

**Decision Session – Executive Member for  
Culture, Leisure and Communities**

7 June 2022

Report of the Director of Customer and Communities

**Multiply Investment Plan**

**Summary**

1. This report sets out the basis for York’s approach to the Multiply strand of the UK Shared prosperity Fund, in collaboration with North Yorkshire County Council, so that an investment plan may be drawn up for submission to the Department for Education (DfE).

**Recommendations**

2. The Executive Member is asked to:
  - (i) Approve in principle the submission of the investment plan as set out in the Annex.
  - (ii) Delegate authority to the Director of Customer and Communities to agree the final version of the plan for sign off by the Chief Operating Officer for submission to the DfE by 30 June 2022.

Reason: To facilitate the finalisation of an agreed plan that will then release funds for the project.

**Background**

3. Administered by the DfE, Multiply is a dedicated strand of the UK Shared prosperity Fund. The overall objective of Multiply is to increase the levels of functional numeracy in the adult population across the UK. The following are the success measures for the programme at a national level:
  - More adults achieving Maths qualification courses
  - Improved labour market outcomes
  - Increased adult numeracy across the population

More information can be found here [Multiply: funding available to improve adult numeracy skills - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multiply-funding-available-to-improve-adult-numeracy-skills)

4. York and North Yorkshire have been awarded the following amounts over a three-year period commencing in September 2022:

Year	North Yorkshire	York
1	£806,587	£224,111
2	£930,678	£258,559
3	£930,678	£258,559
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2.6m</b>	<b>£741,000</b>

5. The money is to be allocated and used based on an evaluation of need and is to be returned in the form of an investment plan to the Department for Education by 30 June 2022.
6. It is important to note that this money is to support a partnership of providers across the region and not just for the Adult Learning Services of City of York Council and North Yorkshire County Council.
7. The submission of the investment plan is an iterative process with the DfE who will work with authority leads to ensure that the plans comply with the programmes aims.
8. Funds for Year 1 will be released once the investment is agreed with further years' funding being released in the April of each financial year.

### **Consultation**

9. A survey of providers has been undertaken to gather interest in working on provision.
10. Further consultation will be completed alongside the consultation on the adult learning strategy with all potential stakeholders.

### **Options and Analysis**

11. It is open to the Executive Member to determine the basis of the submission that is made to the DfE.
12. It would be possible to decouple York's investment plan from North Yorkshire's but this would potentially decrease the efficiency and effectiveness of the fund's management.

## Issues

13. In drawing up our plan the aim has been to demonstrate how the funding will be used most effectively for the greatest benefit to the region, its economy and its residents and communities.
14. At this stage no presumptions are made about which parts of the programme should be delivered by the respective authorities and which parts should be contracted externally.
15. Any provision delivered under Multiply cannot displace or replace any activity delivery already via Adult Skills or Community Learning funding. Activity towards Maths qualifications already utilises around 33% of the £8m funding received in the region. There is no indication at this point on whether this will be measured.
16. There is an issue with Multiply relating to tracking and performance. It is clear that learner's engagement will be based upon learners being flagged on the Individual Learner Record (ILR) that is returned to the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on a monthly basis. This functionality is only open to registered education providers but there is a requirement to engage learners working with employers and community and voluntary groups who are unlikely to be able to return ILR information. Furthermore, it has not been determined whose ILR returns tracking will be through so it is difficult to determine whether there will be an additional cost in relation to data entry and monitoring and where any costs will sit.
17. In addition, it has not yet been determined if provision under multiply will be subject to Ofsted and if it is whose Ofsted inspection will it fall under. Therefore, ring-fencing funds to cover quality assurance cannot be accurately determined.
18. The funds allocated to the region for multiply have been based on the total number of individuals who are of working age compared to how many of those have a level 3 (A level equivalent) or higher qualification. Skills data for York and North Yorkshire indicates that as a high performing region, large numbers of individuals within the county actually have qualifications that would prevent them accessing the multiply provision. With funds only available to those aged 19+ who do not hold a GCSE / O level equivalent in Maths.

## **Council Plan**

19. The strong intention in the use of this funding is to support progression on to provision that will upskill / reskill individuals to address the significant skills shortages in the region. Additional to this will be to use the experiences of the provider base to test delivery and engagement methods with different demographics.
20. Although activity has been impacted by the pandemic, traditionally spend of AEB and Community Learning funding has matched the grants received by providers. It is expected that next academic year will see a return to the pre - pandemic levels.
21. This provision already supports significant numbers with basic skills with the largest proportion (around 64%) of this in Maths. The other largest volume of this work is in individuals engaging in a range of community learning provision, this provision incorporating family learning engages large numbers of individuals, providing vital gateway activity and supporting community engagement, cohesion, reduction of rural isolation and the important improvement in mental health and wellbeing. As this funding is regularly used it is important that it is not displaced, but it is also clear that its aim and reach must be more closely aligned with local skills strategies and that the engagement demographic must be broadened.
22. When age and gender demographics are considered, clear groups can be identified in the current use of the AEB funding strands. In York and North Yorkshire engagement with Adult Learning provision is skewed toward a 31-49 age group and a white female demographic; however, research would suggest that those accessing training are more likely to be those with higher levels of qualifications with YNYLEP reporting that of those accessing training it is a minority of learners (37%) who lack formal qualifications below Level 2.
23. The same study into the use of the Adult Education budget highlights that the sub-region has a relatively small ethnic minority population that accounts for less than 3% of the total adult population but that these groups are much more likely to engage in further training with around 8% of the individuals accessing training being from an ethnic minority background. It is important to note, however, that York has a higher level of diversity and also that this data is pre-Brexit and the demographics are dynamic. For example,

migrants coming into the region on recent resettlement schemes will have access to ESOL interventions often leading to further AEB linked activity.

24. If we consider engagement with training by region, there are strong areas of engagement and those areas with high levels of need, such as those individuals who are unemployed, are actually well served already by targeted provision.
25. This suggests that community outreach is particularly effective in those areas with multiple needs such as Scarborough and areas of York. One method of targeting the funding can therefore be according to areas of disadvantage engaging with the multi-agency working already in place in these communities. To be most effective we will need to build upon practice with hard-to-reach communities but actually seek to work with those individuals who are currently in work, on low wages and with low levels of qualifications.
26. Key to reaching those individuals will be community touch-points, areas where individuals naturally come together and through large employers. Significant will be 'pass-it-on' word of mouth promotions, coupled with bite size social media engagement linked to numerical activity such as simple maths puzzles.
27. Provision of the right types of adult learning are seen as a key cornerstone of government policy and the importance of community level education is stressed, but the context stresses the importance of progression to higher level qualifications and in offering provision that meets local and national skills needs. The most effective use of Multiply within York and North Yorkshire in line with these aims must be based upon engagement and effective IAG led progression.
28. An education landscape that is driven by the skills needs of employers is essential for economic development. The importance of this is set out in the Skills Strategy devised by York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, (YNYLEP) through its co-ordination of the Skills and Employability Board and is mirrored in the 10-year skills plan of the City of York. Taking the cross-region higher level strategy as lead there four key ambitions:
  - Young people are equipped to make quality decisions about education, training and careers

- Employers have the skills to grow inclusive and productive workplaces where everyone can achieve their potential
  - The local skills market meets the needs of local businesses in a dynamic economy
  - Communities are empowered by learning and skills that enable everyone to participate fully in society
29. Whilst Multiply cannot directly impact on the first of these ambitions, by garnering greater understanding of opportunities through supporting a greater range of adults we can nonetheless impact it by creating more community-based skills advocates.
30. The YNYLEP report on community learning and its companion reports, 'Analysis of Adult Education Budget (AEB) funded provision in York and North Yorkshire – June 2020', 'Digital Skills in York & North Yorkshire: An Assessment of Supply and Demand – April 2021' and 'Upskilling and Reskilling across York and North Yorkshire – Stakeholder and Provider perspectives – March 2021' paint a picture of an educational landscape that has the intention to meet the demands of the community but a failure to engage individuals in the breadth of learning experiences necessary to meet the aims of skills strategy, stressing a disconnect between the majority of adults and the skills.
31. Engagement from adults tends to be low level in FE institutions (some exceptions exist) when compared to provision for 16-18-year-olds, or it is very targeted with large groups of employed individuals under legal entitlements. National and local strategy is, by design, based upon the needs of employers, local economies and future jobs markets. The YNYLEP digital skills report however details that there is a clear disconnect. 'There is a gap between digital skills needs in the community, and the extent to which these are translated into demand for learning. Lack of confidence, fear of the unknown, and "not knowing what you don't know" contribute to this, and learning is likely to revolve around informal routes.' Although this statement relates specifically to digital skills it should be similarly applied across the whole adult learning provision. Multiply must seek to provide a solution to this.
32. By funding innovative ways to reach a wider demographic Multiply can set an effective gateway to many of the UKSPF initiatives to

follow. Maximising engagement and throughput to the strategic outputs of the skills plans, will support many of the UKSPF in levelling up disparities in the county where clear disparities exist between those with qualifications and those without.

## **Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

33. The timing, in relation to gaining Executive Member approval, requires that the investment plan is completed before all information is available which will enable full costing of the proposals. Figures included in the Annex are indicative. Investment plans will subsequently be created that fully detail proposed spending plans. There will be a requirement to model how spend will be transferred to delivery partners including York Learning. At this stage no presumptions are made about which parts of the programme should be delivered by the respective authorities and which parts should be contracted externally.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

34. There will be a requirement to recruit dedicated staff to oversee the management and success of Multiply. With only 10% of funding allowable for administration this may not stretch beyond an Operational Manager post which will be shared with North Yorkshire.
35. Further engagement staff may need to be employed, to be funded from the delivery funding.

### **Equalities**

36. There will be positive equality implications with provision being aimed at all individuals aged 19+ without a formal Level 2 qualification in Maths.
37. We will seek to engage with all learners in ways that they feel most comfortable to engage. Those who are already engaged with learning will likely to have already been subject to some levels of screening at enrolment and will likely be offered additional support.
38. By working directly with groups in the community we will show our openness to engagement with individuals within any protected characteristic and will aim to support those individuals in ways that they feel most comfortable with, engaging low level diagnostic

activity and supporting access through use of funding to provide additional support.

### **Legal**

- 39. There will be a requirement to develop a procurement framework and draw up appropriate contracting arrangements for fund administration. To support delivery, the initiative must be supported by an appointed governance board with powers to award funds.

### **Crime and Disorder**

- 40. It is not anticipated that there will be any crime and disorder implications.

### **Information Technology (IT)**

- 41. As part of the governments total investment in Multiply there will be a launch of national Multiply website to support delivery. This will link directly to local information sources so we must ensure that Multiply is visible on the website and that links are in place. The expectation is that resources on this site support individuals to overcome barriers to numeracy but this will potentially highlight digital poverty and digital inequality. As an n an authority we must be sensitive to that and use our networks to complete further digital upskilling.

### **Property**

- 42. There are no expected implications for property.

### **Risk Management**

Description of risk	Actions you will take to mitigate	After mitigation what is the likelihood of the risk occurring (High >70%, Possible 70-30%, Unlikely <30%)	After mitigation what would be the impact of the risk materialising? (High: significant impact of unable to deliver, Medium: delivery compromised, Low: Minor / no impact)
Lack of learner engagement	Using multiple engagement points and methods, development of partnership development roles to co-	Possible	Medium



	author projects		
Provision seen to displace or replace AEB provision	Develop agreed programmes and target groups. Work closely with partners in detail of intervention design. Quality assurance management by Operations Manager reporting to board	Unlikely	Low
Partners over-promising	Use of project led approach will bring on partners to match cohorts / Use of innovation pot approach to match opportunity , need and learners	Possible	Low
Digital connectivity impeding access to provision	Ring fencing of funding within each provision intervention to create most appropriate digital access options, e.g. more community IT provision	Possible	Medium

## Contact Details

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	<b>Report Approved</b>	✓	<b>Date</b> 24.5.22.
<b>Specialist Implications Officers:</b>			
<b>Wards Affected:</b> All			
<b>For further information please contact the author of the report</b>			

## Background Papers:

- York and North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Engagement Strategy Draft for Consultation
- York 10 year Skills Plan
- Greener Fairer Stronger – Covid 19 A Plan to reshape the economy

- York and North Yorkshire Labour Market Analysis 2021
- York and North Yorkshire LEP Skills Strategy 2021-2026
- Digital Skills in York & North Yorkshire: An Assessment of Supply and Demand
- York and North Yorkshire Community Learning Skills Report
- York and North Yorkshire AEB Skills Report

**Annex:**

Annex A: York and North Yorkshire Multiply Investment Plan Draft

**Abbreviations:**

AEB:	Adult Education Budget
DfE:	Department for Education
ESFA:	Education and Skills Funding Agency
ESOL:	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE:	Further Education
IAG:	Information, Advice and Guidance
ILR:	Individual Learner Record
UKSPF:	United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund
YNYLEP:	York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership