

REPORT TO CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE 14 JULY 2022

UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND – CHESHIRE EAST ALLOCATION

APPENDIX 1

1. Summary of the IP for the Multiply element of the UKSPF

- 1.1. Multiply is a specific part of the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). SPF is the Government's domestic replacement of European funding.
- 1.2. The Multiply element is specifically and only for numeracy courses for people aged 19 and over. Any Multiply delivery must not duplicate what is already in place and must provide something different and complimentary to current Adult Education Budget funded provision.
- 1.3. Unlike previous ESF (European Social Fund) provision there is no bidding for this money. There is no requirement for match funding.
- 1.4. Each Local Authority has been awarded a specific amount which will cover years 22/23, 23/24 and 24/25. The total amount awarded to Cheshire East is: £1.535m. This sum is to be split across the financial years as follows:

Year 1 22/23	Year 2 23/24	Year 3 24/25
464,235	535,655	535,655

2. The Cheshire East Approach

- 2.1. Some Local Authorities already provide directly delivered numeracy courses. However, in Cheshire East the bulk of the provision is delivered through FE colleges, community learning and some elements of ESF provision.
- 2.2. The approach to be taken in Cheshire East therefore, is that a commissioning exercise will take place and engagement with the market place of providers for delivery of Multiply.
- 2.3. 10% of the total available funds can be used for Administration purposes. This sum will be used by Cheshire East Council to take on an overall commissioning/project/contract manager post and a finance admin post. The remaining 90% of the funds will be available for delivery partners.

3. Timescales

- 3.1. All Local Authorities including Cheshire East must submit their Implementation Plan by the 30 June 2022. This will set out broad high-level proposals for delivery including numbers of starts, unit costs, types of interventions and outcomes.
- 3.2. The Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities will review the proposals and then enter into any discussions about any of the elements of the Implementation

Plan that they may wish to see modified. This means that there will be “room for manoeuvre” after the submission of the plan.

- 3.3.** Due to the expected length of time to proceed through the commissioning exercise and agreeing contracts, we do not envisage any actual delivery of learning to take place before January 2023.

4. Year 1 Challenges

- 4.1.** Clearly Year 1 is already at month 3 and as explained above, actual delivery is not likely to start before January 2023. It is expected that as this is a new provision that starts on programme are likely to be lower than in Years 2 and 3. All this means that there is an unusual challenge of seeing how and for what purposes, the full allocation of Year 1 funding can be spent.
- 4.2.** Multiply submission documents provide 10 pull-down menu interventions that can be chosen, with accompanying data on numbers of starts, costs and outcomes to be achieved.
- 4.3.** The Cheshire East proposal is that 5 of these will be the focus of delivery. As well as the standard menu options the Multiply submission documentation also allows for “off-menu” proposals if good business cases can be evidenced.
- 4.4.** The Cheshire East Implementation Plan therefore exploits this option to the full by proposing 10 off-menu activities for Year 1 only, which are not direct delivery, but support and help the development of delivery.

5. Background Data to Justify Choices

- 5.1.** Cheshire East Council and Warrington Borough Council commissioned the Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Enterprise Council to research all relevant background data to include facts and figures on: existing provision (where, by who, numbers, cohorts and outcomes).
- 5.2.** As well as this the brief was to look at employer and sector demand going forwards in Cheshire East for numeracy skills in work. This report has been utilised heavily in the pulling together of initial proposals.
- 5.3.** The summary of the findings is as follows:
- Low take up of males into current numeracy learning (only 23% currently)
 - Low take up of entry-level courses
 - Only 18% take-up in the 19-23 age group
 - Comparatively very few in Community Learning compared to neighbouring Authorities. (For instance 37 in Cheshire East compared to 420 in Cheshire West and Chester)
 - The high demand for numeracy declared by employers advertising for Admin, Book keeping, Customer Services, Sales and IT
 - The very high demand for numeracy skills advertised by employers for apprenticeship vacancies