

Decision Report - Executive Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/01/01

Decision Date - 03/04/23



Acceptance of funding for the Multiply (Adult Numeracy) programme

Executive Member(s): Cllr Liz Leyshon - Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member on Finance and Human Resources

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Director: Mickey Green – Executive Director Climate and Place

Lead Officer: Jason Vaughan – Executive Director of Resources and Corporate Services

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1. Summary / Background

- 1.1** The Government committed an initial £559m allocation, from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to improve adult numeracy skills.

The Multiply Programme will provide adults (19+) who do not possess a Level 2 maths qualification (GCSE or equivalent) with the opportunity to learn and develop essential numerical skills they need to succeed at any age to support improved life chances. Funding will boost people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and work and will enable adults to progress and achieve a formal qualification in the subject.

Somerset County Council is the Lead Authority and has been allocated a total of £2,485,156 over a 3-year period (2022 – 2025). Funding of £751,326 for Year 1 (2022/23) has been received and the programme delivered in accordance with the approved Investment Plan. Funding of £866,915 for Year 2 (2023/24) has been awarded following the approval of a revised Investment Plan.

A Grant Determination Letter is attached at Appendix 1

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.** The Director of Finance and Governance:
- a) Authorises acceptance of the funding and agrees to sign the Grant Determination Letter
 - b) Approves the extension of the existing grant funding agreement with Somerset Skills & learning CIC for a further year as defined in the Grant Funding Agreement.

Note – the Leader of the Council and the Chair of Scrutiny Policies and Place Committee have agreed the use of urgent implementation to enable the immediate implementation of the decision.

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1** To enable Somerset County Council to receive Year 2 funding the Grant Determination Letter needs to be accepted and signed. DfE have set a deadline of 4 April 2023.
- 3.2** To continue with the delivery of the Multiply Programme by Somerset Skills & Learning the current grant funding agreement needs to be extended under the agreed terms and conditions.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1.** No other options have been considered as this is for Year 2 of a three-year programme.

5. Links to County Vision, Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

- 5.1.** The delivery of the Investment Plan will support the County objectives to improve the life chances for those in greatest need, reduce inequality and improve social mobility; better outcomes for all children and adults so that they are safe, healthy and have a good physical and emotional well-being; and improve access and opportunities for all to high quality local education, skills and employment, and health and care provision.

6. Consultations and co-production

- 6.1.** In developing the initial Investment Plan, we worked closely with a wide range of stakeholders who emphasised the importance of making a difference to many adults that feel excluded or who have struggled with numeracy.

Year 1 delivery was set as pilot activity and has informed the refined approach for Year 2. An updated Investment Plan for Year 2 has been approved and we will continue to monitor demand and effectiveness of this provision to review ongoing delivery.

All consultees were happy with the report and Cllr Bill Revans, leader of the Council, and Cllr Gwil Wren, Chair of Scrutiny have approved the request for immediate implementation.

7. Financial and Risk Implications

- 7.1.** DfE has awarded SCC £866,915 in Year 2 (2023/24) for spend by 31 March 2024. Funding will be transferred under a Section 31 ring-fenced transfer (Grant

Determination). It is anticipated that this total will be reduced by the underspent amount from Year 1. This was expected and has been considered.

The breakdown of funding is set out in the table below:

DfE Grant Funding	£866,915
10% top slice for M&A - Total £86,691	
Additional payment to delivery partner for management support	£15,000
Management & Admin funding retained by SCC	£71,691
Funding allocated for delivery via Grant Agreement	£780,224

Once we have signed the Grant Determination the first payment will be paid to SCC with three further payments throughout the year 2023/24.

It is intended that SCC continue to work with Somerset Skills & Learning CIC to deliver the interventions. Subject to approval of this decision, we will issue the funding via a back-to-back grant funding agreement.

A 10% top slice will be retained by SCC to manage and administer the programme. £15k of this will be paid to SS&L to support the submission of ILR data, which is a funding requirement, but we do not currently have the capacity/capability within the team. The balance (£780,223) will be used for delivery of the interventions set out in the Investment Plan and will be offered as grant to SS&L.

With reference to 2.1(a) above, there is no risk to SCC in accepting this funding.

With reference to 2.1(b) above there is some risk as expanded upon below.

DfE specify that if the delivery partner (SS&L) fails to deliver in accordance with the Investment Plan, or otherwise put SCC in breach of the terms set out in the Grant Determination Letter Then SCC may be requested to return some or all of the money to DfE without SCC being certain it will be able to claw back in turn from the delivery partner.

The Grant Determination letter does not set out any requirements in respect of clawback of funding if targets are not achieved. Future years funding levels will, however, be adjusted according to performance in the previous year. Therefore, the risk of having to repay funding solely for failing to achieve targets is very low.

For Year 2, we have incorporated a payment mechanism within the Grant Funding Agreement with SS&L which ensures we are only paying for achievement of outcomes against predefined KPIs. This reduces the risk to SCC in respect of clawback.

Likelihood	1	Impact	3	Risk Score	3
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8. Legal and HR Implications

- 8.1.** With reference to 2.1(a) above Legal Services have confirmed that we are able to sign the Grant Determination given there is no risk associated with doing so.

With reference to 2.1(b) above Legal Services have advised that there is some risk. The team are currently reviewing the back-to-back Grant Agreement with Somerset Skills and Learning in respect of changes in the year 2 Grant Determination Letter.

The funding has been offered as a grant, and as such would fall outside the scope of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 - though there is still a risk the arrangement could be construed as a contract for the purposes of those Regulations. Under a grant agreement there will be no contractual obligation on a supplier to comply with its terms. The remedy to SCC under the grant agreement would generally be a right to claw back money up to the amount granted.

Legal Services have advised that the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (SCA) will apply to this grant award. The team are working with Legal Services to ensure the SCA is complied with.

The 10% management and administration top slice is ring fenced for use on Eligible Expenditure (as defined in Annex C of the DfE's Grant Determination Letter) in relation to the delivery of this programme.

9. Other Implications

9.1. Equalities Implications

The Equalities Impact Assessment identifies a number of potential barriers to someone successfully taking part in the Adult Numeracy courses. To address these the EIA also identifies a number of actions to minimise these.

9.2. Community Safety Implications

There are no direct community safety implications associated with this decision.

9.3. Sustainability Implications

There are no direct sustainability implications associated with this decision.

9.4. Health and Safety Implications

There are no direct health and safety implications associated with this decision.

9.5. Health and Wellbeing Implications

The interventions will support those who may struggle with finances in respect of supporting individuals to better understand their money and enable them to make appropriate decisions. The interventions are also aimed to support individuals to enter employment or progress within current roles. Thereby, having a positive impact on mental health and well-being and reducing social inequalities.

9.6. Social Value

The interventions will provide skills development for hard-to-reach individuals supporting them to become more independent in numerical matters (such as financial management). Some of the proposed activity will be delivered by those working in the voluntary and community sector to ensure it targets those in need.

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

10.1 The Scrutiny Chair, Scrutiny Policies and Place comments have been considered.

11. Background

11.1. The Government launched its UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in February 2022 setting out a bold new approach to improve livelihoods and opportunities in all parts of the UK. The fund is a central pillar for the levelling up agenda and will provide £2.6bn of new funding for local investment by March 2025. The Government has committed an initial £559m allocation from the funding to improve adult numeracy skills through the Department for Education's Multiply Programme.

11.2. Multiply will provide adults (19+) who do not possess a Level 2 maths qualification (GCSE or equivalent) with the opportunity to learn and develop essential numerical skills they need to succeed at any age to support improved life chances. Funding will boost people's ability to use maths in

their daily life, at home and work and will enable adults to progress and achieve a formal qualification in the subject. The 3-year funding programme will enable delivery of bespoke adult numeracy interventions; development of a new national online platform offering personal tutoring and digital training; and build an evidence base of 'what works' in improving functional adult numeracy.

The overarching objectives of the Multiply programme are:

- More adults achieving maths qualifications
- Improved labour market outcomes
- Increase adult numeracy across the population

Somerset County Council is the Lead Authority and has been allocated a total of £2,485,156 over the 3-year period:

2022/23 - £751k

2023/24 - £867k

2024/25 – £867k

Funding for Years 2 and 3 will be dependent on performance in the previous year; any underspend will be reflected by a reduction in funding for the subsequent year. At the time of writing, we have confirmed a predicted underspend of £285,000 to DfE. Once figures have been approved DfE will confirm our reduced allocation for Year 2.

It should be noted that this underperformance isn't unique to Somerset. The Year 1 programme was only a part year with Grant Determinations from DfE confirmed in September 2022. Somerset then had to finalise its local grant funding with our key delivery partner (SS&L). SS&L were able to quickly mobilise the delivery of this programme and have done significant marketing and awareness raising. Delivery of interventions commenced in November and have been building up and increasing early into 2023.

Additionally, based on the short timeframe of the Year 1 delivery window it has been difficult to determine levels of demand and requirements for Year 2. We have reflected on delivery thus far and tweaked but will continue to monitor and review the programme of interventions during the course of Year 2 to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose.

Somerset County Council can top slice the allocation by 10% to cover programme management costs.

12. Background Papers

12.1 Key Decision report to accept year 1 funding as in the following link:

[Somerset County Council](#)

Report Sign-Off

		Date completed
Legal Implications	Tom Woodhams	08/03/23
Governance	Scott Wooldridge	08/03/23
Corporate Finance	Jason Vaughan	24/02/23
Customers, Digital and Workforce	Chris Squire	24/02/23
Property		N/A
Procurement	Claire Griffiths	24/02/23
Senior Manager	Jason Vaughan	24/02/23
Commissioning Development	Sunita Mills	27/02/23
Executive Member	Cllr Liz Leyshon - Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member on Finance and Human Resources	23/02/23
ECI Commissioning Director	Michelle Cusack	24/2/23
<u>Sign-off Key Decision / Consulted on Non-Key Decision</u>		
Local Member		
Opposition Spokesperson	Opposition Spokesperson - Finance and Human Resources - Cllr Mandy Chilcott	23/02/23
Scrutiny Chair	Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee - Cllr Gwil Wren	24/02/23

Appendices

1. Grant Determination letter including Memorandum of Understanding for Year 2
2. Year 2 Investment Plan approved by DfE 6th March 2023



Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for	Somerset Skills & learning CIC		
Version	Final	Date Completed	15th March 2023
Description of what is being impact assessed			
Impact of the DfE’s Multiply programme; designed to increase the level of numeracy across the adult population			
Evidence			
<p>What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the Office of National Statistics, Somerset Intelligence Partnership, Somerset’s Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA), Staff and/ or area profiles,, should be detailed here</p> <p>Office of National Statistics for data and information such as unemployment based on age, ethnicity and geographical area Somerset Trends for information on qualification status based on geographical area. How your area has changed in 10 years: Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk) Somerset Intelligence for data/information on ward profiles, travel and access, age, etc. District Community Profiles - Somerset Intelligence - The home of information and insight on and for Somerset - Run by a partnership of public sector organisations Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 for data on area profiles</p>			

[Deprivation - Somerset Trends](#)

Census 2021 for data on demographics

[Census 2021](#)

Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis for data/information on people and groups

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) - Somerset Intelligence - The home of information and insight on and for Somerset - Run by a partnership of public sector organisations](#)

National Numeracy for data/information relating specifically to numeracy levels across the adult population and barriers to learning

Learning and Work reports for data/information relating specifically to numeracy levels across the adult population and barriers to learning

<https://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/>

<https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/>

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

National Numeracy, who played an active part in working with the DfE during the design of the Multiply programme.

Holex, who are the lead professional body for Adult Community Learning.

Somerset Skills & Learning's Community Learning Partnership (CLP), made up of a range of community-based organisations embedded within Somerset's communities across the county.

Maths tutors

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to residents who are under 19 years of age as eligibility criteria is for 19+ 	☒	☐	☐
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to face-to-face sessions due to disability, such as a wheelchair user not being able to access a delivery venue where the correct facilities aren't in place. • Accessibility to learning due to learning support needs based on disability, such as someone with a hearing impairment who would require additional support to enable access to the learning provision. 	☒	☐	☐
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact relating to opinions of other learners in same cohort that could impact on the individuals experience and their wellbeing. For example, other learners express negative views on gender reassignment. 	☒	☐	☐

Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact relating to opinions of other learners in same cohort that could impact on the individuals experience and their wellbeing. For example, other learners express negative views on same sex marriage or civil partnerships. 	☒	☐	☐
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility due to pregnancy • Accessibility due to lack of childcare 	☒	☐	☐
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility due to non-awareness of service offer. 	☐	☒	☐
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility due to timings conflicting with religious commitments. • Accessibility due to other participants conflicting with religious or cultural beliefs (such as mixed gender classes) 	☒	☐	☐
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility due to other participants conflicting with religious or cultural beliefs (such as mixed gender classes) • Statistically, according to National Numeracy, women are more likely to suffer from maths anxiety than men. 	☒	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact relating to opinions of other learners in same cohort that could impact on the individual's experience and their wellbeing. For example, other learners express negative views on same sex relationships. 	☒	☐	☐

Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility for carers, those in the justice system, rurally isolated and impacted by a lack of transport infrastructure 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Negative outcomes action plan
 Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
A range of learning opportunities made available, which include face-to-face, remote/online and blended options. This will provide those who are unable to travel or attend a face-to-face session due to time commitments, access a range of learning options. Recorded sessions made available online to further support accessibility.	15/03/2023	Kate Priddle	Curriculum plans submitted for scrutiny and monthly reporting to relevant management groups	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
All face-to-face provision planned in accessible buildings with alternatives provided where this is not possible. PEEPs to be set up for all learners who identify as having a disability.	15/03/2023	Tracey Smith	Weekly health & safety checks reported. PEEPs submitted to Business	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

			Support Manager	
Learning support plans written up for all learners who feel they have a learning support need. The relevant adjustments made, and support provided; additional or adjusted learning resources, Learning Support Worker, etc.	15/03/2023	Kath Colvill	Learning support needs and learning support plans monitored by the Learning Support Coordinator and reported to the Quality Manager	☒
Alternative options made to learners under 19 who are not eligible for the DfE's Multiply programme. CEIAG offered to all learners and signposting made to most appropriate support	15/03/2023	Chelsea Edwards	Daily monitoring of enquiries and gaps in support requests. Report submitted to the Director of Quality & Curriculum	☒
Learner support needs assessed at enrolment and learners supported to access relevant support i.e., support with travel expenses, childcare, etc	15/03/2023	Chelsea Edwards	Daily monitoring of enquiries and	☒

			gaps in support requests. Report submitted to the Director of Quality & Curriculum	
Learner Behaviour Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy and Safeguarding Policy implemented to mitigate against inappropriate behaviour impacting on others. Monitored through learner voice activity and reported through management structure	15/03/2023	Justin Spiers	Learner voice activity such as facilitated question and answer sessions, surveys etc. Regular safeguarding meetings and IT set up to monitor PC activity. Reporting through management structure including Board	☒

	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

It is felt that the actions taken (outlined above) to mitigate against the identified negative impacts will eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. However, the assessment is ongoing, and any potential further impact will continue to be assessed and mitigated against.

Completed by:	Justin Spiers
Date	15th March 2023
Signed off by:	Tom Rutland
Date	17th March 2023
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	
Review date:	

