

Title of report: Multiply Local Investment Plan submission to the Department for Education

Decision maker: Cabinet Member Children and Young People

Decision date: 1st July 2022

Report by: Senior Adviser Post 16 Learning and Skills

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To seek Cabinet Member approval to further develop and submit the local Investment Plan for consideration by the Department for Education for the delivery of the Multiply adult numeracy programme. The Local Investment Plan will outline how the council will deliver the £903,193.51 Multiply programme over a 3-year financial funding year period.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People approves the submission of the Multiply Investment Plan to the Department for Education to deliver a 3-year adult numeracy programme in Herefordshire; and**
- b) The council agrees to act as the accountable body for the Multiply programme within Herefordshire and any associated grant funding awarded by government; and**
- c) Authority is delegated to the Director for Children and Young People following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to determine the final investment plan and submit to the Department For Education; and**
- d) Authority is delegated to the Director for Children and Young People and S151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to undertake any operational decisions required to implement the Multiply programme within Herefordshire.**

Alternative options

- 1.** To not submit a 3 year Multiply Investment Plan for Herefordshire by 30th June 2022. This is not recommended because this will result in the county not receiving up to £0.9m of Multiply programme funding investment that has been allocated to Herefordshire to improve adult numeracy skills. This will impact those businesses and residents who could most benefit from improved numeracy skills. It would also be a lost opportunity to improve the skills base of the county and address levelling up and growth ambitions.

Key considerations

- 2.** The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has allocated up to £559m, to the Multiply programme to improve adult numeracy skills. To support the government's Levelling Up mission to ensure that by 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the United Kingdom. The funding is to be spent on three main strands of delivery:
 - I.** Allocation to local areas (over 3 years) to deliver numeracy interventions such as, for example, intensive flexible maths courses for those in employment or unemployed, building on what is already delivered (in England) through the Adult Education Budget;
 - II.** The development and roll out of a national digital platform; and
 - III.** A programme of randomised control trials and evaluation to improve evidence about what works to improve adult numeracy.
- 3.** The prospectus invites the GLA, Mayoral Combined Authorities, and upper tier/unitary authorities outside of these areas in England, to develop investment plans for bespoke adult numeracy programmes, against a national menu of interventions.
- 4.** Herefordshire has provisionally been allocated £903,193.51 over the next 3 financial years to deliver adult numeracy provision for individuals aged 19 or older on 31 August of the funding year, who do not already have a level 2 Maths qualification (GCSE grade C/4 or higher, and Functional Skills Qualifications). They can either be working towards a maths GCSE or

Functional Skills Qualification, need specific numeracy skills for their work or progression, or want to improve their skills to help them get on in life and work.

5. Allocations have been determined by three key factors: local authority skills level, total population size and an area cost uplift.
6. Funding provided through the Multiply programme is in addition to existing funding streams available for adults to improve maths and numeracy skills, including through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) in England.
7. Local areas will have the opportunity to resubmit their investment plans ahead of Year 2 and Year 3 incorporating learnings from Year 1 and any national offers that have been launched.
8. The national menu of interventions include:
 - I. Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money.
 - II. Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace.
 - III. Courses aimed at people who can't apply for certain jobs because of lack of numeracy skills and/or to encourage people to upskill in numeracy order to access a certain job/career.
 - IV. Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression.
 - V. Numeracy courses aimed at those 19 or over that are leaving, or have just left, the care system.
 - VI. 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.

Each area can choose as many types of intervention as they like from the menu, according to what is appropriate for local needs. The Department for Education (DfE) suggested that it is interested to hear about innovative ideas to reach learners.

9. There is a need to build some capacity in the workforce locally to deliver selected Multiply initiatives successfully, for example, to invest in recruitment campaigns to target key teachers, to invest in dedicated training and support for existing staff, or support numeracy champions and tutors. Spending on workforce capacity building must directly support the delivery in local areas and this will be included in the investment plan.
10. Discussions are underway on how interventions will be commissioned transparently and fairly and to achieve the best value and impact. Opportunities to allocate Multiply in Herefordshire through grant funding via a published criteria will be subject to Cabinet Office Grants Standards. Any required procurement will be in line with Council procurement rules.
11. Local areas are expected to measurably improve adult functional numeracy levels locally. That includes through increasing the number of adults participating in, and achieving, adult numeracy qualifications up to and including Level 2 (both GCSE Grade C/4 or above, and Functional Skills Qualifications) Key targets and performance indicators will be agreed with each provider and included in their partnership agreements as per their investment plan and budget profile. A programme of reviews will be conducted with providers to assess performance against targets, particularly in the areas of numbers and types of learners, target groups, guided learning hours and learner hours.

12. The evidence base for adult numeracy is outdated and not specific to numeracy. As part of the Multiply programme, a full national systematic review of evidence around adult numeracy is being undertaken and will conclude in Autumn 2022.
13. The DfE accepts that Multiply lead bodies will also collect quantitative, qualitative, and anecdotal evidence as part of developing the investment plan. The council has appointed Metro-Dynamics to support the council to develop the Big Economic Plan and UK Share Prosperity Investment Plan, which includes the Multiply investment plan.
14. Noting the shortcomings in the numeracy data, what is known is 17m adults in England - half of the working-age population - have everyday maths skills roughly equivalent to those expected of a primary school child (Entry Levels) 1. This compares poorly internationally – below the OECD average, and behind countries such as Japan, Germany and Canada.
15. In Herefordshire, female school leavers have consistently higher Level 2 English and maths achievement rates than males.
16. The percentage of 19 year olds in Herefordshire qualified at level 2 with English and Maths eligible for Free School Meals, continues to be below England averages.
17. According to the ONS annual population survey (Jan 2021-Dec201) 4.7%, 5200 of those aged 16 to 64 were recorded as having no qualifications in Herefordshire. Residents with few or no qualifications are vulnerable to disproportionately low paid work or unemployment.
18. In 2020/21, there were a total of 111 adult learner enrolments, funded by the adult education budget undertaking accredited maths programmes in Herefordshire with Herefordshire based providers. This was a decrease of 48 enrolments from 2019/20. Indicating that there is potential current capacity for further delivery.
19. According to government statistics, nationally learners achieving a L2 maths qualification saw their wages increase by on average 13.7% and were 10% more likely to be in work after seven years, compared to those who do not. People who improve their numeracy skills are more likely to be in employment, have higher wages, and better wellbeing.

Community impact

20. The investment plan submission is an opportunity to secure up to £0.9m in external government funding to support revenue activity for the next 3 financial years in support of the County Plan objectives. In particular the ambition for communities: strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together; and the economy ambition to support an economy, which, builds on the county's strengths and resources; and Invest in education and the skills needed by employers, Improve educational attainment and widen further and higher education opportunities, Skill-up – Encourage continuous investment in our local workforce and a culture of lifelong learning in our community.
21. In addition, there will be courses aimed at those aged 19 or over that are leaving, or have just left, the care system, to improve their numeracy skills, supporting the ambitions of the Herefordshire Children and Young People's Partnership plan 2019-2024 such as:
 - Targeting resources and supporting vulnerable people aged 19 and over into learning including care leavers.
 - Achieving success in life, learning and future employment.

22. It also contributes to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy vision of 'Herefordshire residents are resilient, lead fulfilling lives, are emotionally and physically healthy and feel safe and secure' and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Plan and Strategic Economic Plan.
23. Most delivery will take place in the community and workplace, working with Talk Community Hubs and other community based groups, and employers. Whilst some accredited learning will be provided, funding will mostly be focused on contextualised non-accredited informal learning.

Environmental Impact

24. Whilst this is a decision on back office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the council's Environmental Policy. For example minimise waste, paper and energy usage and considering sustainable and active travel options.
25. The environmental impact of this proposal will be considered through the service specification and will include appropriate requirements on the contractor/delivery partner to minimise waste, reduce energy and carbon emissions and to consider opportunities to enhance biodiversity. This will be managed and reported through the ongoing contract management.

Equality duty

26. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
27. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.
28. Local areas will be expected to consider the Public Sector Equalities Duty in any provision developed through Multiply, including but not limited to gender, age, disability and race. This will also include promoting equality through recruitment processes; offering information, advice and guidance; ensuring that the structure and content of the activities delivered are suitable and appropriate; and ensuring that provision is accessible and flexible where necessary.

Resource implications

29. The table below outlines the council's indicative allocation for the financial years 2022 – 2025.

Financial Year	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Total Funding Allocation
Funding Allocation - Revenue (£)	273,058.50	315,067.50	315,067.50	903,193.51

30. The revenue funding will be awarded based on the local Multiply Investment Plan being agreed by the DfE. The resources required for the preparation of the local Investment Plan is being provided from existing resources. In addition, the council has commissioned Metro Dynamics to provide support to the UKSPF including Multiply, in the review of the evidence base, to engage with local partners and to assist in the drafting of the final investment plan.
31. There is a menu of interventions laid out in the prospectus for local areas to draw down from. There are no set rates for engagement or resources, however, there will be a 10% limit on the value of funding that can be spent on administration costs. All costs must be evidenced against the investment plan and should ensure value for money.
32. The maximum 10% administrative expenditure is based on the total allocation for each local area, and so will not be impacted by projected underspends or under delivery. This will be used to employ a Multiply project officer to performance manage and monitor contracts and ensure that the Multiply investment
33. The investment plan only requires high-level milestones e.g. when courses will be starting, when procurement process will begin, when contracting arrangements will commence and when providers will be identified.
34. Delivery of the chosen interventions is the choice of each local authority. However, the local authority will need to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the receipt and disbursement of Multiply funding. That includes ensuring appropriate due diligence is in place to establish which providers and / or organisations will deliver Multiply funding, establishing value for money, complying with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, as appropriate; as well as day-to-day monitoring of performance. The council will need to contract with each project, make and monitor payments to projects including examining claims and supporting evidence, and report on progress to government. This is a common feature of grant schemes and one the council has extensive experience of performing.
35. In Year 1 (22-23 FY), local areas need to consider how much they can deliver in the timeframe & highlight unallocated budget; The DFE will make payments on that basis. Any underspend will be clawed back at the end of the financial year. In years 2 and 3, there will be some flexibility to increase/decrease payments in year according to delivery.

Legal implications

36. The council has the power to act as the Accountable Body for the Multiply Investment under s 1 -4 of the Localism Act 2011 and although there is no statutory requirement for the council to act as Accountable Body the UK Shared Prosperity Fund prospectus makes it clear that it is anticipated that the council will fulfil this role.
37. Any funding awarded to the council following the submission of the Investment Plan will be provide by way of a Section 31 ring-fenced grant under the Local Government Act 2003. The grant determination letter will be accompanied by a Memorandum of Understanding which will set out the fund requirements and obligations. These requirements and obligations will be included in any onward grant agreements with providers to mitigate any risk to the council.
38. The Memorandum of Understanding will also set out the success measures against which the council will be measured to ensure that the objective of the funding has been met, this being to increase levels of functional numeracy in the adult population.

Risk management

39.

Risk/opportunity	Mitigation
<p>Delay in having the Year 1 allocation confirmed impacts on delivery of the programme and funding allocation. ring the funding year to monitor.</p>	<p>This will be mitigated by ongoing discussions with the Department for Education and targets adjusted accordingly.</p>
<p>Delivery partners fail to attract the number of learners identified in their proposals/or are unable to continue to deliver.</p>	<p>All successful project delivery partners will receive a project inception meeting to set out expectations, including eligible and ineligible activity, financial records keeping, project liabilities, required processes and reports. Legal agreement between council and project will set out eligible expenditure, reporting requirements, and project deliverer default including clawback proceedings. Projects will be required to complete a progress report to accompany each financial claim. This should detail progress towards delivery of outputs and other milestones as set out in the funding agreement. Unsatisfactory progress towards project milestones and output delivery which will be reported with each claim made (usually on a monthly basis) will result in project suspension and potential closure depending on mitigating action taken by the project deliverer. Funding and targets would be reallocated.</p>
<p>Not having enough qualified maths tutors to deliver the Multiply programme.</p>	<p>The Department for Education has stated that tutors do not need to be fully qualified maths tutors. They do need to hold a teaching qualification. Some of the allocated funding can and will be used to train tutors, specifically for this programme.</p>
<p>Engaging learners to join the Multiply programme is going to be a challenge due to barriers some people have to maths.</p>	<p>The Department for Education has agreed that an engagement role can be built into the investment plan.</p>

40. Risks will be managed by the Children and Young People's Directorate.

Consultees

41. Comments were received back from Councillors Toynbee and Hey and a political group consultation was held on 8 June 2022, members at these meetings were supportive of submitting the Multiply investment plan for Herefordshire. The views and comments members provided are as follows:

Need to ensure that Care Leavers are prioritised and involved in the design of provision to support them.

Some of the funding should be used for Train the Trainer and workforce capacity building.

Maths for better health courses - for example, ability to understand and act on health messaging (health promotion), health instructions.

Maths for Life - Financial literacy courses should be delivered.

Talk Community Hubs should be referral route/mechanism and perhaps some courses could be delivered from some of the Hubs.

Concerns raised about how we reach people in dispersed rural communities where there isn't a Talk Community Hub. Suggested that in person small group or one to one programmes if agreed by DFE, should be developed to ensure they are accessible to people in rural areas.

Programmes should support people in employment to retrain and upskill.

How do we engage people so that there isn't a stigma in admitting poor maths skills. What can Councillors do in their communities to play their part.

Design programmes in a more social setting rather than a formal classroom.

Need to understand through evaluation how this programme has made a difference and capture more information on residents' numeracy skills through this process.

42. Both current and potential partners and key stakeholders have been consulted about the proposed programme's content and delivery, to gain ideas and feedback to help inform the final local Investment Plan. The range of organisations includes Further Education (FE) colleges, and training providers, community, and voluntary organisations, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, Herefordshire Business Board, Department for Work and Pensions, employers, Herefordshire Skills Board and council teams such as children centres and care experienced children and young adults. All ideas have been collated and will be used to inform delivery priorities.

Appendices

43. Appendix 1 Multiply Investment Prospectus

Appendix 2 Multiply Technical Guidance

Appendix 3 Multiply Investment Template

Appendix 4 Multiply Investment Plan Template – Section A Question 2

Background papers

44. None

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 23/06/2022
Finance	Louise Devlin	Date 22/06/2022
Legal	Alice McAlpine	Date 20/06/2022
Communications	Alex Floyd	Date 23/06/2022
Equality Duty	Carol Trachonitis	Date 20/06/2022
Procurement	Lee Robertson	Date 20/06/2022
Risk	Elizabeth Freeland	Date 26/06/2022
Approved by	Darryl Freeman	Date 26/06/2022