

## Delegated Cabinet Member Decision (Grant £40,000) Report

**Decision Maker and Portfolio area:** Richard Lynch, Director of Education and early Years

**Date of Decision:**

**Subject:** Opportunity Area funded '50 Things To Do' initiative

**Report Author:** Paula Healey

**Ward(s) Affected:** Is Ward Member consultation required? No

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### Reason for the decision:

The Opportunity Area Partnership Board has approved investment 20k from Y4 funding and 20k from Y5 for delivery of the **50 Things to Do** initiative to boost children's early learning by increasing the diversity of children's experiences at home through a universal and targeted place-based approach. This is to address the significant loss of learning experienced by children during lockdown as evidenced through national research and local research, namely the Reception Baseline data submitted by Oldham schools in the autumn term and the Home Start survey of Oldham parents and carers.

The initial '50 Things to Do' would run for the remainder of Y4 of the OA programme (June – August) utilising Y4 funding and Y5 (Sept 21 to 31 Aug 22) subject to final approval from the DfE. Long term sustainability beyond the OA (10k annual fee) would be sourced through the LA Early Years budget.

**Year 4: £20,000 for 50 Things plus**

**Year 5: £20,000 for 50 Things plus**

**Total=£40,000**

Implementation of 50 Things to Do enables parents to benefit from new technology to support their children learning at home.

The 50 Things approach has been designed to support the most impactful pedagogies and parenting approaches in the home learning environment with the objective of helping to solve the problem of children reaching their first school experience with

low literacy levels, language skills, or just a lack of life experiences. This immediately puts them at a disadvantage against the rest of the class, and research shows that most children never recover from this early disadvantage, affecting not just their attainment, but also their confidence and aspirations.

- *50 Things has been explicitly designed to promote early language development which is a key priority within our new partnership Early Years Strategy and SEND strategy.*
- *50 Things is premised on parents as key agents of early development and learning.*
- *50 Things has been designed to secure relationships and interactions between parents and child, which at the same time promote resilience*

50 Things To Do will help schools fulfill their statutory obligation to promote home learning at a time of Covid recovery. It will also help primary schools meet the challenge of Ofsted's new inspection framework focus on the wider curriculum

Whilst other websites and apps are available for families to access, it can be difficult for busy parents to work out what content is best. If purchased, 50 Things in Oldham would be free to users at the point of access and universally accessible. Also, what is unique about 50 Things is that in addition to the app and website, Oldham would get access to a comprehensive range of resources and tools for use for families; schools and practitioners across the borough. 50 Things has been designed to enable LAs to:

- simply add localised information and photographs of local places e.g. library & children centre information to make it their own.
- Ability to promote local assets and for local assets to promote activity through an events page
- Access a wraparound training, support and guidance.
- Advice on promoting 50 Things in Oldham and importantly a place at the table and a voice within a growing and vibrant 50 Things community.

## **Summary:**

This report seeks exemption from contract procedure rules in order to make a direct award to St Edmund's Nursery School and Children's Centre through grant funding to purchase and use the '50 Things to Do'

brand including a mobile app; website; marketing assets and support and guidance.

St Edmund's Nursery School and Children's Centre, a school judged as outstanding by Ofsted, developed 50 Things alongside the Centre for Applied Educational Research as a partner. The school has an extensive proven track record of working with schools and LAs across the country as a Teaching School and National Support School. The Director of 50 Things is a member of the Bradford OA partnership Board and the approach is a key tool in the City of Bradford's Metropolitan District Council approach to Early Years 50 Things is also supported by [Big Change](#) and [Shine](#)

***What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):***

Option 1: Engage with the market to purchase and delivery a home learning app through an open, competitive tender process. This option presents the following risks:

- Noncompliance with the expectations of the Opportunity Area Partnership Board who have approved funding for 50 Things. This may result in the loss of funding.
- Other apps do not offer the full benefits of 50 Things including the ability to add and promote localised assets and information; website, materials and support and guidance
- Other apps may be unable to demonstrate a proven track record or evidence base in line with 50 Things
- Unable to commission and deliver by the summer to support the DFE holiday activities and food programme

Option 2: Do not approve the purchase of 50 Things. This option presents the following risks:

- Noncompliance with the expectations of the Opportunity Area Partnership Board who have approved funding for 50 Things. This may result in the loss of funding.
- Unable to build on the current targeted home learning programme delivered through a small number of schools and early years settings. This will significantly limit reach; ability for communities to get involved and parents unable to benefit from new technology to support their children learning at home.
- Reduction in activity to support this priority within the new Early Years Partnership Strategy

**Recommendation(s):**

That authority to be given to make a direct award to the St Edmund's Nursery School and Children's Centre.

**Implications:**

*What are the **financial** implications?*

The financial implication associated with this report are to make a direct award to St Edmund's Nursery School and Children's centre for a total amount of £40,000. This can be wholly financed from within the Council's existing Opportunity Area allocations as follows:

**OA Year 4** = £20,000 (£1.580m received in 2020-21).  
**OA Year 5** = £20,000 (To be received in financial year 2021-22).

As such there are no direct revenue consequences for the Council.

Funding has been formally agreed at £18.1m funding for year 5 (2021/22) of the Opportunity Area programme. Funding will be allocated to each area based on need identified within the year 5 delivery plans you are currently developing with officials



Minister Donelan  
Letter Oldham OA Y1

(Victoria Hayes 26.4.21)

What are the **procurement** implications? There is a provision within Rule 21.3 (A) for the Council to grant an exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in exceptional circumstances where proprietary or patented goods or services are proposed to be purchased which are only obtainable from one person and it can be demonstrated that no reasonably satisfactory alternative to those proprietary or patented goods or services is available. Commercial Procurement Unit supports the

recommendation in the report. (Mohammad Sharif) 14/04/2021

*What are the **legal** implications?*

There is a provision within Rule 21.3 (a) for the Council to grant an exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in exceptional circumstances where proprietary or patented goods or services are proposed to be purchased which are only obtainable from one person and it can be demonstrated that no reasonably satisfactory alternative to those proprietary or patented goods or services is available. The narrative in the body of this report would support the granting of an exemption from the Rules in these exceptional circumstances. (Elizabeth Cunningham Doyle)

*What are the **Human Resources** implications?*

None

***Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment** attached or not required because (please give reason)*

None

*What are the **property** implications*

None

**Risks:**

**Risk**

Implementation of 50 Things does not deliver the benefits and impact expected

There is insufficient local capacity to lead and complete the work for rapid

**Mitigation**

We will work with procurement, finance and legal services to develop robust monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

A theory of change to be completed with key milestones and outcomes identified. Progress will be monitored under the stewardship of the Early Years Partnership and OA Partnership Board.

Early engagement with key partners i.e. comms; web team to identify requirements and capacity required.

Set up local project team

roll out in the  
June- Aug

Collaboration with other LAs to  
share learning and resources to  
speed up set up and launch

Lack of  
engagement in  
the 50 Things  
project by local  
partner  
organisations  
and families

Comprehensive comms strategy  
in place which includes briefing  
sessions; social media campaign  
etc

### Co-operative agenda

This programme enables and empowers parents and carers to support their child's social, emotional, physical and early language development. As such it is in line with the aims of our co-operative approach to build on and enhance existing skills and capacity within our communities. (Amanda Richardson 13.4.2021)

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Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No

### Reason(s) for exemption from publication:

### List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title	Available from
Opportunity Area 2017-2020 Plan	<a href="https://oldhamopportunityarea.co.uk/">https://oldhamopportunityarea.co.uk/</a>


Early Years Strategy 2021-24	<a href="https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/6685/early_years_strategy_2021-24">https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/6685/early_years_strategy_2021-24</a>
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<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
Paula Healey	The recommended approach is in line with our local strategies and maximises use of time-limited y4 & y5 funding made available through the Opportunity Area.
<b>Date: 26.4.2021</b>	

Please list any appendices:-

Appendix number or letter	Description

In consultation with

(Relevant Executive Director/Director  Date:26/4/21  
Richard Lynch, Director of Education, Skills and Early Years