



Decision-making checklist

Questions to ask when considering a new project, programme or intervention for your school, trust or setting

1. Does it help us meet our core objectives or improvement plan priorities?
2. Does it fit with our values?
3. What are the potential benefits? Who could benefit, and how? Consider the impact for:
 - a. Pupils
 - b. Parents
 - c. Staff
 - d. Community and stakeholders
4. What makes us think that it will be beneficial? What evidence of impact can we draw on? Is there evidence of positive impact in similar contexts to ours?
5. Do we have the capacity to deliver it effectively? For example:
 - a. What staffing is required?
 - b. What resources are needed?
 - c. Are there hidden costs to be considered?
 - d. Can we provide the appropriate maintenance, monitoring or follow-up?
6. Do we have the skills to deliver it effectively? Are there training and development needs? Can we provide that? Is there expertise we can draw on if needed?
7. What does it cost? Does the cost balance favourably against the potential benefits? Costs might be:
 - a. Financial
 - b. Time
 - c. Resource
8. If we commit to this project, does that mean that there is something else that we don't or can't do? Is that the right decision for us?
9. Can we afford it?

These days, 'Can we afford it?' is the very last question on my list. Which might seem like an odd thing for a chief finance officer to say. But we think through the benefits first, ask all the questions and then consider the cost.

Paul Edmond in [Seeking the co-benefits: people, planet - and financial efficiency](#)

You start with the why. Why are you trying to do what you do? What is it that drives you? What's the mission statement? What's the vision? What are the values? And that needs to be the start of the school improvement process.

Paul K Ainsworth in [Keep going: routes to sustainable improvement and finding your why](#)