

22nd June 2022

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR INVESTMENT & GROWTH

MULTIPLY- ADULT NUMERACY FUNDING

Purpose of the Report

1. To update on progress and seek approval for the submission of the Investment Plan in relation to Multiply (the Governments adult numeracy programme).
2. This is a Key Decision because it will result in expenditure of £1 million or over and it will have significant effects on two or more electoral divisions.

Information

Background to the funding

3. The £559m Multiply Programme (funded by the Department for Education – DfE) aims to help transform the lives of hundreds of thousands of adults across the UK with bespoke adult numeracy programmes to improve numeracy skills and confidence and boost their career prospects. On this basis, Government has invited the upper tier/unitary authorities to develop and deliver a three-year investment plan (2022/2023 to 2024/25) of bespoke programmes, against a set menu of interventions to:
 - deliver bespoke adult numeracy interventions,
 - provide a new national online platform that offers free personal tutoring and digital training; and
 - build the evidence based on ‘what works’ in improving functional adult numeracy.
4. This funding is additional to the funding currently provided and is specifically targeted to support those people, over 19, without the basic maths qualifications. Numeracy is the ability to understand and use maths in daily life, home, and work. Whether that be improving household finances, helping children with homework, making more sense of the statistics and facts in the media, or improving numeracy skills specific to your line of work. It is recognised that people who improve their numeracy skills are more likely to be in employment, have higher wages, and better wellbeing, and will be more able to progress to higher levels of free training to secure a skilled job in our economy. Businesses who develop their employees’ numeracy skills can boost productivity, increase profits, and improve employee retention.

5. Published on 13 April 2022, the following link provides access to the detailed documents (investment prospectus, technical guidance and indicative allocations): [Multiply: funding available to improve adult numeracy skills - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multiply-funding-available-to-improve-adult-numeracy-skills)
6. The funding opportunity will support the work of the Council Plan (specifically ambition four), by ensuring that our residents have access to more support to gain numeracy qualifications and the skills required to get into work, or progress if they are already in work. Furthermore, this work programme ties in with the Council's Economic Transition Plan to ensure that we support employment and skills programmes and to ensure that people have the skills they need now and into the future (objective 1 and 2).

Investment Plan requirements

7. The investment plan will outline what provision is needed to deliver high quality, innovative numeracy interventions that meet the needs of Nottinghamshire residents and the national aims. The plan will also cover the following principles:
 - Deliverability
 - Evidence of need and demand
 - Interventions to be used from the menu
 - Strategic Fit
 - Engaging and motivating learners
8. Our investment plan is set over the three-year funding period against the following profile:

	Total Funding Allocation (£)	2022-2023 (£)	2023-2024 (£)	2024-2025 (£)
Nottinghamshire	4,255,272.91	1,286,477.86	1,484,397.52	1,484,397.52

9. Investment plans for Multiply are required to be submitted to Government by 30 June 2022 and once approved, provisional allocations will be signed off, grant agreements put in place and first payments made in Autumn 2022. Allocation amounts may be subject to change in Years 2 and 3 according to delivery against agreed outcome expectations and spend against allocation profiles.

Drafting our Investment Plan

10. Based on a growing evidence base on the barriers that hold people back from addressing their numeracy skills and what works in tackling poor adult numeracy a menu of interventions has been provided. The activities proposed in the County Council's investment plan will be targeted towards adults aged 19 and over and are additional to and differentiated from that which is already fully funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) legal entitlement and will not displace that provision.
11. From the menu of interventions identified in the government guidance, we have identified those that best suit Nottinghamshire. Our proposed programme of work will include a mix of:
 - Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications.
 - Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money.

- Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace.
- Courses aimed at people who can't apply for certain jobs because of their lack of numeracy skills and / or to encourage people to upskill in numeracy in order to access a certain job / career.
- New intensive and flexible numeracy courses targeted at people without Level 2 maths, leading to a Functional Skills Qualification.
- Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression.
- Numeracy courses aimed at prisoners, those recently released from prison or on temporary licence.
- Numeracy courses aimed at those 19 or over that are leaving, or have just left, the care system.
- Numeracy activities, courses or provision developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners aimed at engaging the hardest to reach learners – for example, those not in the labour market or other groups identified locally as in need.
- Additional vocational maths embedded into vocational courses.

12. Our investment plan will ensure that:

- More adults achieving maths qualifications in numeracy courses (up to, and including, Level 2) with GCSEs and Functional Skills Qualifications as the qualifications of choice in England
- Increased participation in numeracy courses
- Increased adult numeracy proficiency across the county
- Creating a more skilled and resilient workforce, and
- Businesses will have access to more skilled workforce and the associated benefits

13. There are a number of general principles, which the County Council's investment plan adheres to:

- **Target Audience:** Target learners are adults 19+ who have not previously attained a GCSE Grade 4/C or higher maths qualification. They can either be working towards a maths GCSE or Functional Skills Qualification, need specific numeracy skills for their work or progression, or just want to brush up on the skills to help them get on in life and work.
- **Existing arrangements:** Interventions should not displace, replace and / or duplicate any existing adult numeracy provision, such as activity funded through the existing Adult Education Budget (AEB) statutory entitlement for maths qualifications. The Nottinghamshire County Council investment plan pays due regard and coordinates where possible with wider skills and employment interventions
- **Partnerships:** Nottinghamshire County Council will submit its' own investment plan although and we are working in partnership with Inspire Learning, West Notts College and other partners to ensure we capture what works best. From this our investment plan provides a means of ensuring value for money and delivery of effective solutions for learners.
- **Peer to peer support and sharing evidence of what works** peer learning and networking opportunities will be available as part of the Multiply programme and a series of events to enable peer to peer support and sharing of best practice amongst local areas and with sector experts, providers and employers will take place through the life of the funding.

14. Officers are still finalising the investment plan ready for sign off and submission and will share with members when complete.

Delivery of the Investment Plan

15. Inspire will be the main provider of Multiply activities and will employ a project manager, numeracy champions, specialist tutors, multiply advisors and administrators to deliver the fund. Other activity will be commissioned with learning providers and the FE sector to meet the needs of learners.
16. In order to ensure effectively and timely delivery of the Investment Plan in year 1 (as suggested in the guidance), the Council (and our incumbent adult education provider) are undertaking the following activities (at risk):
- Undertaken a survey of local businesses and residents to understand barriers and opportunities to delivery numeracy courses across Nottinghamshire
 - Engaged the Learning and Work Institute to undertake a data mapping exercise to understand the gaps in essential skills across Nottinghamshire
 - Initial preparation for the commissioning of courses to start in September, including advertising and resourcing

Other Options Considered

17. The do-nothing option was discounted as Multiply presents an opportunity to provide residents to access free numeracy training and advice to gain the skills and confidence needed to use numeracy at work or in everyday life. By providing this opportunity for those who are aged 19+ and do not have a maths GCSE at Grade C or equivalent and will help to build a skilled workforce and make sure everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

18. Delivering Multiply will support the Nottinghamshire Plan for a healthy, prosperous, and greener Nottinghamshire, in particular the delivery of Ambition 4: Building skills that help people get good jobs. This scheme also delivers two of the Objectives of the Council's Economic Transition Plan. As the timing is tight to deliver the first-year funding allocation, approval is also being sought to deliver the Investment Plan activities when it is approved by DfE.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

20. The preparation for the Investment Plan will be covered through existing resources.

21. The submitted Investment Plan will outline our proposals for a maximum value of £4,255,272 over a 3-year period. When the Investment Plan is assessed and approved by DfE, year 1 allocations will be signed off (£1,286,477.86). It is expected that grant agreements will be put in place swiftly to allow the first payments to be made in September 2022. Payments for years 2 and 3 will be subject to successful delivery against agreed outcome expectations and spend against allocations. Any revenue implications of the additional commissioning required will be covered by the Multiply funding allocation, as there is a provision made for administration under the terms of the funding.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management:

- 1) Approves the proposed spend profile (as detailed in paragraph 8)
- 2) Approves the priorities for the Multiply funding (as detailed in paragraphs 10 to 15)
- 3) Approves the submission of the Investment Plan allocating the £4.2m of Multiply funding across the County.
- 4) Approves the spend, delivery and commissioning of the Investment Plan activities over the three-year period.
- 5) Receives regular updates on the delivery of the Investment Plan for their consideration.

Matthew Neal
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For any enquiries about this report please contact: Joelle Davies, Group Manager 0115 977 4857

Constitutional Comments (CEH 31/05/2022)

22. The report and recommendations fall within the remit of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management in accordance with their terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SES 27/05/2022)

23. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 23 and 24 of the report.

24. The recommendations themselves have no immediate financial impact, as the preparation for the Investment Plan will be covered through existing resources. Proposals resulting from

the actions will be costed and considered and subject to the usual scrutiny and democratic process.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All