

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Councillor C. Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning
Date:	13 – 17 June 2022
Subject:	Multiply Adult Numeracy Programme in Lincolnshire
Decision Reference:	IO26334
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

Lincolnshire County Council has been appointed Lead Body for the Multiply Adult Numeracy Programme. This requires the submission of an Investment Plan to the Department for Education by 30th June 2022 that outlines how up to £4m will be spent in the county for new numeracy provision targeted at residents aged 19 years and over who do not have a grade C/level 4 or above in GCSE maths.

This report sets out the business and individual benefits of the investment in the context of the levelling up agenda, the types of interventions proposed and the consultation and engagement work underway to produce an inclusive, compliant and deliverable 3 year plan that will have the best chances of addressing skills gaps in key sectors as well as meeting the needs of some of the hardest to reach groups and individuals in the county.

The investment will help support those furthest from the labour market in gaining confidence and work ready skills, as well as supporting those already in work to achieve career progression. The content, location and means of engagement will vary from workplaces to informal meeting places and from functional to practical basic maths that can be applied in everyday life.

All provision will complement and not displace or duplicate the Adult Learning Programme and will align with skills and economic plans to support residents to access employment, better jobs and to improve the skills base of Lincolnshire.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning:

- 1) supports the submission of the Multiply Investment Plan to the Department for Education to deliver a 3-year numeracy programme that tackles the known and emerging numeracy problems in Lincolnshire based on the general**

principles referred to in paragraphs 1.13 and 1.14 of the Report; and

- 2) delegates to the Executive Director – Place in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning authority to determine the final form of and to submit the Investment Plan.

Alternatives Considered:

To not submit a 3-year Lincolnshire Multiply Investment Plan by 30th June 2022.

This will result in the County not accessing up to £4m of skills investment that has been allocated to the county based on need. This will impact those businesses and residents who could most benefit from improved numeracy and will represent a lost opportunity to improve the skills base of the county and address levelling up and growth ambitions.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The benefits of endorsing the Multiply programme are many and reflect an important part of the government's levelling up agenda and investment in Lincolnshire. The Programme will help improve life chances and well-being for the individual participants, supported businesses will be helped to attract and retain staff and grow; and collectively the investment will improve productivity and economic growth in Lincolnshire.

1. Background

Multiply and Levelling Up

- 1.1 A key component of the Government's Levelling Up agenda is to ensure that by 2030 the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of England.
- 1.2 Accordingly, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has allocated £559m to be spent on three components of Multiply:
 - New local numeracy provision (£270,434,517 in England);
 - A national digital numeracy platform; and
 - On testing new approaches to addressing barriers to participation.
- 1.3 The programme has provided a needs-based allocation to Lincolnshire of £4,021,671 over the next 3 years to deliver adult (19 years+) numeracy provision.
- 1.4 The Multiply Prospects can be found [here](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/1068822/Multiply_Investment_Prospectus.pdf

Numeracy in Lincolnshire

- 1.5 The evidence base for adult numeracy is universally poor (outdated and not specific to numeracy) and part of the Multiply programme nationally will be used to address this to help inform future interventions.
- 1.6 The Department for Education (DfE) accepts that Multiply lead bodies will also collect quantitative, qualitative, and anecdotal evidence as part of developing the bid. Further, the consultations and engagements referenced in paragraph 1.12 will inform the position and help identify what and where the interventions will be. The County Council will also be commissioning data from the Learning and Work Institute to add further detail of need and using lessons emerging from its UK Community Renewal Fund activity.
- 1.7 However, noting the shortcomings in the numeracy data, what is known in Lincolnshire is:
- DfE rankings for upper tier authorities (16–64-year-olds with level 3 qualifications over the last three reported years to 2019) put Lincolnshire in the bottom third of performance in England
 - The last Skills for Life survey undertaken by government to measure basic skills (literacy, numeracy and Information Computer Technology - ICT) among 16–64-year-olds, showed East Lindsey, Boston and South Holland performing worst in the county
 - The GLLEP Local Industrial Strategy identified:
 - Over 30% of residents in the East from Mablethorpe to Skegness have no or low qualifications.
 - An oversupply of people with low skills and an undersupply of higher-level skills is resulting in significant unfilled vacancies (actual and forecast 2014-24).
 - The education gap between GLLEP and comparators widens after NVQ 3. GLLEP NVQ 4 attainment is lower than UK averages with over 10% difference between GLLEP and UK attainment.
 - There is a mismatch between the skills employers require and skills individuals can offer. Over 20% of hard to fill GLLEP job vacancies are due to skills shortages.
 - Progress 8 score for mathematics in Lincolnshire is lower than both the regional and the national figures, with the county's performance lower than all local authority areas in the East Midlands except for Nottingham City.

The Multiply Programme in Lincolnshire

- 1.8 Under the Multiply Programme, Lincolnshire County Council is the nominated Lead Authority charged with developing an Investment Plan by 30th June 2022 which must outline a bespoke programme of support targeted at those adults that do not have above or equal to a GCSE Grade C/4 (or equivalent) in maths.

- 1.9 Multiply is intended to provide access to free, flexible numeracy provision (up to and including level 2 or equivalent) that will:
- individually improve a recipient's confidence, life chances, access to the labour market and/or progression within jobs and careers enabled by improved numeracy skills;
 - Support individual businesses to improve profitability, attract/retain staff and grow; and
 - collectively improve productivity and economic growth in Lincolnshire.
- 1.10 Multiply provides an opportunity to engage Lincolnshire residents including hard to reach cohorts who may be in work or who are economically inactive and who have had poor experience or minimal touch points with both formal and informal learning previously.
- 1.11 The Multiply provision to improve functional numeracy skills must complement and not duplicate Adult Education Budget (AEB) provision but presents a chance to position residents to progress to that provision when without the support of Multiply, they may not do so.
- 1.12 Since the announcement of the allocation in April, work has been initiated to look at how provision might be delivered in existing locations, in new locations and groupings and in the workplace. Extensive consultations are underway with FE providers, business support intermediaries and community groups to help drive new and innovative engagement that will be tailored to local needs and not duplicate existing provision. The intent will be to help participants understand maths in everyday life and to improving certain skills at work and within key economic sectors (including agriculture/food and the visitor economy).
- 1.13 Whilst the programme is bespoke to Lincolnshire, it must largely align with a national menu of approved interventions which are outlined in the Multiply Prospectus and below. Lincolnshire will not deliver against all the interventions, but officers and partners are currently focused on developing core activity around those interventions highlighted in bold although a caveat to this is that work on the evidence of need must first be completed and no activities provided by Multiply will displace or duplicate any of the Adult Education Budget Adult Learning Programme:
- a) Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications
 - b) Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money
 - c) Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace
 - d) Courses aimed at people who cannot 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
 - e) New intensive and flexible numeracy courses targeted at people without Level 2 maths, leading to a Functional Skills Qualification

- f) Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression
- g) Numeracy courses aimed at prisoners, those recently released from prison or on temporary licence
- h) Numeracy courses aimed at those 19 or over that are leaving, or have just left, the care system
- i) 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
- j) Additional relevant maths modules embedded into other vocational courses.

1.14 There will be a heavy emphasis on community level delivery with community groups, innovative workplace delivery and marketing and engagement will form the backbone of the Lincolnshire programme to reach new and hard to reach individuals. Whilst some accredited learning will be provided, the main premise will be to focus on non-accredited informal learning to create an initial engagement with learners (through social settings, work and other) and to contextualise the content in ways that will practically engage and resonate with learners (as highlighted above). Other opportunities will be explored through focused sector support including ways to increase take up and completion of apprenticeships or enhanced support ahead of Level 2 provision to ensure effective learning in the accredited phase. In building confidence in numeracy, it is hoped that this will drive progression in work and progression in learning – helping people to access core AEB offers.

Lincolnshire Multiply Investment Prospectus

1.15 A standard template must be completed by the Council that achieves the maximum spend profiles in Table 1. These are maximums and must be spent in year with no opportunity for reprofiling.

Table 1				
Area	Total Funding Allocation (£)	Allocation 2022/3 (£)	Allocation 2023/4 (£)	Allocation 2024/5 (£)
England	270,434,517	81,759,273	94,337,622	94,337,622
Lincolnshire	4,021,671	1,215,854	1,402,908	1,402,908

1.16 When the Investment Plan is submitted at the end of June 2022, the Department for Education will review the programme with a view to approving spend from September 2022. It is likely that the £1.2m year 1 allocation may not be spent in full, with only 6-7 months remaining for active spend and delivery. This is the same for all areas and the financial ask of year 1 will be tailored accordingly.

1.17 Evidence to support interventions is currently being collected including alignment with emerging data from the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) as well as nationally available data. An option to commission some specific work is under consideration that will take some evidence to ward level via a

bespoke mapping tool, the costs of this are recoverable from the Multiply Programme.

- 1.18 Discussions are also underway on how the training provision will be commissioned transparently and fairly and to achieve the best value and impact. With the tight timeframes and associated costs, procuring services with new providers may not be the best option. Opportunities to allocate Multiply in Lincolnshire through grant funding via a published criteria are being reviewed but have been confirmed as being compliant with the requirements of the funder.
- 1.19 To maximise impact and comply with the published criteria, efforts will also be made wherever possible, to align the activities of the Lincolnshire Multiply Investment Plan with those of the District UKSPF Investment Plans and those of the Greater Lincolnshire area. Further lessons from activities funded under the Council's UK Community Renewal Fund will also be applied to identify what works and build on existing community driven activity where relevant.

2. Legal Issues:

Equality Act 2010

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision-making process.

The Multiply programme will be available and accessible to a diverse cohort as per the Public Sector Equality Duty including those with dyscalculia or other protected characteristics. Information on how the programme will take the Equality Act duty into account is a required element of the Multiply Investment Plan.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

The Council must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) in coming to a decision.

These strategies are considered within the information provided in the main body of the report.

Crime and Disorder

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 is not applicable to the proposals made in this report.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The £4m Multiply Programme allocation provides an excellent investment opportunity to improve adult numeracy provision within Lincolnshire and provides a variety of benefits to drive wider skills provision in the county. This accords with

the Council Plan objectives particularly around enhancing the skills of the county's communities and meeting the needs of businesses and the economy.

- 3.2 As the nominated Lead Authority, LCC must now submit an Investment Prospectus to release the funding for Year 1 and set out plans for activity for years 2 and 3. Progress in year 1 will be reviewed as a gateway to funding and activity to Years 2 and 3.
- 3.3 In the meantime, work to develop the specific nature of the interventions and where these will take place will be developed with partners and respond to evidenced need with a focus on community engagement.

4. Legal Comments:

The Council has the power to apply for and to spend the funding proposed.

The decision is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive Councillor.

5. Resource Comments:

Funding for the Multiply programme is expected to be provided by the Department for Education as a ring-fenced grant solely for the purpose of supporting the Government's Multiply programme.

The development and submission of the Multiply Investment Plan enables the confirmation of the funding allocation, agreement of the grant terms and release of funding for delivery of the proposed programme.

Up to 10% of the Multiply funding allocation is permitted to be used for administrative expenditure to build capacity for successful delivery. However, any administrative and preparatory costs incurred prior to DfE sign-off of the investment plan is at the Council's risk but are eligible for funding if the plan is agreed. Approval of the recommendation is therefore not expected to require any contribution from the Council's own resources beyond Officer time which is already budgeted for in the approved revenue budget.

6. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

N/A

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

Views of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee will be sought at the meeting scheduled on 31st May 2022.

d) Risks and Impact Analysis

A Risk Analysis will be undertaken as part of the submission requirement (Section H of the Investment Plan) including but not limited to any financial or fraud risks that would affect the delivery of the programme.

7. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Mandy Ramm, Funding and Investment Manager, who can be contacted on 077 2525 6629 or mandy.ramm@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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