

CABINET

22 SEPTEMBER 2022

IMPLEMENTING THE DFE MULTIPLY PROGRAMME

Relevant Cabinet Member

Cllr Marc Bayliss

Relevant Chief Officer

Strategic Director for People

Local Member(s)

None

Recommendations

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy and Skills recommends that Cabinet:

- a) Notes the submission of a Worcestershire Investment Plan to the Department for Education (DfE), to deliver the Multiply Programme in Worcestershire as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF);**
- b) Endorses the content of the Worcestershire Investment Plan, as summarised in paragraph 9, which outlines how Worcestershire County Council will deliver the £2.68M Multiply programme over a 3 year funding period between 2022 – 2025; and**
- c) Delegates the implementation of the plan to the Strategic Director for People in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills.**

Background

2. The Multiply Programme is a strand of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund designed as a core part of the Government's Levelling Up mission and investment in adult skills. Its overall objective is to increase the levels of functional numeracy in the adult population in Worcestershire. The programme will support residents over 19 years old, who have not previously attained a GCSE Grade 4/C or a higher maths qualification, to either work towards a GCSE or equivalent, develop specific numeracy skills for their work or progression or simply refresh their skills to help them get on in life or work.

3. Multiply funding has been designed to enable Worcestershire, as an area, to invest in meaningful participation in numeracy that boosts people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and work – and enable adults to achieve a formal qualification that

provides further opportunities such as find employment, progression in a job or to further study. Worcestershire has been allocated £2.685M by the DfE over the financial years of 2022-2025, pending submission of an investment plan.

4. The DfE have identified the following success measures for the whole programme at a national level:

- More adults achieving maths qualifications courses (up to, and including, Level 2 – with GCSEs and Functional Skills Qualifications as the qualifications of choice in England – or equivalent) and an increase in participation in numeracy courses.
- Improved labour market outcomes e.g., fewer numeracy skills gaps reported by employers, and an increase in the proportion of adults that progress into sustained employment and / or education.
- Increased adult numeracy across the population – this overall impact, which goes beyond achieving certificates or qualifications, will track both the perceived and actual difference taking part in the programme makes in supporting learners to improve their understanding and use of maths in their daily lives, at home and at work - and to feel more confident when doing so.

5. The DfE will evaluate Multiply nationally against these criteria. Local areas, such as Worcestershire, will be expected to collect data in order to inform this evaluation.

Strategy and Next Steps

6. Worcestershire County Council (WCC) submitted an investment plan to the DfE on 30 June. This plan outlines the interventions to be delivered over the lifetime of the programme, along with information around the partners engaged, points of engagement, outcomes and the challenges in delivery.

7. In preparing the investment plan, the County Council's Skills and Investment Team have engaged a number of Education and Employment support providers who work across Worcestershire including Seetec, lead for the DWP Restart programme, Independent Training Providers delivering Worcestershire employability contracts and the three Further Education colleges. These organisations each completed an expression of interest offering the support they wanted to deliver in Multiply.

8. Worcestershire County Council will look to deliver alongside the identified partners, through its Learning Services team and if appropriate through Learning and Development interventions to communities through libraries and other community venues and our own staff as needed.

Summary of the Plan

9. A full copy of Worcestershire's Investment Plan can be found in the Appendix, however a summary of the provision is below. The Worcestershire plan for delivery seeks to find differing ways to engage and embed the numeracy learning into other subjects and disciplines, whilst engaging learners at various levels of ability up to GCSE Grade 4/C.

The plan will be delivered by a range of providers and across locations within Worcestershire where learner demand is found.

Multiply intervention	Estimated output – Learners 2023-2025	Short description of Multiply provision
Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications.	2050	These programmes will be designed to engage individuals in functional numeracy for the first time. The purpose of this programme is to deliver non-accredited entry level equivalent programmes, which focus on activities and exercises, to those who have had negative schooling experiences, fear of maths and/or have specific challenges such as dyscalculia.
Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace	1060	Programmes will be tailored with individual employers including understanding how this intervention would prepare their employees to be considered for promotion and career progression in their own roles.
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	285	Programmes will be designed to meet both individual's employment numeracy skills needs and those required by employers. Courses will be designed to either act as a tool to support enhancing an individual's employability such as embedding numeracy into ICT courses which embed improved digital skills for participants and as add on to employability pathways such as Bootcamps and Sector Work Based Programmes for instance supporting individuals on a care pathway to understand drug dosages and associated calculations needed .
New intensive and flexible numeracy courses targeted at people without Level 2 maths, leading to a Functional Skills Qualification	215	Responding to employer and individual needs, courses provide flexible and intensive sessions running courses in full-day , evening and weekend sessions to prepare learners to undertake 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	400	These programmes are designed to engage and upskill parents and carers to be able to support their child's mathematical learning. The purpose of these programmes are to deliver non-accredited entry level equivalent programmes, which will essentially mirror the curriculum taught in education environments. This approach will develop an understanding in mathematics curriculum to support their children and potentially encourage progression to formal learning for themselves.

Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money.	445	These programmes are designed to support those who are likely to be in serious debt and /or struggling to manage their finances. Learning will be provided to enable participants to develop specific functional numeracy skills, for example budgeting, costing shopping (both for consumables and non-consumables) and travelling as part of daily activity as well as strategies to manage their current debt levels and how to resolve the current challenges they face.
Numeracy activities, courses or provision developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners aimed at engaging the hardest to reach learners	200	Working with existing community partners and council teams , programmes will target those who are furthest away from undertaking formal qualification routes and those whose prior educational attainment has been low, typically those individuals who are inactive in the benefits system. Provision will be embedded in supporting residents to understand their current financial future and the impact of employment on that future building them towards moving into qualifications through gained confidence in numeracy. Working alongside agencies such as Libraries, Food Banks, Health and Social housing providers.
Additional relevant maths modules embedded into other vocational courses	200	These programmes will map across existing provision to identify optional additional tuition opportunities for adult students where current considerations to a formal maths qualification is not within the scope of their existing time availability nor aspirational as a chosen outcome - but which might become the outcome with incremental additional maths tuition and progress for example, statistics within CIPD courses, data analysis within IT courses, basic accounting/budget management within leadership and management courses or trades (electrical, hairdressing) etc. Programmes will target all adults on current vocational courses. Courses will be to suit individual needs on either one to one basis or in small groups and provision will be a minimum of 6 hours and a maximum of 45
Numeracy courses aimed at those 19 or over that are leaving, or have just left, the care system	80	Worcestershire working in partnership with the Care leavers function in Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Childrens First will pilot an online virtual platform for Care leavers to consider their financial futures and improve their numeracy skills alongside. This online platform will form part of a care leavers journey alongside careers support to support them to better budget their daily lives and to understand how they can improve their financial picture through work and better off calculations.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

10. The proposed Multiply allocations have been published – [Indicative allocations for local areas - GOV.UK \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/publishing.service.gov.uk) The table below outlines Worcestershire County Council's indicative allocation for the years 2022 – 2025.

Local Authority	Total Funding Allocation (£)	Funding Allocation 22-23 (£)	Funding Allocation 23-24 (£)	Funding Allocation 24-25 (£)
Worcestershire	2,692,723.34	814,079.15	939,322.09	939,322.09

11. The funding has been allocated to Worcestershire and then will be issued to the county based on the approval of the local Investment Plan by the DfE. The fund will be paid over a 3-year period and reviewed on an annual basis. Partnerships will be established with local providers as key stakeholders to support the delivery of the programme across Worcestershire, working with local communities to achieve key outcomes. Resources used in the preparation of the Local Investment Plan relate to WCC officer time only and was absorbed within the existing budgets for the service.

12. Additional staff will be employed to manage the programme. A Programme Manager, Project Support Officer and Business Administration Apprentice will be employed on a 2.5-year fixed term contract basis to administer the programme. This equates to a total cost of approx. £75k per year which will be funded from the 10% administration fee which is included in the amount allocated from the Multiply funding.

13. Any additional support required to engage, train and administer delivery will be done within the existing budgets for learning and through successful performance. All partnership agreements will be commissioned through procurement and will be based on outputs and outcomes in the main ensuring that any performance is not financially at risk.

14. There are no additional financial implications for the Council resulting from the activities within this report, as costs to deliver and administer will be fully met from the Multiply Funding and existing revenue budgets.

Risk Implications

15. There is limited risk within the Skills and Investment Team as the programme allows a 10% administration allocation to support the programme management and administration burden. Overall, the risk will come in delivery phases and in the timeframes set by the DfE.

16. However, the timescales set by the DfE are challenging in Year 1. Funding commenced 1 April 2022 and the investment plan confirmation is in Autumn of 2022 presenting a delay in financial start whilst the plan has been confirmed. This risk in delivery will be mitigated through ongoing discussions with the DfE during the funding year to monitor performance and raise concerns regarding grant spend and adjust the targets within the investment plan accordingly.

17. There are performance risks in relation to the reliance upon partnership agreements with local providers and stakeholders to support with the delivery of the programme across the county. If any of the partners were to fail to attract the number of learners identified in their submitted proposals or if they are unable to continue to trade, WCC would need to either consider new partners or how Learning Services could pick up any short falls.

18. Staffing to deliver the programme will be challenging as there will be a national need for both tutors and a level of qualified maths tutors to help deliver the Multiply programme, during a time when it is particularly hard to recruit generally and where shortages exist in this skills base. However, WCC and its partners will look to run a recruitment programme to meet this need.

19. Engaging learners to join the Multiply programme is going to be challenging and it will be essential to find the points of engagement through existing education as much as engaging in contextualised delivery. For instance, estimating materials in construction sites as a vocational example and embedding maths by practical examples such as cooking on a budget, completing universal credit claims, budgeting in work, debt management and organising tax returns.

20. The greatest risk to the programme is around any process that delays the start of learning. Therefore challenging procurement timescales and any potential delay in this process presents a risk against performance. The Multiply procurement processes need to be priority following approval of the investment plan, as the longer this takes then the more impact on delivery and performance in year one. However, the Skills and Investment team are working with procurement in advance to set up a digital procurement system for the teams work which would make procurement a faster process for these opportunities. This is the largest risk to year one performance.

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

21. A full Equality and Public Health, Data Protection, Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of the recommendations. This identified no potential negative impacts and noted the DfE responsibilities for Impact Assessments but highlighted need to ensure staff are fully trained on data protection , document control for programme.

Supporting Information

Available electronically

- Appendix A – Worcestershire’s Investment Plan Proposal
- Appendix B - Worcestershire’s Investment Plan Template
- Appendix C and D – Data Protection Full Impact Assessment, Equality Public Health Full Assessment

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Strategic Director for People) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1068822/Multiply_Investment_Prospectus.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1068823/Multiply_Technical_Guidance.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1072837/Multiply_investment_template.docx

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073036/Multiply_investment_plan_template_SECTION_A_QUESTION_2.xlsx