

Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 20 October 2022

Subject: **AEB Update and Flexibilities**

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1. To update the Committee on progress with Multiply and appraise of next steps.

2. Information

- 2.1. Multiply is an adult numeracy programme, led by the Department for Education (DfE) as part of the £2.6bn UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). West Yorkshire Combined Authority has been given an allocation of £12.4m for Multiply across 3 financial years. The funding is to engage more adults with numeracy levels below level 2 (GCSE C/4 pass) in informal learning to boost their maths skills for life and work.
- 2.2. Multiply will be an integral part of UKSPF, however it has a clearer focus in terms of operation. There is considerable overlap of the Multiply target market with that of the Adult Education Budget (AEB), and therefore in designing the Local Investment Plan for Multiply, there has been a particular focus on ensuring that activity does not duplicate provision already commissioned but wraps around and adds value.
- 2.3. The Investment Plan was approved in draft at the Combined Authority meeting of 23 June 2022, with delegation for final approval by the Combined

Authority's MD prior to submission on 30 June 2022. The Investment Plan outlines 3 key workstreams.

2.4. Individual Engagement:

- Flexible activity and courses delivered through community organisations which provide money management and budgeting support to tackle numeracy and cost of living concerns. To include 'barrier breaker' funding targeted to overcome participation issues.
- Additional numeracy modules to be embedded into vocational programmes.

2.5. The community focussed strand of the individual engagement workstream will be led by Local Authorities – as outlined in the investment Plan. The LAs' overview of community learning in their area will help to ensure that AEB funded activity is enhanced and that Multiply activity wraps around already commissioned work.

2.6. The second part of this workstream will be led by West Yorkshire FE Colleges. A range of models will be tested, working with adults who are already undertaking vocational programmes, developing their numeracy skills and encouraging them to undertake a level 2 programme.

2.7. Business Focussed Activity

- Innovative programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace.
- Numeracy champions embedded within workplaces to identify and support staff needs; triage skills needs, signpost to (new &) existing programmes, provide mentoring/buddy support. To include training package and coordination of mentors.

2.8. Capacity Building for the Sector

- Training subject specialists in maths to embed numeracy into vocational curriculum (FE and Training provider programmes).
- Sector training for front line staff (e.g. Employment Hub advisors, student services, PAs for Care leavers, careers teams, community tutors) to be numeracy ambassadors and/or numeracy mentors.

Governance

2.9. The Combined Authority approved on 23 June 2022, that the Multiply programme should adopt the AEB governance structure and table of delegations. This will help to align Multiply activity with the wider AEB investment in skills and ensure Multiply does not run as an isolated initiative.

- 2.10. In line with AEB table of delegations, strategic decisions will remain with the Combined Authority, with operational decisions taken by the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Employment and Skills Committee.
- 2.11. Because Multiply is part of UKSPF, the UKSPF Local Partnership Group has a role in advising on those decisions to ensure coherence with the rest of UKSPF.
- 2.12. The AEB table of delegations has been updated to reflect this (Appendix B).

Next Steps

- 2.13. The grant agreement with Department for Education has been signed and the Combined Authority is currently recruiting a team to deliver the Multiply programme.
- 2.14. Detailed implementation plans on each of the workstreams will be referred to the UKSPF Local Partnership Group for scrutiny, advice and recommendation for approval. The Community focussed activity has been appraised and recommended for approval.
- 2.15. Following recommendation and approval, the business focussed activity and capacity building programmes will be commissioned through open and competitive process.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1. There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1. The overall aim of Multiply provision is to support those citizens who have a numeracy skills deficit and need to access learning opportunities to progress them towards further learning, employment or a better way of life.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1. There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report, although as per item 4 – this fund seeks to address inequality in skills acquisition. Enrolment statistics will be monitored in terms of demographics.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. DfE has been clear that Multiply funds must be spent in-year, as per their published allocations. Given grant agreements have been issued six months into the financial year this will make the first year incredibly challenging to deliver.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. A grant agreement is now in place with DfE. This will be mirrored for the Local Authority funding agreements, and contracts for services will be drawn up as part of the open and competitive process undertaken for the remaining workstreams.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1. There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1. No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. The Committee is asked to note the progress with Multiply.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix A – Multiply Investment Plan

Appendix B – AEB table of Delegations (updated for multiply)