

# Executive Report

Delegated Decisions – 27 February 2024

## GRANT AGREEMENT FOR THE DELIVERY OF MULTIPLY BY MILTON KEYNES CITY COUNCIL AND MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE

Name of Cabinet Member	<b>Councillor Zoe Nolan</b> Cabinet member for Children and Families
Report sponsor	<b>Mac Heath</b> Director of Children’s Services
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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	<b>No</b>
Council Plan reference	<b>Not in Council Plan</b>
Wards affected	<b>All wards</b>

### Executive summary

Milton Keynes City Council submitted a proposal to the Department for Education to deliver the Multiply Programme within Milton Keynes, to help improve numeracy skills in adults aged 19+, who do not have a qualification in Level 2 Maths/Numeracy or equivalent.

Milton Keynes City Council will be delivering the programme via its ‘Community Learning MK’ service and in partnership with Milton Keynes College, the other Adult Education provider in Milton Keynes. MKCC and MK College are the two main providers of post 19 further education with the quality controls needed to run the MULTIPLY interventions.

Following award of the programme and associated funding to Milton Keynes City Council, the agreement between Milton Keynes City Council and Milton Keynes College now needs to be formally agreed.

#### 1. Proposed Decision(s)

- 1.1 That £750,000 be paid by Milton Keynes City Council over three years to Milton Keynes College for the delivery of MULTIPLY.

## 2. Reasons for the decision

2.1 Multiply is a national programme from the Department for Education using the Shared Prosperity Fund to ensure:

- Adults who do not already have a GCSE grade C/4 or higher in Maths will be able to access free numeracy courses that fit around their lives – whether that be in person or online, at work or in the evening, part time or intensive – with additional support to meet their needs.
- Employers who could benefit from boosting their workforce's skills will be able to work with their Local Authority and training providers to deliver Maths and numeracy skills towards a potential GCSE or work-ready Functional Skills Qualifications and design and deliver bespoke programmes for their workforce – at no cost to them.
- All residents of Milton Keynes, with a particular focus on residents living in priority areas, as well as care leavers and ex-offenders.

2.2 As an Ofsted registered adult education provider, Milton Keynes College is ideally placed to deliver the local Multiply Programme, and therefore supported the joint proposal, because they currently deliver Adult Skills and record learning on the Individual Learner Record (ILR) which is part of the DfE requirement for Adult Education Budget delivery. They also have the contract to deliver offender and ex offender learning, which is part of the MULTIPLY investment plan. Furthermore, MK College have well established employer connections and a history of delivering learning on site for large companies and organisations in Milton Keynes and can extend this delivery to MULTIPLY interventions.

## 3. Background to the decision

3.1 Milton Keynes City Council and Milton Keynes College submitted a proposal to deliver the MULTIPLY programme within Milton Keynes, delivering bespoke adult numeracy courses from October 2022 to April 2025. The proposal was written in collaboration, but MKCC are managing the programme and are therefore the recipients of the funding.

3.2 The proposal for delivery of the Multiply Programme in Milton Keynes has the following objectives for working with:

- Those already in work, who need to improve maths skills for their jobs. For example, teaching assistants, care assistants, support staff, factory workers, shop assistants, hospitality workers and leisure industry workers.
- Prisoners and recently released prisoners, including rehabilitation skills and money management.
- ESOL learners who are seeking work and need support with the language of maths.

- Parents and carers wishing to upskill themselves in maths or require support with family budgeting.
- Those in need of money management skills to help them recover from debt issues.
- The long term unemployed or those who are 19 or over and not in education, employment, or training (NEET).
- Schools, such as Stantonbury, delivering numeracy skills classes to parents.
- Community groups, such as, MK Act and Water Eaton Church to deliver money management and numeracy classes on site.

#### 4. Implications of the decision

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	N/A
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	N/A
Communication	N/A	Procurement	N/A
Energy Efficiency		Workforce	

##### a) Financial Implications

Milton Keynes City Council will receive a total of £1.321m from 2022-2025 for the local delivery of Multiply, as per the original Investment Plan Proposal. In line with the proposed Investment Plan, £750,000 will be paid to MK College over this period in relation to the planned interventions delivered.

- Year 1 - £230K will be paid to MK College
- Year 2 - £260K will be paid to MK College
- Year 3 - £260K will be paid to MK College

Funding will need to be returned to the Department for Education if the programme does not meet its objectives in relation to the interventions delivered and the number of learners engaged.

##### b) Legal Implications

This report seeks approval for a direct award of a grant funding in the sum of seven hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds (£750,000) to Milton Keynes College for Project Multiply- a UK Shared Prosperity Fund initiative.

The reasons for the proposed award are set out in the body of the report.

The Council has a general power of competence to make the grant award. Section 1 Localism Act 2011 gives the Council the same power to act that an individual has. The power does not need to be exercised for the benefit of any particular place or group and can be exercised anywhere and in any way. In exercising the general power of competence, the Council must act in accordance with any restrictions applying to existing powers that are overlapped by the general power.

The proposed grant has been analysed against the provisions of the subsidy control legislation (Subsidy Control Act 2022) and whether the measure proposed amounts to a subsidy as defined by Section 2 of the Act. The Council has reviewed the provisions within the context of the activity being proposed and determined that MK College has not satisfied the definition of an “Enterprise” as prescribed under the Act and as such considered that the grant to MK College to deliver Project Multiply is unlikely to constitute a subsidy under the Act. The delivery of Multiply project is considered a non-economic activity and where public authorities provide financial assistance in support of a person or body’s non-economic activities, such financial assistance will not be considered to constitute a subsidy.

In awarding the grant to MK College, the Council is the Accountable Body and its role as an Accountable Body involves taking on the responsibility and accountability for the spending of grant monies and the delivery of planned outcomes. This requires compliance with all the terms of the grant funding and active monitoring and management of spend. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund prospectus makes it clear that it is anticipated that the Council will fulfil this role in delivering Project Multiply under the Multiply Investment.

The Council’s financial regulations require that any grant to external bodies with a value of £100k or above in any one financial year is approved by the relevant Cabinet Member (delegated decision). This report therefore aligns with the constitutional requirements of the Council.

In order to ensure that the grant funding is used for the purposes for which they are provided, the Council will need to enter into a grant funding agreement with MK College if approval is given for the award of grant.

### c) Other Implications

The UKSPF grant for MULTIPLY does not impact on any other Council departments. If the money is not spent, it will be returned to the treasury.

Working in partnership with Milton Keynes College will ensure the funding targets are reached and employers and local groups will be included in the plans.

MULTIPLY interventions are targeted in priority areas across Milton Keynes and Milton Keynes College and MKCC both have broad experience of delivering in these areas and working with those learners most at need of intervention.

## 5. Alternatives Considered

- 5.1 Milton Keynes City Council could seek to deliver the entire Multiply Programme by way of its in house ‘Community Learning MK’ Service. However, this would require a significant increase in delivery, which would mean employing more staff, purchasing more class resources, finding bigger premises, employing more business support, and developing a much bigger marketing strategy. Furthermore, MKCC does not currently have a contract to deliver offender and ex offender learning, which is an important strand of the Multiply project. It would also limit the available links with local employers.

## 6. Timetable for implementation

- 6.1 Due to tight time requirements of the project following confirmation of our successful submission, both MKCC and MK College have commenced delivery of the programme in line with the proposal. The arrangement between MKCC and MK College now needs to be formalised to ensure delivery is in accordance with the investment plan, funding conditions are met, and payment can be made to Milton Keynes College.

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### List of Annexes

None

### List of Background Papers

The MULTIPLY Investment plan July 2022

[Multipler Technical Guidance - July 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1141222/multiplier-technical-guidance-july-2023.pdf)