

Forward Plan reference number:

Report title: Submission of investment plan for 'Multiply' adult numeracy programme	
Report to: Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member, Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability	
Report author: Mark Doran, Director, Sustainable Growth (mark.doran@essex.gov.uk)	
Date: 27 June 2022	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member, Education Excellence and Lifelong Learning	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Everyone's Essex

- 1.1 Everyone's Essex sets out four strategic aims and 20 commitments for Essex County Council (ECC) to deliver over the next four years. ECC's Levelling Up White Paper also sets out the need to level up opportunities for our most disadvantaged cohorts and in our most disadvantaged places.
- 1.2 This decision seeks to support the following Everyone's Essex commitment to deliver Good Jobs, Future Growth and the Levelling Up of the Economy and aims to help people in Essex prosper by increasing their skills.
- 1.3 Multiply is a new Government funding stream focused on raising participation in learning and attainment in Maths for adults aged 19 and over. Outside of devolution areas, Multiply is the only element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for which top tier local authorities (e.g. Essex County Council) have the leading role. Whilst the focus on Maths and numeracy may appear narrow, Maths is often a barrier to progressions to learning and opportunities e.g., Level 2 technical apprenticeships and all qualifications at Level 3 and above, which require Level 2 Maths and English language. Moreover, the scheme goes beyond traditional maths learning to embed numeracy skills into everyday life challenges e.g., debt management, homework help, etc.
- 1.4 The Government has announced an indicative maximum allocation of funding for Essex of £7.9m. The Council is required to submit an investment plan to secure this investment, which would run from September 2022 to April 2025. This Cabinet Member decision is to agree the submission of this investment plan.
- 1.5 We propose to use the funding to enable 14,150 residents to participate in education/training, supporting businesses to upskill their workforces, helping parents to support their children's learning and to offer adults more effective tools with which to manage their money better.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree that the Chief Executive is authorised to agree, sign and submit the Multiply investment plan to the Department for Education by 30 June 2022.

3. Background and Proposal

- 3.1 Multiply is a £270m scheme managed by the Department for Education (DfE) to increase adult numeracy skills between 2022 and 2025. The Multiply prospectus invites the GLA, Mayoral Combined Authorities, and upper tier/unitary authorities outside of these areas in England, to develop investment plans for bespoke adult numeracy programmes, against the national menu of interventions. These programmes would be delivered across the Spending Review period (2022-23 to 2024-25), with the aim that provision starts for the 2022-23 academic year. The DfE asks local authorities to submit investment plans by 30 June 2022. In return for funding, it expects local areas to measurably improve adult functional numeracy levels locally. That includes through increasing the number of adults participating in, and achieving, adult numeracy qualifications up to and including Level 2 (both GCSE Grade C/4 or above, and Functional Skills Qualifications).
- 3.2 DfE's analysis of skills levels across the country highlighted that Essex was 38th from bottom out of 151 with an average of 51.2% of the working age population having qualifications of NVQ 3 or above in 2017, 2018 and 2019 – at a similar level to Northumberland, Kirklees and St. Helens. In England, the range holding this qualification level across England varies by upper tier local authority from 36.9% to 79.2% (or 94.8% if the City of London is included with its smaller sample size).
- 3.3 Target learners are adults 19+ who have not previously attained a GCSE Grade 4/C or higher maths qualification. They can either be working towards a maths GCSE or Functional Skills Qualification, need specific numeracy skills for their work or progression, or just want to brush up on the skills to help them get on in life and work.
- 3.4 Multiply boosts funding for adult numeracy and offers a menu of interventions set out by the DfE:
- Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications.
 - Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money.
 - Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace
 - 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

- New intensive and flexible numeracy courses targeted at people without Level 2 maths, leading to 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.
- Numeracy courses aimed at prisoners, those recently released from prison or on temporary licence.
- Numeracy courses aimed at those 19 or over that are leaving, or have just left, the care system
- 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.
- Additional relevant maths modules embedded into other vocational courses.

There is the possibility to add off-menu proposals, but this would require an “extremely strong” rationale.

- 3.4 Local investment plans need to demonstrate additionality and complement existing provision and should not displace, replace and / or duplicate any existing adult numeracy provision, entitlements or campaigns. The key aim is to attract more learners which may require investments in Multiply specific tutor recruitment and training, teaching materials and capacity in communities. Programmes need to meet public sector equalities duty, including information, advice and guidance.
- 3.5 The need for Multiply to offer new and additional provision that does not displace other provision using mainstream funding that is currently underspent - e.g., Adult Education Budget and Adult Community Learning Budget – means that the provision will need to reach out beyond what existing providers can do and adopt innovative new approaches. ECC's investment plan will therefore ask the DfE to accept the need for Multiply funding to invest in building community capacity to reach out to new learners that are currently off the radar of the local skills offer. This community-based approach will deliver value for money and well as ensuring that provision reaches out to new learners. The DfE will also be investing in a national online platform to complement local delivery.
- 3.6 The Government's Multiply Prospectus enables Essex to develop an investment plan with a view to securing up to £7.9m to manage the scheme. The investment plan should include an indicative spend profile across each of the three years of Multiply alongside measurable outcomes and outputs, as well as making provision to undertake necessary Fund administration which can amount to up to 10% of the investment plan value. The investment plan must be submitted by 30 June 2022.
- 3.7 Essex County Council is setting out a Multiply investment plan up to a maximum potential pot of £7.9m for Essex. The maximum annual breakdown of that spend is set out below:

Year 1 - £2,390,883 (September 2022 – March 2023)

Year 2 - £2,758,711 (April 2023 – March 2024)

Year 3 - £2,758,711 (April 2024 – March 2025)

Total - £7,908,304

- 3.8 Subsequently, the investment plan would be subject to review, negotiation and change with the Department for Education (DfE) over the summer before a formal agreement (Grant Award Letter) is sent to ECC for consideration. A separate Cabinet decision to be taken in September will decide whether to accept the grant on the terms of that future agreement.
- 3.9 Essex's investment plan projects a spend of £7.9m. We will use this funding to align with and add value to services that are planned, are in the discovery phase and are already for delivering positive outcomes.
- 3.10 Multiply, by raising participation in learning and increasing skills, will help to: deliver a strong, inclusive and sustainable economy; support levelling up for people and places; and promote health, care and wellbeing for adults aged 19 and above and will support local residents to gain key life skills, businesses to improve their workforce skills and productivity, and communities to be more resilient.
- 3.11 The investment plan seeks to make a contribution to all four strategic objectives set out in Everyone's Essex and will support Essex County Council's commitment to level up the economy and communities.
- 3.12 The outcomes of the funding for Essex residents will include 14,150 people participating in education/training, supporting businesses to upskill their workforces, helping parents to support their children's learning and to offer adults more effective tools with which to manage their money better. This groundswell of interest in learning will build over time to maximise the take up of courses using mainstream funding. In years 2 and 3, Multiply will support 1,000 full Maths qualifications that are new and additional to those funded via existing funding e.g. Adult Education Budget and Adult Community Learning Budget.
- 3.13 We have carefully considered the data about skills needs in Essex to help shape our priority interventions to meet the needs of our levelling up places and cohorts as well as meeting the wider skills, societal and workforce needs. We have also engaged with a range of local partners to gain a qualitative understanding of the interventions that we might wish to prioritise.
- 3.14 We propose prioritising the following interventions for Multiply in Essex. The first group are linked strongly to the delivery of Everyone's Essex priorities.
- **Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money.** *To help to address cost of living pressures for people and families on low incomes and or dealing with debt issues.*
 - **Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers**
– including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills

required in the workplace. *Develop Maths skills pledges with Anchor Institutions with a view to rolling this out with private sector businesses too.*

- **Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression.** *Joint working between skills providers and schools – linked to the Year of Maths 2023*
- **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.** *To be developed with DWP, VCS & skills providers.*

3.15 The second group will be driven by local skills providers and have been included based on a strong provider response to add value to existing vocational courses.

- **Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications.** These will provide tasters and access courses to enable learners to overcome barriers to starting vocational courses.
- **Additional relevant maths modules embedded into other vocational courses.** These could be bespoke to the study discipline or focused on the Maths of climate change and net zero.

3.16 The investment plan recognises the need to overcome the low participation of adults in Maths learning and that delivery needs to come with additional support in communities and neighbourhoods. It also recognises the importance of aligning and adding value to existing Essex County Council services in operation and in the pipeline.

3.17 Essex County Council will use Multiply funding to deliver financial wellbeing support laced with learning to support financial literacy and personal resilience which has become a deeper and more widespread problem due to the cost of living crisis. This work has established a robust evidence base and will target key cohorts and places strengthening the Council's Levelling Up delivery.

3.18 Essex's investment plan proposes a number of "off menu" interventions. Rather than hiding the real costs of delivery in the unit cost of training, we have chosen to be transparent with DfE about the fact that the current Maths learning offer is not landing in the market nor in the community sufficiently enough to change lives and fortunes. To deliver transformation in adult learner demand and to bring the communities closer to the providers and valuable provision will require significant investments in outreach into businesses, schools and communities.

3.19 Multiply will help us to build capacity for community outreach to ensure that Maths learning can connect with the hardest to reach groups in Essex. We will support local voluntary and community sector organisations to support and refer vulnerable adults to Multiply provision. Maths ambassadors and activists will be recruited in local communities to support outreach and participation and ECC's community agents will add a Multiply string to their bow in support of residents.

- 3.20 Essex County Council is delivering a Year of Reading in 2022 and has forged stronger connections with schools, notably academies in the process. We will build on this and the lessons learnt to apply a similar approach to the Year of Maths in 2023. Through Multiply, Essex will be able to expand its support and learning offer to parents to upskill and to support their children with their school work.
- 3.21 Multiply funding will address the Maths teacher shortage by supporting 150 new teachers to be trained (Level 3 in Education). It will also provide additional funding to develop new bespoke courses that support key aspects of Multiply delivery that can be rolled out through providers and into the community.
- 3.22 Our plan proposes for Maths provision to be delivered through local skills providers, involving local schools, businesses and voluntary and community organisations in the delivery of new pathways into learning.

4. Links to our Strategic Ambitions

- 4.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision;
- Enjoy life into old age
 - Strengthen communities through participation
 - Connect us to each other and the world
 - Share prosperity with everyone
- 4.2 Approving the recommendations in this report will have the following impact on the Council's ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030:
- Supporting an acceleration in the progress towards sustainable housing and energy
- 4.3 This report links to the following strategic priorities in the emerging Organisational Strategy 'Everyone's Essex':
- A strong, inclusive and sustainable economy
 - Health wellbeing and independence for all ages

5. Options

- 5.1 This CMA seeks Member agreement for the Chief Executive to agree and sign the Multiply investment plan and to authorise officers to submit the investment plan to the Department for Education (DfE) by 30 June 2022.
- 5.2 As a result, at this stage, the CMA sets out two options for decision:

Option 1: Agree for the Chief Executive to sign the Multiply investment plan and for the plan to be submitted to the Department for Education by 30 June 2022. This would enable valuable skills support to be delivered to

individuals, businesses and communities in support of Essex County Council's Everyone's Essex and Levelling Up priorities.

Option 2: Do nothing – This would mean not bidding for the Multiply funding that the Government is making available, depriving Essex residents of these opportunities to improve their adult numeracy skills and local businesses of a better-skilled workforce. It would also lead to reputational damage for Essex County Council with the Department for Education and Government in general, and would be at odds with ECC's policy to secure greater local determination of skills.

- 5.3 If satisfied with Essex's Multiply investment plan, DfE would send ECC a grant letter outlining the final award and agreeing the final version of the investment plan and the terms of the funding. This will be subject to a further decision at that point.

6. Issues for consideration

6.1 Financial and other implications

- 6.1.1 Multiply is a new Government funding stream focused on raising participation in learning and attainment in Maths for adults aged 19 and over. ECC has been allocated £7.9m of funding over three years. The annual funding allocations are as follows:

Year 1 - £2,390,883 (September 2022 to March 2023)

Year 2 - £2,758,711 (April 2023 to March 2024)

Year 3 - £2,758,711 (April 2024 to March 2025)

Total - £7,908,304

The table below shows planned expenditure and target learner numbers over the life of the Multiply Programme:

Planned Expenditure and Learner Numbers	Expenditure by Year			Total Expenditure £	Total Number of Learners
	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £		
Priorities					
Improved Maths to Managing Their Money	246,240	126,198	129,353	501,791	2,400
Employer Bespoke Courses	102,600	210,330	215,588	528,518	1,500
Parents to Support Pupils	205,200	455,715	215,588	876,503	2,500
VCS - Hardest to Reach	153,900	315,495	323,382	792,777	3,750
Maths Add Ons for Vocational Courses	123,120	252,396	258,706	634,222	1,500
Confidence with Numbers Access to Vocational Courses	61,560	126,198	129,353	317,111	1,500
Full Qualifications Topping Up AEB	-	289,204	691,679	980,883	1,000
Capacity Building					
Community Grants to VCS	300,000	350,000	320,000	970,000	
Education Outreach Support the Year of Maths	150,000	250,000	100,000	500,000	
Financial Wellbeing Service	465,000			465,000	
Communications	100,000	120,000	100,000	320,000	
Teacher Training - 150 Teachers	150,000			150,000	
Curriculum / Course Design	100,000			100,000	
Admin Costs	233,263	263,175	275,061	771,499	
Total	2,390,883	2,758,711	2,758,711	7,908,304	14,150

- 6.1.2 ECC's investment plan projects expenditure of £7.9m, which will align with and add value to services that are planned, are in the discovery phase and are already delivering positive outcomes. The first payment is expected to be received in the Autumn of 2022.
- 6.1.3 ECC will be required to submit mid-year statements of expenditure and annual progress reports and revised investment plans. Any under spend against a previously submitted investment plan will be clawed back through a reduced funding allocation for the following year, therefore it will be important for the delivery to be kept under constant review to maximise achievement of outcomes utilising the full grant available.
- 6.1.4 In the expenditure modelling, inflation has been assumed at 2.5% per annum, in line with existing ECC Medium Term Resource assumptions for pay-related costs. If the actual rate of inflation exceeds 2.5%, project delivery will need to be scaled back to enable the programme to be delivered within the available budget, with a consequent reduction in outcomes.
- 6.1.5 ECC is not required to make any financial contribution towards the cost of the Multiply Programme therefore no match-funding assumption has been modelled in the costings.

6.2 Legal implications

- 6.2.1 This decision relates to the submission of the Investment Plan to the DfE. A separate decision will be taken to accept the funding, and the terms of that funding, once the DfE have approved the plan and are happy to take it forward. Those terms are likely to set out how the funding should be administered and used for the purpose for which it is intended.

7. Equality and Diversity Considerations

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership'

is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

- 7.3 The Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

8 List of appendices

A – Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment
B – Investment Plan

9 List of Background papers

[Multiply Prospectus](#)

[Multiply Technical Guidance](#)

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability	27.06.22

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Tom Walker, Executive Director, Place and Public Health consulted	27.06.22
Executive Director, Corporate Services (S151 Officer)	27.06.22
Nicole Wood	
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	27.06.22
Katie Bray on behalf of Paul Turner	