



# Delegated Decision

Date **9 JUNE 2022**

Title **MULTIPLY INVESTMENT PLAN**

Report of **COUNCILLOR DEBBIE ANDRE, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND LIFELONG SKILLS**

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. On 13 April 2022, the Government launched a package of grant funding known as 'Multiply' to support adult numeracy. The programme will help adults with no or low-level maths skills to understand and use maths in daily life, at home and in work. In order to access funding for the 2022/23 academic year, the council is required to submit an Investment Plan to the Department for Education by 30 June 2022.
2. As a consequence of deadlines set by the Department for Education, a decision is required urgently to enable the Multiply project to commence as soon as possible after 1 September 2022. The leader of the council has been consulted and has given her agreement that the decision by way of delegated authority, may be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills under such circumstances and will be taken on or after 21 June 2022.
3. This report outlines the proposed delivery plan for the first year of the Multiply grant.

## RECOMMENDATION

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. That the proposed investment plan ('the Multiply Investment Plan') to the Department for Education, referred to in para 9 of this report, be agreed and be submitted to the Department for Education by no later than 30 June 2022. (This will enable adult numeracy courses and workshops to commence from September 2022).</li></ol> |
|---|

## BACKGROUND

5. As part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the government announced a new £559 million adult numeracy programme for the whole of the UK, the programme will be delivered under the brand 'Multiply'. The programme will help adults to understand and use maths at home and in daily life. The programme will help employers to upskill their workforce with useful basic maths skills specific to their job roles. The Isle of Wight has been allocated a maximum of £666,594 split equally over a 3-year period.
6. A local Skills Plan was agreed by Cabinet on 16 December 2021 with key priorities of aligning aspiration and opportunity to better meet employers' skills needs; developing a highly skilled, productive and future ready workforce; enabling opportunities for all and a more inclusive approach to growth.
7. In England, half the working age population have maths skills equivalent to entry level. The 2011 DBIS Skills for Life Survey shows just 44% of Isle of Wight adults had achieved GCSE maths grade C or above. The Multiply programme aims to address skills gaps in maths through a range of flexible interventions.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

8. The Multiply funding will support local residents to improve their maths skills and aligns with corporate values of economic recovery, skills development and regeneration ambitions as defined in the [Corporate Plan 2021 - 2025](#). The scheme also meets the values of working together with partners, as well as being community focused.

## PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

9. Improving functional numeracy is an important stepping-stone to intermediate and higher level qualifications, accessing better paid jobs and career progression, meeting needs of changing industrial sectors on the Island and attracting inward investment. A range of interventions will be delivered at employer premises and developed in collaboration where possible. Interventions could range from a single workshop, short course over 4 weeks with study of relevant maths skills which fill in missing gaps in knowledge, short unit-based qualifications completed in 20 guided learning hours. Employers will be encouraged to incentivise participation, this could include time off to progress to a level 2 functional skills qualification, offering an interview or additional training.
10. All employment sectors will be eligible for Multiply programmes. However, to support local economic plans and sectors where there are vacancies, priorities have been identified including health and care, hospitality, construction with a focus on net zero, retail, manufacturing and engineering.
11. To further support employers, Adult Community Learning seeks to work with local further education providers delivering tailored maths interventions, including open days in curriculum areas, taster activities with embedded maths, producing work

packs based on real world application of numeracy and some shareable video content, highlighting how relevant maths is used across various industries and curriculum areas available on the Island.

12. Improving functional numeracy helps unemployed adults gain jobs, meets the needs of adults who left school without level 2 qualifications and develops the confidence and skills of adults prior to accessing functional skills qualifications. Working with Department for Work and Pensions and within local community centres to target unemployed adults and those furthest from the labour market who have skills gaps that do not match the vacancies available.
13. Improving functional numeracy helps in everyday life; helping parents to support their child's homework, helping to manage personal finances or avoid scams for example.
14. Family Learning courses will be designed with a cohort of school teachers working alongside functional skills tutors to create short courses and work packs supporting parents to develop their own skills, whilst supporting their child with homework. Courses could be delivered by school staff, adult community learning tutors or networks supporting electively home educated families.
15. Multiply will support people to manage their money through partnerships with local community centres and the Citizen Advice Bureau. Areas where there is demand include financial literacy, debt, cost of living crisis and becoming victims of scams. Other aspects of money management will include healthy cooking and budgeting and energy saving calculations.
16. Providing flexibility is key to finding new ways to engage with adults and improve numeracy levels. Multiply will provide online and blended learning, which will be facilitated and supported by a real tutor. Multiply will provide short interventions; a fast track course aiming to get people ready to undertake qualifications within one term; a unit based approach to building skills, to allow a greater time period to become ready for exams; 1:1 and small group tutoring, including specialist assessment and support for those with entry level skills and other barriers to learning. Flexibilities will include day and evening courses, local venues, online options and the choice of the pace of study.
17. A communications strategy will be developed using partner agencies, social media, newspapers and radio. Informal engagement could include activities in community centres, libraries and other touch points. Activities will include fun quizzes and games, takeaway resources and signposting to local courses, websites and the national digital platform.

## CONSULTATION

18. Consultation was undertaken with service users attending existing functional skills maths classes, staff teaching in the basic skills curriculum area, members of the Adult Community Learning Advisory Board, including the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health. Conversations have been held with the Regeneration Directorate who lead on the Skills Plan and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Department for Work and Pensions and with other local authorities through the Halex network.

19. As part of the annual commissioning cycle, Multiply has been included in the Adult Community Learning Grant Programme Prospectus 2022-2023. This enables local partners to propose ideas and apply for funding to help deliver Multiply outcomes.

### FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

20. The Isle of Wight has a ring-fenced grant allocation from the Department for Education of £666,594. Funding will be split across 3 academic years and will be agreed annually through a grant determination letter. All project costs will be met within the ring-fenced allocation. A dedicated cost centre will be established for this purpose.

### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

21. The qualifying criteria has been specified by the Department for Education in the Multiply Investment Prospectus and Technical Guidance. Multiply funding will be included within the existing Education & Skills Conditions of Funding Grant, which is issued annually by the Education and Skills Funding Agency prior to the start of the academic year.
22. Grant agreements for partners will be drawn up by the Isle of Wight Council's Legal Services and signed by all providers and will ensure due diligence from both a financial and legal perspective.

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

23. The council, as a public body, is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010, to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
24. These grants will have a positive impact on the following protected characteristics:
  - Age – adults aged 19 and over will benefit from services, providing opportunities for those who completed compulsory education without gaining maths qualifications.
  - Disability – services provided will be inclusive.

### OPTIONS

25. The options available are as follows:

**Option 1** - To approve the submission on the Multiply Investment Plan, securing funding which will allow numeracy programmes to begin in September 2022.

**Option 2** - Not to approve the submission of the Multiply Investment Plan.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

26. There is a risk in starting to deliver the objectives of the Multiply Investment plan prior to receiving a signed Education & Skills Conditions of Funding Grant letter. The letter is expected to be in place in August 2022. To mitigate against unfunded spending, staff recruitment and partnership arrangements will not be contracted until the grant letter and payment profile has been received from Department for Education.
27. As part of the Adult Community Learning Grant Programme Prospectus 2022-2023, partners will be required to sign a formal grant agreement with the Isle of Wight Council which clearly defines the purpose of grant funding, a payment schedule and performance measures. Regular contract monitoring activity will ensure adequate progress is being made and any under performance may result in a reduction of grant payments.

## EVALUATION

28. Option 1 allows for the Multiply Implementation Plan to be started promptly in September 2022. It supports corporate priorities relating to adult skills and provides opportunities for adults to improve their maths skills in new and flexible ways. Subsequent implementation plans will be submitted for year 2 and year 3, allowing the project board to make improvements based on experience and reflect any future changes in priorities.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multiply-funding-available-to-improve-numeracy-skills>

Contact Point: Rob Brindley, Adult Community Learning Service Manager, ☎ 821000  
e-mail [robert.brindley@iow.gov.uk](mailto:robert.brindley@iow.gov.uk)

Sharon Betts  
*Director of Corporate Services*

Councillor Debbie Andre  
Cabinet Member for Children's Services,  
Education and Lifelong Skills