

Cabinet

30 September 2025

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills - Councillor Dr K Sandhu

**Director approving submission of the report:**

Director of Regeneration and Economy

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

**Acceptance of Additional £243,953 Grant Allocation from Department for Education (DfE) to Increase the Total Educational Grant to £1.027M**

**Is this a key decision?**

Yes - the proposals involve financial implications in excess of £1m per annum and likely to have significant impact on residents in two or more electoral wards in the city.

**Executive summary:**

The Adult Education Service (AES) typically receives an annual grant from the Department for Education (DfE) to deliver educational study programmes. This funding specifically supports 16–19-year-old learners. These learning programmes are designed for an individual learner, aimed at supporting their development and progression in line with their aspirations for sustainable paid work, further or higher education or an apprenticeship. This includes learners aged 19–24 with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).

In July 2025, the AES received written notification from the DfE regarding the Education and Skills Condition of Funding Grant. The DfE intends to award the Council an additional £243,953 for 16–19-year-old study programmes for the period 1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026.

The DfE also provides grants for Adult Skills provision, Tailored Learning, and Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ), aligned to our strategic priorities through an agreed curriculum plan. This supplementary funding is in addition to the existing 2025/26 academic year grant allocation of £784k, resulting in a total aggregated grant exceeding £1 million for the year.

The DfE have since written an urgent request to Adult Education Service to accept and sign for the additional monies by no later than 1 October 2025. As such and in accordance with the Constitution, Councillor G Lloyd, Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee (or his

nominee), has been invited to attend the meeting for this item of business to agree the need for urgency such that call-in arrangements will not apply.

The additional investment will focus on a flexible approach that builds capacity to deliver a broad range of 16 to 19 programmes and learning outcomes i.e. essential skills, study programmes, supported internships, health and well-being and supporting progression into further learning, apprenticeships and/or work. It will also provide the opportunity to align with other investment e.g. UKSPF, Connect to Work and Youth Trailblazer, and wider programmes such as Work Well and the development of the Get Britain Working Local Plan.

This report outlines the background and context of the DfE funding focus within Adult Education and seeks the council's approval to accept the additional monies together with delegated authority to enter into future funding agreements with DfE where necessary and available.

### **Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended to: -

- 1) Approve acceptance and expenditure of the additional grant to Adult Education Service for Education and Skills in the sum of £243,953 for 2025/26.
- 2) Grant delegated authority to the Director for Regeneration and Economy, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources, the Director of Law and Governance and the relevant Cabinet Member(s), to:
  - i) Accept any additional funding up to the value of £1,500,000 to Adult Education Service for Education and Skills in the event of further grant funding being secured.
  - ii) Expend any additional funding secured up to the value of £1,500,000 to Adult Education Service for Education and Skills in the event of further grant funding being secured.
  - iii) Undertake all necessary due diligence in relation to any of the additional funding made available, including the authority to enter into future funding agreements with the DfE, and entry into back-to-back contracts with partners as deemed necessary.

### **List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 – Equality and Impact Assessment Form

### **Background papers:**

None

### **Other useful documents:**

None

**Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

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

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title:** Acceptance of Additional £243,953 Grant Allocation from Department for Education (DfE) to Increase the Total Educational Grant to £1.027M

## **1 Context (or background)**

- 1.1** The Adult Education Service has typically received an annual grant agreement for the delivery of education and skills from the Department for Education (DfE).
- 1.2** DfE funded 16-19 Education delivery is an essential part of the region's path to continue building strong communities, offer a good education up to level 2, develop young people with the skills required for employment, and to support our communities and businesses. This funding allocation demonstrates the DfE's commitment to further support educational needs and tackle inequalities through place based integrated service delivery across the city.
- 1.3** These goals align closely to strategic priorities within the One Coventry Plan as well as the Adult Education Service strategic plan 2024-27.
- 1.4** In June 2025 DfE issued an indicative funding allocation statement through the gov.uk document exchange portal. This is to deliver learning programmes for 16 to 19 Education and includes 19-24-year-olds with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs). In addition, the DfE provides grants for Adult Skills provision, Tailored Learning and Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) through an agreed curriculum plan aligned to our strategic priorities (2.3 above). The total grant value for the 2025/26 academic year, was £783,553 (which was consistent with the previous year).
- 1.5** Subsequently, in July 2025 the Adult Education Service received written notification from the DfE for the Education and Skills Condition of Funding Grant, with the intention to grant to the Council a further £243,953 for 16 to 19 Education for the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2026, increasing the total funding grant value for 2025/26 academic year to £1,027,506.
- 1.6** This additional investment will focus on the need for a flexible approach that builds capacity to deliver a broad range of 16 to 19 programmes and learning outcomes i.e. essential skills, study programmes, supported internships, health and well-being and supporting progression into further learning, apprenticeships and/or work.
- 1.7** This additional investment also provides the opportunity to align with other investment e.g. UKSPF, Connect to Work and Youth Trailblazer, and wider programmes such as Work Well and the development of the Get Britain Working Local Plan.

## **2. Context for the Additional Investment**

- 2.1** On 11 September 2024, the government announced the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), which was responsible for funding and regulating education and skills in England, would close on 31 March 2025. Its functions were transferred to the Department for Education (DfE). Bringing the agency's functions back into the DfE, the government aims to create an integrated and responsive approach to education and skills policy.
- 2.2** The House of Commons Library briefing paper, January 2025, identifies that the further education funding system in England is complex and has undergone several changes in recent years. Further education providers are allocated funds from different sources depending on the type of courses they provide and on the age of their students. A

national funding formula is used to calculate the allocation of funding that each provider receives each academic year.

- 2.3** The vast majority of Coventry's young people who are from economically inactive households, live in communities that have the highest levels of deprivation and are experiencing significant disadvantage affecting their educational attainment, health, caring responsibilities or English language development needs. The region continues to see a slight increase in the number of young people, not in employment, education or training (NEET).
- 2.4** Recognising the importance of local employment focused learning programmes for young people offers a response to this challenge and capitalises on the reach of our active partnerships, particularly employers and voluntary and community sector organisations across the city.
- 2.5** The additional investment will enable growth of a delivery team to undertake programme development activities, for younger learners linked to designated employment sectors. These learning programmes increase opportunities to improve numeracy, literacy, English language and digital skills for employment. In turn, this supports good health and wellbeing, creates social capital, builds confidence, improves inclusion and integration, develops key life skills, and prepares learners for employment, apprenticeships and further learning.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1** Options were considered on the use of the additional grant allocation to enable a focussed and flexible approach that builds capacity to deliver a broad range of 16 to 19 programmes and learning outcomes i.e. essential skills, study programmes, supported internships, health and well-being and supporting progression into further learning, apprenticeships and/or work.
- 3.2** It will also provide the opportunity to align with other investment e.g. UKSPF, Connect to Work and Youth Trailblazer, and wider programmes such as Work Well and the development of the Get Britain Working Local Plan.
- 3.3** Failing to accept the additional monies from DfE will have considerable socio and economic impacts on these residents and creating opportunities for positive future life choices.

### **4. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 4.1** In accordance with the Constitution, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Leader of the Council were consulted.

### **5. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 5.2** The DfE has written an urgent request to the service to request that the allocation documentation to accept the monies is signed by no later than 1 October 2025.

## 6. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance

### 6.1 Financial Implications

- 6.1.1 The DFE has awarded Coventry additional grant of £243,953 on top of its existing grant allocation of £783,553 giving a total of £1,027,506. This grant will be invested in the 16-19 Education for the period August 2025-July 2026. There is no match funding requirement by the City Council.

### 6.2 Legal Implications

The grant will be accepted and expended in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Constitution and the recommendations detailed in this report. The Adult Education Service for Education and Skills will work closely with legal services to ensure compliance with the Subsidy Control Regime and to ensure that the required legal documentation is entered into with any delivery partners, as may be necessary.

## 7. Other implications

### 7.1 How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

- 7.1.1 Securing the additional funding from DfE will contribute to the One Coventry's Plan's Vision - **Working together to improve our city and the lives of those who live, work and study here**". The three delivery priorities: Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities; Improving the economic prosperity of the city and regions; Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change. The two enabling priorities: Continued financial sustainability of the Council; Council's role as a partner, enabler and leader.

- 7.1.2 The funding being made available to the Adult Education Service will help to connect Coventry residents with employment and skills opportunities, by enabling them to access the necessary employment and training support available through the wider Employment, Skills and Adult Education initiatives.

### 7.2 How is risk being managed?

- 7.2.1 The Employment, Skills and Adult Education Service has a long track record of delivering externally funded skills, business support and regeneration projects, and the risks associated with this type of work are well understood. For example, there are financial risks such as the failure to deliver output or financial targets, and the risk that this could lead to funding clawback.

### 7.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

- 7.3.1 The principal impact on the organisation will be to secure funding for staff directly employed by the Council working on our funded programmes and employment and skills activities. Successfully securing additional funding for these programmes will

provide funding crucial to retaining highly skilled staff currently working on projects and supporting our residents who otherwise will have limited opportunities.

#### **7.4 Equalities / EIA?**

7.4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as is attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

#### **7.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?**

None

#### **7.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

None

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Ewan Dewar	Head of Finance	Finance and Resources	15 August 25	18 August 25
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Andy Williams	Director - Regeneration and Economy	-	19 August 25	20 August 25
Councillor Dr K Sandhu	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	-	19 August 25	1 September 25

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