



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 19th JULY 2023

REPORT TITLE:	ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET AND MULTIPLY PROGRAMME FUNDING FOR LIFELONG LEARNING SERVICES (ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING)
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks authority to accept the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) funding of £1,322,591.37 awarded to the Council under the Adult Education Budget for the academic year 2023/24. The request includes the discrete funding to deliver the Department for Education (DfE) Multiply Programme.

The Council's Lifelong Learning Service is the fund holder of a local Adult Education Budget (AEB) on behalf of the LCR Combined Authority, delivering a focused but balanced programme of adult learning each year across Wirral.

Adult learning re-engages adults 19 years plus in activities to acquire new skills (including basic skills) and interests for the benefit of the individual and their wider family networks.

The purpose of the Council's Adult Learning Programme is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation, and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds to:

- I. improve their health and well-being, including mental health and/or
- II. progress towards formal learning or employment, and/or
- III. develop stronger communities.

In April 2023, the LCRCA confirmed the Council's AEB allocation of £1,135,646. The grant funding covers the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

The LCR Combined Authority grant funding includes a separate financial allocation for the DfE MULTIPLY maths intervention programme. This discrete maths initiative funding is £186,945.37.

The Adult Learning Programme in Wirral is delivered via a combination of direct delivery by the Council's Lifelong Learning Service and sub-contracting arrangements with the local Third Sector organisations.

As a service, Lifelong Learning supports three of the key strategic Council themes, as outlined in the Wirral Plan 2021 – 2026. These themes include (1) Brighter Futures through the delivery of high-quality education for adults and families, (2) Active and Healthy Lives through a curriculum focus on wellbeing and positive mental health, and (3) Safe and Pleasant Communities through targeted engagement of adults and families in the Borough's most deprived communities / ward areas.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

This is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- 1) authorise the Director of Children Family and Education to accept grant funding for the 2023/24 academic year from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in the sum of £1,135,646 for the purposes set out at paragraph 3.4 of this report; and
- 2) authorise the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary agreements or other legal documentation to implement the above recommendations.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Lifelong Service enrolled over 1,640 adults on a range of over 3,100 education provisions during the 2021/22 full academic year. Of those adults that enrolled on courses and workshops 66.5 percent were residents from Wirral's top 20 percent most deprived ward areas (identified using the indices of multiple deprivation index). The employment status of the learners engaged through the service included 69.4% (1,160 learners) being unemployed (either seeking employment or unable to work at the time).
- 1.2 Of all adult enrolments 93.1% successfully completed their course or workshop. Over 79 percent of learners tracked after their course either progressed to further learning (at a higher level), undertook volunteering locally or entered employment.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 This report is based on the latest academic year funding allocation and given the funding conditions remain unchanged no further options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council's Lifelong Learning Service offers entry and lower-level learning (up to level 2) which supports local employment and skills priorities and wider social and economic outcomes, as follows:
 1. Maximise the employability of Wirral residents through delivery of a range of programmes that support people to progress into work;
 2. Deliver learning and skills programmes that are responsive to Wirral employer and residents' needs;
 3. Deliver social well-being (including health) and economic outcomes.
 4. Deliver outstanding teaching, learning and assessment;
 5. Inspire and promote ambition for all learners to succeed and progress and promote equality and diversity throughout all aspects of the learner journey; and
 6. Support and develop 3rd sector organisations across the borough in the delivery of quality education provision. Facilitating capacity building and underpinning Social Value outcomes
- 3.2 In order for the Lifelong Learning Service to achieve the above priorities, the following objectives have been identified by the services Governing Board:
 - a. Implementation of a community-based learning offer that is responsive to local needs, recognising its importance to social and economic inclusion across the Wirral.
 - b. Development of clear and effective local progression pathways from non-accredited learning; to accredited learning, improve signposting and referrals, and measure impact and progression across Wirral and the Liverpool City Region, on to further education and/or employment/enterprise.

- c. Offer targeted, local learning and skills provision that meets the current and future skills needs of Wirral employers.
- d. Focus grant funding on people who are hard to reach, disadvantaged and least likely to participate.
- e. Maximize the funding, resources and sharing of practice through local partnership working and third sector commissioned provisions.
- f. Continually developing a universal community learning offer through a range of direct and commissioned (where appropriate) delivery.

3.3 The core (see table below) AEB funding allocation for 2023/24 has been uplifted by the LCRCA to reflect consistent service over delivery across the last 4 academic years. Compared to the initial 2022/23 academic year AEB funding allocation (£982,326) the 2023/24 funding allocation has been uplifted by +£153,320 to £1,135,646. The service has systematically over delivered on qualification-based course delivery through the creation of progression pathways for learners.

3.4 As in previous academic year it is planned that a sum up to £200,000 be used to commission adult learning from local Third Sector organisations that have reach and engagement in our more deprived communities.

3.5 The breakdown of the 2023/24 funding allocation is as follows:

CORE ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET FUNDING (AEB)	Community Learning (Non-qualification courses / workshops)	£823,600.00
	Adult Skills (Qualification based delivery)	£162,046.00
	Test & Learning Projects	£150,000.00
DISCRETE PROGRAMME FUNDING	MULTIPLY Programme	£186,945.37
TOTAL		£1,322,591.37

3.6 The MULTIPLY funding has been allocated to the Council to support delivery of a DfE programme to help adults improve their numeracy skills. It is for adults who do not have a GCSE at Grade 4/C or equivalent in maths. In support of the programme the Council and its Third Sector partners delivery numeracy courses that both engage adults and can lead to a formal qualification. The grant allocation is inclusive of £100,000 for Third Sector organisation maths engagement activities. This will be allocated utilising a competitive procurement process.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The funding agreement has been informed by the Head of Service for Learning, Skills and Employment. A comprehensive business case was completed and submitted early 2023 informing planned delivery for the 2023/24 academic year.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The decision to accept the £1.32m LCR Combined Authority AEB grant funding for academic year 2023/24 will ensure the Adult Learning and MULTIPLY programmes can be delivered.

6.2 Due to the annual, recurring nature of this adult education funding the required Curriculum managers, Community Development Manager, Tutors, and Business Support staff are already in post for delivery in academic year 2023/24.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Council Lifelong Learning Service and any subcontracted providers must comply with the Conditions of Funding grant and AEB funding guidance documents for academic year 2023/24. Failure to comply may result in a bad audit and subsequent funding clawback.

7.3 There are no significant risks identified with the key decisions set out in this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation and engagement with service users and providers is focused on the programme content, access, and the quality of delivery and integral to service planning and review; this is undertaken throughout the academic year.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This recommendation is to accept the LCRCA Adult Education Budget funding under an existing programme and delivery model. There are no known adverse impacts associated with this decision to accept the funding. The adult learning programme seeks to build the capacity of individuals and communities. To this end, the curriculum will continue to promote greener living, environmental appreciation, and effective management of our resources, addressing the issues identified within external emissions, under climate emergency mitigation.

10.2 The programme is delivered in areas of the borough experiencing significant social and economic disadvantage and the curriculum focus will also specifically promote and support positive responses to many of the impacts within climate adaptation, particularly energy, waste, water, food, and homes.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Sufficient and appropriate entry level community-based learning opportunities for all Wirral resident adults is fundamental. Inactive and unemployed adults must be supported and encouraged to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to enable them to access local jobs, support their families, have good health and wellbeing as well as supporting local economic growth.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

LCR AEB Funding Rules 2022/23
Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022
FE and Skills Handbook, Ofsted
Local Skills Improvement Plans, .GOV.UK

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with Section B of its Terms of Reference, the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date