

REPORT TO: CEOS MEETING

DATE: August 23, 2023

REPORT TITLE: DECISION NOTICES - MULTIPLY YEAR 2

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MULTIPLY PROJECT MANAGER**

Purpose of Report

- 1 Approve Multiply year 2, call 2 assessment decisions.

Recommendations

- 2 Following assessment and moderation of 9 applications for Multiply funding we are making the following recommendations to CEO for approval:
 - a. To authorise the approval of 9 applications of Multiply funding and to allocate £254,982.

Background

- 3 Multiply is a three-year, c.4.5m, initiative to upskill residents with low levels of numeracy. The project entered its second of three funding years on April 1, 2023.
- 4 The funding value of year 2 allocation is £1,395,746.
- 5 Approval was given from CEO on April 5, 2023, to extend the funding contracts of the 9 existing Multiply providers using the allocation from 22/23 as a baseline and which totalled £953,908. This left a funding allocation of £441,838.
- 6 A second call was launched for the remaining allocation June 19, 2023.
- 7 Decisions were agreed upon following assessment and moderation of applications and all 9 projects scored well over the 40% minimum threshold.

Proposal / solution

- 8 Allocate further funding to 9 projects (£254,982) bringing total funding allocation to £1,208,889.
- 9 To re-launch a third funding call to allocate the remaining £186,856, which will be limited to the areas of South Gloucester and B&NES (Bath and Northeast Somerset) or large employers and/or existing providers.

Consultation details (if appropriate to this item)

10 The Skills Officer Group has been consulted in the decisions taken following the assessment process on August 2, 2023. They have also been consulted on how to allocate the funding to the areas of B&NES and South Gloucestershire through two meetings, details below:

Date of meeting	Summary of discussions	Skills Officers in attendance
26 th July 2023	Presented by Graham Smith on the gaps in the areas of B&NES and South Gloucestershire, no further suggestions on how to close this gap.	William Monachio-Ayres – Bath and Northeast Somerset Council Mark Lawrence – South Gloucestershire Council Jane Taylor – Bristol City Council
2 nd August 2023	Presented the decisions to the group. Confirmation of approval for all 9 projects.	Jane Taylor – Bristol City Council William Monachio-Ayres Bath and Northeast Somerset Council Jayne Griffiths – North Somerset

11 The CLT (Corporate Leadership Team) group approved the paper moving forward to CEO group for approval of the 9 projects and funding value of £254,982 on August 15, 2023.

Risk Management/Assessment (if appropriate to this item)

12 Risks associated with the funding decisions:

- a. Underperformance against KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) which will be mitigated through the performance management framework and provider meetings.
- b. If not approved through this decision, funds will need to be returned to the Department for Education.
- c. One provider has been highlighted by grant assurance of being at high-risk due financial records. They currently have a contract with AEB (Adult Education Budget) for £400,000 (due diligence, see appendix 1). Several steps have been put in place to mitigate the risk to approving funding, see table below:

Provider	Risks identified	Mitigating Factors
The Restore Trust	Due diligence identified that financially the provider is high risk due to having a recommended contract limit of £115,000 and having an average debt ratio to assets.	To mitigate the high-risk status of this provider following due diligence the following steps will be taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider will be paid in arrears based on results only. • The funding is limited to £19,000. • The combined authority will not be exposed should the provider become insolvent due to the payment on results model. • There will be no reputational damage to the combined authority, this is a small but growing organisation whose financial rating is reflected by the growth. • Work with other areas in the directorate/CA to ensure that the provider does not overstretch themselves financially when assessing applications for funding.

(Assurance advice given by: Karl Williams Date: August 7, 2023)

Public Sector Equality Duties (if appropriate to this item)

13 Project adheres to the two main components of Public Sector Equality Duties.

General Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) and the due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination harassment and victimisation on protected characteristics
- Advance equal opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not

Specific duties (section 149A of the Equality Act 2010) The Specific Duties complement the General Equality Duty and require public sector organizations to publish specific, measurable, and time-bound objectives to demonstrate their compliance with the General Equality Duty.

Climate change implications (if appropriate to this item)

14 The use of a more automated system and the use of the ILR (Individual Learner Record) will negate the use of paper reporting.

Strategic communications planning (if appropriate)

15 The people and Skills Service are working with the CA's communication team to ensure that the funding call/s for the Multiply provision described above are widely disseminated.

16 The engagement officer within Skills Bootcamp and Multiply team been liaising with the communication team to ensure there has been a social media and website presence.

17 The engagement officer has been engaging with providers and partners to spread the information widely regarding the Multiply funding.

Economic (and other) Impact Assessment (if appropriate to this item)

18 The funding allocated from this assessment process and the carry over contracts already awarded for 23/24 will support 1008 residents of the region in upskilling in maths. A minimum of 60% (605) of those residents will then progress onto a qualification at Level 1 or 2, which will support residents to work towards gaining employment or upskilling existing workforces.

Procurement & Commercials (if appropriate to this item)

19 Forming part Department of Levelling Up UK Social Prosperity Fund Multiply is a three-year Department for Education funded programme. In place is a three-year Government grant funding contract. Calculated annually paid in quarterly increments

to the Combined Authority. ([90000444_WECA MoU Multiply Programme 22 23 FINAL.pdf](#))

(Commercial advice given by: insert officer name; Date – insert date)

Finance Implications

20 There will be 9 further projects across the regional geographical area which will be funded by this allocation decision amounting to £254,982. Below is the allocation for each organisation:

Provider	Bath & Northeast Somerset	Bristol	North-Somerset	South Gloucestershire	Total
ACH		£48,000			£48,000
Bath Spa University	£32,000				£32,000
Curo Choice		£18,000	£18,000		£36,000
Knowle West Media		£23,982			£23,982
The Restore Trust		£19,000			£19,000
WEA (Workers Education Association)		£30,000	£30,000		£60,000
Weston College		£36,000			£36,000
TOTAL	£32,000	£174,982	£48,000		£254,982

21 In summary Multiply allocation to date:

	Bath & Northeast Somerset	Bristol	North Somerset	South Gloucestershire	Totals
Full Allocation year 2	£256,184	£590,482	£262,855	£286,224	£1,395,745
Awarded to Date	£120,600	£499,708	£228,000	£105,600	£953,908
Proposing to award	£32,000	£174,981	£48,000	£0	£254,981
Remaining funding to allocate	£103,584	-£84,207	-£13,145	£180,624	£186,856

(Finance advice given by: Martyn Davies; Date – August 9, 2023)

Legal Implications:

- 22 The West of England Combined Authority has the power to make the proposed funding available for the proposed projects.

(Legal advice given by: insert officer name; **Date –** insert date)

Human Resources Implications:

- 23 There are no HR implications to this decision as sufficient staffing is in place to manage all contracts.

(HR advice given by: insert officer name; **Date –** insert date)

Recommendation(s):

