

# Briefing Note on Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 2024/25 Tailored Learning Grant Funding – DDM Report

## Decision to be taken

1. **Accept** ESFA funding of £541,660 and enter an agreement to deliver the Tailored Learning programme in academic year 2024/25 (Spend Approval ID 7252)
2. **Extend** existing contracts (Appendix A: Table 1) by £314,000 for a year, in line with the comprehensive procurement undertaken in July 2023
3. **Allocate** £128,025 (Appendix A: Table 2) for NCC project management costs including a Compliance Officer (0.6 FTE), Finance manager (0.1 FTE), Data Manager (0.5 FTE) and Community Family Learning Lead Office (0.8 FTE)
4. **Delegate authority** to the Corporate Director for Growth and City Development to award contracts for 12 months, with the option to extend by a year, subject to NCC receiving the ESFA and devolution AEB outcome.
5. **Allocate** £99,635 (Appendix A: Table 3) to support NCC meeting ESFA contractual requirements and the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, including Management Information System, Information Advice & Guidance, standardised processes, marketing, external audit, celebration and continued professional development of delivery partner staff.
6. **Approve** the Nottingham City Council Fees, Remission and Refund Policy for 2024/2025, (Appendix B)

## Reasons for the Decision(s)

### Purposes of the Funding

NCC has been awarded a contract worth £541,660 from the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) Adult Skills Fund for the delivery of 'Tailored' Adult Learning to eligible Nottingham city residents in Academic Year 2024/25. The Council has been contracted for some 20 years to deliver learning of this type through its Community and Family Learning service, which was rated 'Good' by Ofsted following an inspection in May this year. The service is continuing to drive high expectations and improve the outcomes by overseeing a clear improvement plan.

Funding is provided annually by the ESFA and must be spent by the end of the academic year (July 2025). Not spending the allocation could result in any future funding allocations being significantly reduced or even ended. Spend Approval or this funding has been secured from the Section 151 Officer (SR 7252).

Tailored learning includes both Community and Family Learning, which engage individuals who have no qualifications and are furthest way from the labour market, into first steps learning. In delivering the 'Tailored Learning' contract, NCC will work alongside delivery partners to deliver Family Learning Provision to support different generations of family members to learn separately and /or together and Community Learning that supports unemployed adults or those on low income, with low skills levels and from disadvantaged communities

Family Learning aims to;

- develop the skills and knowledge of both the mother/father/carer and the child participant,
- enable a mother/father/carer to be more active in supporting their children's learning and development and to understand the impact of that support.

Community Learning aims to;

- support and widen participation by improving health, confidence and social wellbeing and improving skills such as financial literacy and communication,
- prepare learners for further training and employment.

Delivering foundational learning (such as Community and Family Learning) is a key action in the Nottingham Growth Plan.

### **Budget for Academic year 2024/25**

The £514,660 budget received from the ESFA for Academic Year 2024/25 is summarised in Appendix A and is detailed below;

#### **1. Staffing (£128,025)**

The budget supports four posts and is the equivalent of 2 FTEs. All posts are existing team members within the Community and Family Learning team. Team members, excluding the project lead, are on fixed term contracts with NCC for the duration of the ESFA contract.

#### **2. Contracted delivery (£314,000)**

Following a full procurement exercise (July 2023), NCC has the opportunity to extend the contract by one year + one year, subject receiving the ESFA funding contract. Funds are allocated via LOTS aligned to the Council Plan priorities. These include: Wider Family Learning, Family English Language & Maths, English Speakers of Other Languages, Personal Development, Digital Skills, Green skills, Health & Wellbeing.

#### **3. Additional delivery costs (£99,635)**

The additional delivery costs arise from mandatory ESFA and Ofsted requirements and will support the service in continuing performance improvement. Costs include training, Continued Professional Development of the workforce aligned to the service quality improvement plan, marketing, management information systems, provision of impartial Information, Advice and Guidance to learners (IAG), tracking learner destinations after programme completion, additional ESOL engagement and celebrating learners success – which is a key measure in the Ofsted framework.

### **Managing Risks**

All partner payments are not purchases but are the reimbursement of actual delivery costs incurred by the delivery partners. Payments are made on actual costs.

The ESFA Supply Chain Fee and Charges Policy is a mandatory policy that the ESFA Accountable Body is required to publish and apply. It is reflected in the Nottingham City Council Fees, Remission and Refund Policy for 2024/2025 (attached as Appendix B). It requires Nottingham City Council to pay partners within 30 days. The service is subject to an annual external audit that will examine whether the payment terms are adhered to.

Delay in payment could mean we haven't met our contractual obligations and we would be in breach of contract with Delivery Partners. It would also cause reputational damage with our delivery partners, and the ESFA & Ofsted which could impact on future funding.

As delivery funding is paid in arrears some of the external delivery partners are small, community organisations. Delays in payment to these organisations would cause them significant issues with cash flow. The City has established funding mechanisms to manage payments to suppliers.

(ENDS)