

**REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY DEPUTY DIRECTOR, CHILDREN, FAMILIES
AND CULTURAL SERVICES****ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING ANNUAL PLAN AND FEES POLICY
2015 /2016****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - 1) report on the Adult and Community Learning Service's (ACLS) delivery and outcomes 2013/14
 - 2) seek approval of the Adult and Community Learning Annual Plan for 2015/16
 - 3) seek approval for expenditure relating to the receipt of an anticipated allocation of £2,145,430 from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to the Adult and Community Learning Service
 - 4) seek approval of the Fees Policy for 2015/16.

Information and Advice**Introduction**

2. The Adult and Community Learning (ACL) Annual Plan sets out the plans for adult and family learning in Nottinghamshire for the period 2015/2016. The Adult and Community Learning Service (ACLS) is funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and in 2014/15 a grant allocation for Community Learning of £2,146,172 was available to plan, manage and deliver learning. It is anticipated that for 2015/16 a very similar grant will be available to fund ACLS. ACLS also uses some non-SFA generated funds to commission work that falls outside the SFA funding rules.
3. The SFA requires the allocation to be used to:
 - maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances
 - promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement
 - maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

4. The overall purpose and objectives for community learning are set by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in the White Paper 'New Challenges, New Chances' and the relevant extract is available as a background paper to this report.
5. The aim of the Nottinghamshire ACL Annual Plan is to deploy the SFA funding to ensure that local people have access to a range of appropriate and flexible learning opportunities that will contribute to their personal, social, educational and economic development and hence contribute to the strategy of Nottinghamshire County Council.
6. The contents of this Plan have been shaped with the involvement of the ACLS Reference Group, other Nottinghamshire County Council Services and external and internal partners particularly through an event 'Shared Dreams, Shared Themes' in November 2014.
7. This Adult and Community Learning Annual Plan:
 - outlines our strategic aims and objectives for adult and community learning and introduces the wider learning offer
 - reports on achievement of targets and outcomes against the adult and community learning objectives for academic year 2013/14 and provides an overview of priorities and targets for 2015/16.

Strategic Aims and Objectives

8. The strategic aims and objectives are as follows:

Aim

To ensure that local people have access to an appropriate range of flexible learning opportunities that contribute to their personal, social, educational and economic development.

Objectives

- Deliver a programme of high quality learning which clearly contributes to the priorities of the County Council (to support safe and thriving communities; support economic growth and employment; provide care and promote health; invest in our future)
- Focus ACLS public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in learning, including people on low incomes, those with low skills and those furthest away from the labour market
- Continue to deliver a universal ACLS programme with access for all and set a fees policy to ensure fees are paid where learners are able to do so
- Widen participation in learning through locally delivered informal learning programmes serving the needs of the diverse communities in the County
- Provide learning opportunities in a wide variety of community venues, focused on deprived areas where learning can make a difference to the life-chances of adults and their families
- Provide Family Learning in partnership with schools and Children's Centres in deprived areas where attainment levels are low
- Grow the capacity of the voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver effective adult learning that meets the quality requirements of Ofsted through funding and supporting niche provision.

Delivering the Objectives

9. In order to achieve the above objectives, we will:

- Commission a Curriculum which will give priority to:
 - Engaging new learners and ensuring they are aware of further learning opportunities
 - Improving confidence and skills to allow people to participate fully in society
 - Moving parents from family learning into English, mathematics and ICT qualifications through active links to college qualification programmes to enable learners to enhance their employability
 - Meeting the needs of those who are unemployed to support their routes to employment
 - Meeting the needs of vulnerable adults, particularly those with learning difficulties/disabilities and those with physical and mental health issues
 - Delivering Family Learning in deprived areas to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of both children and adults and to provide better outcomes for families.
- Commission learning activities under the themes of:
 - Employability* (to build confidence and basic skill for people not supported by Department of Work and Pensions programmes)
 - Health and Social Wellbeing* (to improve physical, emotional and mental health through enjoyable group learning)
 - Family Learning* (to strengthen families and improve the skills of parents to support their children particularly in mathematics and English)
 - Learning Difficulties and Disabilities* (discrete courses to improve the lives through learning of people with learning difficulties and disabilities)
 - Community and Individual Capacity Building* (to build confidence and skills to enable people to shape their own futures or that of their communities)
 - Equality, Inclusion and Citizenship* (to engage communities of interest and minority groups and to allow people to play an active part in wider society).
- Work with partners to develop a curriculum plan, outlining how the identified target groups will be attracted to learning by the courses, times, locations and modes of delivery on offer to meet the priorities outlined above.
- Develop the capacity to directly deliver community learning courses to meet gaps in provision through merging the Adult and Community Learning team with the Skills for Employment team.
- Continue to improve the planning and commissioning of ACLS so that we develop an improved analysis of needs, and are able to improve further the quality of teaching and learning, outcomes for learners and value for money.
- Work with voluntary and community sector organisations and support their application of quality assurance to meet Ofsted requirements.

- Ensure we are on target to achieve an Ofsted inspection outcome of grade 1 'Outstanding'.
- Build capacity in communities to raise awareness of ACLS, enable communities to contribute to identify needs and to increase the potential number of volunteers.
- Increase the number of Learning Champions and ensure their work attracts new learners from target communities and promotes community learning. Commission this aspect of delivery from 2014/15 year.
- Work with partners in Notts Loves Learning (the Community Learning Trust) to move forward the development of the strategy and learning offer for Community Learning across Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City.

Fees Policy 2015/16

10. A consistent Fees Policy is required to ensure that adults within Nottinghamshire are treated equitably by each delivery partner within the ACLS Provider Network. Given the focus of this funding on those with low skills/confidence, along with the current economic climate, it is proposed that the hourly tuition fee of £2.75 should be increased very slightly to £2.80. Providers will continue to be encouraged to use a small proportion of their allocation to deliver activity in areas of less deprivation where participants are less likely to be eligible for fee remission. Family Learning activity remains free of charge in line with national policy. The proposed Fee Policy for 2015/16 is attached as **Appendix 1**.
11. It is proposed that the fee remission categories remain unchanged from the agreed policy for 2014/15.

Delivery and Outcomes 2013/14

12. ACLS operates within academic years so the 2013/14 year is the most recent full set of data.
13. In 2013/14 ACLS achieved 9,571 individual learners against a target of 9,000 and had 15,224 enrolments on 1,887 short courses (mostly under 20 hours). Both the number of learners and the number of enrolments have increased since last year. The percentage of learners who declared themselves as falling into specific categories was: 3.5% Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) learners; 29.5% male; 34.3% disabled and 21% learning difficulty; 21% over 60; and 54.5% concession paying no fees.
14. Overall achievement rates in ACLS provision in 2013-14 were good at 85.8% and was very good in Family Learning (90.4%). BME achievement is an area to improve for 2015/16 whilst participation and achievement are as expected for the other specific groups.
15. ACLS contracts out its learning having funding agreements with a wide range of organisations. These include four Colleges of Further Education, the WEA East Midlands, and an Academy Trust which manages adult learning provision from two campuses. The number of providers decreased again in 2013-14 to 38 with five fewer than in 2012/13, although the number of courses was 90 higher.

16. The Service aims to recruit learners from the most deprived areas of Nottinghamshire and set a target for 2013-14 for 73% of learners to come from the top 250 most deprived super output areas. The end of year figure showed that 69.4% of learners came from the top 250 most deprived areas which is 2% lower than the previous year and is being addressed through closer monitoring of provision in 2014/15.
17. There was a wide subject offer with learners in each of the 16 separate Sector Subject Areas (SSAs) although courses were predominantly in SSA 14 Preparation for Life and Work (2,981 learners) and SSA 9 Arts, Media and Publishing (1,714 learners). The table at **Appendix 2** (Summary Table 2013/14 Learners and Enrolments by Sector Subject Area (SSA)) shows the distribution across the SSAs plus the number of learners in provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD).

The Wider Learning Offer

18. In October 2014 the ACLS and the Skills for Employment (SFE) service were brought under the Team Manager Library and Community Learning and will be formally merged in a new structure from 1 August 2015.
19. SFE has 23 full-time tutors who have some capacity to deliver courses to adults in addition to the Education Funding Agency funded qualification Study Support Programmes for young people 16 to 19 years old. SFE tutors will be delivering a small but increasing amount of adult learning from academic year 2015/16 to reduce the costs of community learning and to fill gaps in commissioned provision. As this is not expected to fill all gaps, additional casual tutors will be recruited from 2015 as needed.
20. Within the Library service a vibrant offer of adult and family learning is scheduled each year. A pilot in 2014 where there was a charge for Astronomy courses demonstrated that people are willing to pay for some of these activities. For the 2015/16 financial year this pilot will be extended and market testing of a range of courses will be used as a foundation to plan income-generating courses from April 2016 as part of the offer from the new arm's length operating model.
21. SFA funding rules limit Community Learning funding to non-accredited courses or accredited courses not funded under other SFA funding streams. Recognising the barriers for some adults in joining a course within a college, ACLS is identifying unmet accredited learning needs and developing an accredited offer funded through other sources.
22. A new Commissioning Bid Panel will be set up to assess the bids for 2015/16 delivery of community learning. The Panel will have ACLS managers plus two members of the ACLS Reference Group and will work to ensure rigor and transparency in the consideration and awarding of bids.

Other Options Considered

23. None.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

24. The recommendations are made to ensure effective spend of the SFA grant against relevant government and Nottinghamshire County Council priorities and to set a fair Fees Policy.

Statutory and Policy Implications

25. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

26. The anticipated SFA grant figure for the period 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2016 is £2,145,430 and it is expected that this will be fully utilised delivering the services as set out in the report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) the Adult and Community Learning Service's delivery and outcomes for 2013/14 be noted
- 2) the Adult and Community Learning Annual Plan for 2015/16 be approved
- 3) the expenditure of the anticipated grant allocation from the Skills Funding Agency against the priorities identified be approved
- 4) the Fees Policy for 2015/16 be approved.

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Constitutional Comments (SMG 13/02/15)

27. The proposals in this report fall within the remit of this Committee. The Committee has responsibility for adult learning under its Terms of Reference which are set out in the County Council's Constitution.

Financial Comments (SS 06/02/15)

28. The financial implications of the report are set out in paragraphs 10 and 26 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Extract from 'New Challenges, New Chances: Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan – Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, December 2011 (page 14)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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