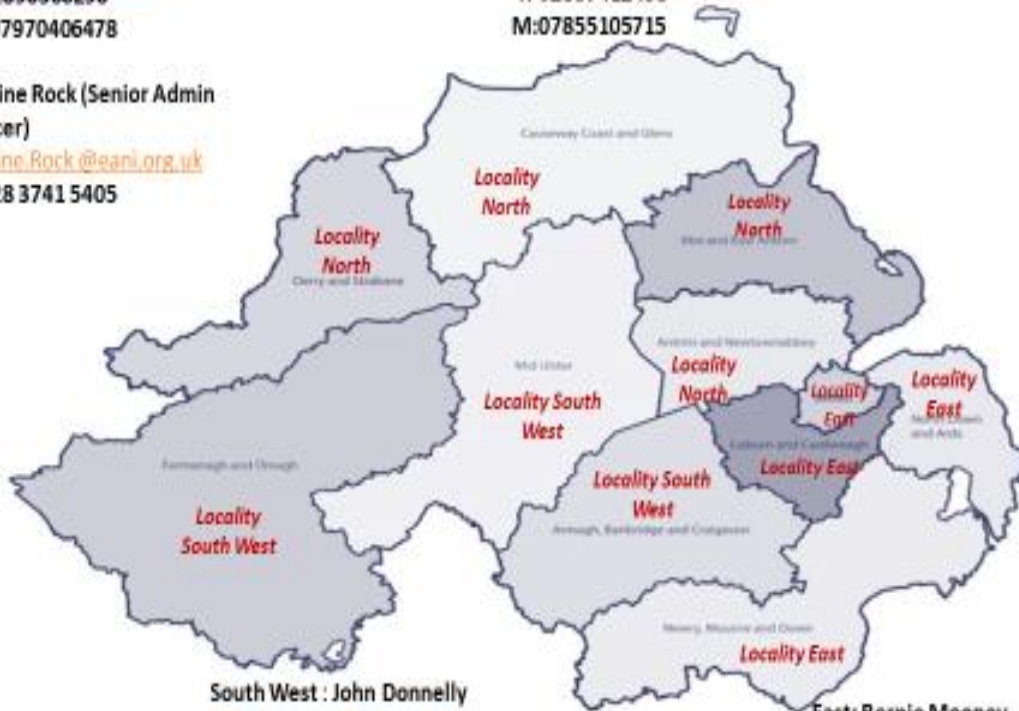
T: 02837412438

M: 07855105715

Pauline Rock (Senior Admin Officer)

[Pauline.Rock@eani.org.uk](mailto:Pauline.Rock@eani.org.uk)

T: 028 3741 5405



South West: John Donnelly

[john.donnelly@eani.org.uk](mailto:john.donnelly@eani.org.uk)

T: 02890564282

M: 07855105707

East: Bernie Mooney

[bernie.mooney@eani.org.uk](mailto:bernie.mooney@eani.org.uk)

T: 02890564228

M: 07855105713



**Alison Chambers**  
**Director, Promoting Collaboration,**  
**Tackling Disadvantage Directorate**



Department of  
**Education**  
[www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk)

Rathgael House  
43 Balloo Road  
Rathgill  
BANGOR  
BT19 7PR

Tel: 028 91279741

Email: [alison.chambers@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:alison.chambers@education-ni.gov.uk)

**To education stakeholders**

**23 September 2020**

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

**LAUNCH OF THE “ENGAGE PROGRAMME” TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS THEY RETURN TO SCHOOL**

I am writing to inform you of the launch of the “Engage” programme, which the Minister will announce today. Many of you have contributed to the development of the programme over the past few months and I am grateful for your ongoing support as we seek to help children and young people make a successful return to school.

The wellbeing of children and young people remains a primary concern and as routines within school are being established, taking into account the changing nature of the Covid-19 landscape, this important programme will provide an extra level of support to schools to manage pupil’s learning as they begin their educational journey again this autumn.

The Engage programme forms part of range of projects the Minister recommended to the NI Executive to support learning for key groups of children over the summer and as they start the new academic year. The projects include:

- Summer school support, providing financial support to any primary school which wished to voluntarily run a short summer school this year;
- Virtual classroom / distance learning, supported by funding access to commercially available resources to support numeracy and literacy for all Year 6 pupils entering Year 7 in 2020/21; and
- The “Engage” Programme which has been designed to limit any long-term adverse impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on educational standards by supporting pupils’ learning and engagement on their return to school



through provision of high quality one to one, small group or team teaching support in every school in Northern Ireland.

### **Progress to date**

Summer activity programmes have gone well with 48 primary schools out of 50 who expressed an interest having taken up the offer of a Summer School during July / August. A formal review of the Summer Schools programme will be produced in the coming months. Approximately 210 primary schools having currently availed of the offer of virtual learning software in literacy and numeracy for pupils entering Year 7 in 2020/21 academic year. We would expect this number to grow as schools / pupils settle into the new academic year. An Irish Medium equivalent has been identified and will be made available to Irish Medium schools in the coming weeks.

### **The Engage Programme**

The aim of the programme is “to limit any long-term adverse impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on educational standards by supporting pupils’ learning and engagement on their return to school through provision of high quality one to one, small group or team teaching support in every school in Northern Ireland”.

All primary and post primary schools in Northern Ireland will receive funding (to varying levels) through the Engage programme to provide additional teaching resources.

Through the Engage programme, qualified teachers will provide child centred one to one, small group or team teaching support within school to those pupils identified by schools as most benefiting from additional support following the Covid-19 period of lockdown. In some schools, the one-to-one, small group and team teaching could provide opportunities to further embed a whole school approach to nurture and provide pupils with a learning experience to develop social, emotional and behavioural skills and encourage success at school and with peers. It will also help develop pupils’ resilience and capacity to respond more confidently to challenges and support the positive promotion of the health and well-being of pupils.

Fundamentally, it is for schools to decide how to best utilise Engage programme funding within the aim and objectives of the programme in order to maximise positive outcomes for those children and young people with the greatest need, and to tailor associated provision accordingly.

Consequently, circa 400 schools with approximately average levels of Free School Meal entitlement (a minimum of 28% of pupils) or higher will, dependent on the number of pupils, be provided with funding to support either 0.2, 0.5, one or two additional teachers during the 2020/21 academic year providing over 300 additional teachers across the system.

**Table 1 – Schools with free school meal entitlement of 28% or higher**

Enrolment Band	Funding Allocation (2020/21 financial year)	Number of Primary Schools	Number of Post- Primary Schools
0-85	£5,090	47	1
86-200	£12,724	94	4
201-1000	£25,448	159	80
>1000	£50,896	0	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>97</b>

School closures and COVID-19 have affected the whole community. In recognition of this context, all other primary and post-primary schools, with Free School Meal Entitlement below 28%, will also receive funding to provide (depending on their size) 30, 45 or 60 substitute days during the 2020/21 school year in order to deliver a programme to support pupils to engage with learning.

**Table 2 – Schools with free school meal entitlement below 28%**

Enrolment Band	Funding Allocation (2020/21 financial year)	Number of days equivalent sub cover days (2020/21 financial year)	Number of Primary Schools	Number of Post- Primary Schools
0-200	£3,600	20	300	3
201-500	£5,400	30	160	9
>501	£8,100	45	32	84
<b>Total</b>			<b>492</b>	<b>96</b>

In this way, the Programme is both targeted at those schools with concentrations of disadvantage but also provides universal support across all primary and post-primary schools.

### Financial Implications

The total cost of the Summer Schools, Virtual Learning projects and the Engage Programme will be £12m for the 2020/21 financial year. In due course, the Minister will seek the Executive's agreement to additional funding of £4.8 million in order to provide the Engage Programme throughout the 2020/21 academic year. Total cost for the programme is therefore, estimated to be £16.8m; and this is subject to the necessary approvals but we are hopeful that this will be secured.

Detailed guidance together with allocations for each school will be published on-line today. I hope you will join with me in making this investment a success and in welcoming our children and young people back to school to maximise every opportunity that awaits them.

Yours faithfully



**ALISON CHAMBERS**