
Council

14 January 2025

Name of Cabinet Member:

N/A

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Chief Executive

Ward(s) affected:

City wide

Title:

Acceptance of WMCA Grant Funding and Deed of Variation – Adult Education Service

Is this a key decision?

N/A

Executive Summary:

This report informs Council of a decision undertaken by the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules as set out in the Constitution and following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Leader of the Council to approve acceptance of a grant of £5,288,368 with an additional Free Courses for Jobs allocation of £63,754 made available by the West Midlands Combined Authority. Due to the timescales involved, this decision is reported to Council retrospectively.

List of Appendices included: None

Background papers:

Other useful documents: None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny? No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council? - Yes – 14 January 2025

Report title: Acceptance of WMCA Grant Funding and Deed of Variation – Adult Education Service

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Adult Education Delivery

1.2 Following devolution of the Adult Education Budget in 2019, the Adult Education Service has typically received an annual grant agreement for the delivery of education and skills from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

1.3 This year WMCA has issued a Deed of Extension and Variation. This is to deliver Community Learning and Adult Skills provision through an agreed curriculum plan aligned to the WMCA’s Employment & Skills Strategy 2024-27. As in previous years, the value of the allocation is £5,288,368.00, with an additional Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) allocation of £63,754.00.

Local Authority/College	Coventry City Council
2024/25 Total Allocation:	£5,288,368.00
Comprises of:	
Community Learning allocation	£2,648,497.00
Adult Skills allocation	£2,639,871.00
FCFJ Allocation:	
FCFJ	£63,754.40

1.4 WMCA funded Adult Education and skills delivery is an essential part of the region’s path to continue building strong communities, offer a good education up to level 2 for those who need it, move people into employment and reskill/upskill adults to support our communities and businesses. This funding allocation demonstrates WMCA’s commitment to further support educational needs and tackle inequalities through place based integrated service delivery across the city.

1.5 These goals align closely to strategic priorities within the One Coventry Plan as well as the Adult Education Service strategic plan 2024-27.

1.6 Whilst there is no adjustment to the grant amount/allocation from previous years, the period of the Deed to extend the arrangements relate to academic year 2024-25. The Council have now entered a deed of extension and variation corresponding to this value and period.

2 Adult Education Grant

2.1 The WMCA are committed to provide earlier sight of indicative budgets than previous years to enable improved programme planning. However, annual budgets are set at the same level as a previous academic year, for several reasons.

2.2 For the final allocations to be confirmed the forecasted outturn for the previous academic year is determined at Period 8 of the Individual Learner Return (ILR)

March 2024 (R08). This evidence must provide a minimum final outturn of 97% against grant allocations and include job outcomes for employability programmes to meet or exceed the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

- 2.3 Where the budget allows consideration for growth, the forecasted outturn for an academic year needs to evidence at final outturn a minimum of 103% with a strong performance on priority areas, and job outcomes for into-employment programmes to meet or exceed the KPIs.

3 Deed of Extension and Variation

- 3.1 The annual grant allocation, issued as a deed of extension and variation enables consideration for growth. The agreement to design and implement priority area programmes, against longer term strategy plans, will retain delivery teams to support greater devolution opportunities.

- 3.2 Due to the value of the grant being in the sum of £5.3m, part 3F of the constitution sets out the requirements for acceptance of the grant as follows:

(e) Over £2,500,000 ~ to Council, if time permits; if no time to go to Council, joint approval in writing by the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and Leader to be reported to Council retrospectively.

- 3.3 This is an existing standard annual grant to deliver education and skills provision through the Adult Education Service for the year 2024/2025. However, on receipt of a Deed to Extension and Variation for 2024/25, due diligence was sought to determine the relevant process and ensure it was completed by the set deadline issued by the West Midlands Combined Authority.

- 3.4 This delayed the time for approval to be sought through full Council and therefore in accordance with the alternative mechanism “if no time to go to Council” a briefing paper was prepared and approved by the relevant persons with this retrospective for full Council to satisfy the constitutional requirements.

- 3.5 This report presented to Council is to inform Council that such decision has been taken under the delegated authority afforded to the *Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and Leader.*

- 3.6 Approval was sought to accept the funding via the Deed of Variation and Extension of the recommendations set out below which is in line with the requirements of the Council’s Constitution where time does not permit for a report to be presented to Council. This was necessary to allow the clarification required on the Deed of Variation, against timescales.

4 Options Considered

- 4.1 The Chief Executive and Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Leader,

agreed that the decision to accept the grant could not wait until the next council meeting and was critical to the Council's ability to deliver the Adult Education and Skills delivery:

- a. acceptance of the funding by way of entering a Deed of Extension and Variation in the sum of £5,288,368.00, with an additional Free Courses for Jobs allocation of £63,754.00
- b. the use of grant funding to meet the curriculum delivery plan
- c. to delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration & Economy, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education & Skills, to take such ancillary or incidental actions (including decisions made on the implementation of the delivery plan), required to bring into effect the recommendations set out in this note.

5 Results of consultation undertaken

- 5.1 In accordance with the Constitution, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Leader were consulted.

6 Timetable for implementing this decision

Considering the urgent nature of the matter detailed in this report, the decisions were implemented immediately.

7 Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the Chief Legal Officer

Financial implications

Where decisions made involve the receipt of grants and making of expenditure, this has been identified in the decision summary. The City Council maintains detailed records and forecasts of the financial impacts. Alongside regular financial management activity, the financial implications are included within the Council's financial monitoring reports.

Legal implications

Section 1 Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence and as such the Council has the power to receive grant funding and enter into the Deed of Extension and Variation.

Prior to entering into the Deed of Extension and Variation, Legal Services reviewed the document and provided the necessary advice on the terms and conditions.

Paragraph 2.3.2 (e) of Part 3F of the Constitution provides for approval of grant agreements by the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and Leader relating to grant receipt and expenditure over the value of over £2,500,000 if time does not permit consideration by Council.

Report author(s):

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Enquiries should be directed to the above.

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