
REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	15 September 2016
Subject:	Adult Learning Strategy
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Michael Lockwood, Chief Executive
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Sue Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Community, Culture and Resident Engagement
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Adult Learning Strategy 2016-18

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out an Adult Learning Strategy outlining the key adult and community learning priorities for the London Borough of Harrow for the next two years to take account of national changes in policy and funding.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

Agree that the Adult Learning Strategy 2016-18 is circulated for consultation to internal and external partners and stakeholders, providers and service users and future findings are adopted, following the Chief Executive's consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community, Culture and Resident Engagement.

Reason: (For recommendations)

There are national changes in the funding, delivery and external inspection of Adult and Community Learning, including moves to a devolved Adult Education Budget for London by 2018. The Adult and Community Learning Service should have in place a strategy that sets out key adult learning priorities for the next two years.

Section 2 – Report

2.1 Introductory paragraph

- 2.1.1 The Adult Learning Strategy aims to secure the delivery of an accessible and high quality learning programme that is aligned with local and regional priorities and has a positive impact on health, well being, social inclusion, and employability.
- 2.1.2 The adoption of the Strategy will help the Council achieve its vision set out in the Harrow Ambition Plan 2020 by protecting the vulnerable and supporting families.

2.2 Options considered

- 2.1 A revised Strategy is required to set out the key adult and community learning priorities for the London Borough of Harrow for the next two years to take account of national changes in policy and funding, of regional and local priorities and of local economic and demographic changes. Therefore Cabinet is recommended to agree that the Adult Learning Strategy 2016-18 is circulated for consultation and future adoption as the planning framework for programme delivery over the next 2 years.

2.3 Current situation

- 2.3.1 Harrow Council receives provision for Adult and Community Learning through the Adult and Community & Learning Service, with funding through the Skills Funding Agency (SfA). The framework for the Service's objectives, aims and actions was included within the Community Learning Strategy 2013-15, approved by Cabinet in March 2014.

2.4 Why a change is needed

- 2.4.1 A revised Strategy is required to set out the key adult and community learning priorities for the London Borough of Harrow for the next two years to take account of national changes in policy and funding, of regional and local priorities and of local economic and demographic changes. Over the period of this Strategy the government is intending to transfer control of a revised Adult Education Budget (AEB) to local government areas through devolution agreements. It is intended that this will enable local authority services, colleges and other training organisations to reshape their local adult education provision and align with local and regional priorities.
- 2.4.2 The main drivers for this revised Strategy are:

- Introduction of a new Adult Education Budget (AEB) that combines SFA funding, which was previously separated for funding the delivery of qualifications and of non-accredited community learning.
- The priorities for learning and skills as set out in the Harrow Ambition Plan 2020 and the West London Vision for Growth
- The Area Reviews for post-16 Education and Training Organisations and the London Review of Adult and Community Learning (ACL) that aim to fundamentally review learning and skills provision across London
- The transition to full adult skills devolution by 2018-19

2.5 Implications of the Recommendation

Resources, costs

2.5.1 The Adult and Community Learning Service is externally funded by the Skills Funding Agency and the Adult Learning Strategy outlines the rationale for delivery against funding. Additional external project funding will also be sought during the lifetime of the Strategy.

Staffing/workforce

2.5.2 Approximately 30% of delivery is direct delivery through a pool of sessional tutors. The Service has recruited additional staff to meet changes in the curriculum and enable a greater emphasis on functional skills and employability skills. The recruitment has been made within the budget. In 2013 the Service introduced a Commissioning model with a 4 year Framework of preferred providers who submit proposals for the majority of delivery using the providers' own staff against an annually revised Prospectus. The Commissioning model will be revised with Procurement for effect from August 2017

2.6 Performance Issues

2.6.1 The Adult Learning Strategy sets out the framework for delivery of anticipated annual enrolments of around 4500 users. The proposed actions include working with the Xcite team to provide employability skills, functional skills and language skills for residents seeking employment and developing links with the Together with Families programme to increase the number of identified families accessing pathways to training and employment.

2.6.2 The Adult Community and Family Learning Service returns learner data to the Skills Funding Agency. KPIs include enrolment numbers, success rates and retention rates. Annual success rates are currently reported on the Regeneration and Planning Scorecard and will remain as performance indicators.

2.6.3 The Service is also subject to external inspection by Ofsted, which expects priorities for delivery to be identified in a Strategy linked to local and regional priorities.

2.7 Environmental Implications

2.7.1 There is no specific environmental impact associated with this report

2.8 Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

2.8.1 The risks identified with these proposals are:

- **Future external funding for adult and community learning jeopardised by failure to deliver anticipated learner numbers.** There are planned phases of commissioning new programmes at later stages in the year and for direct delivery to increase the volume of delivery if necessary.
- **External funding through Adult Education Budget at risk through plans for budget devolution to London by 2018.** The Adult and Community Learning Service is part of a London area review of ACL that aims to establish the future strategic direction of ACL provision and develop recommendations for the commissioning and delivery of this provision in London post-devolution.
- **Poor grading in an external Ofsted inspection that could jeopardise future funding.** Risks around quality assurance are addressed through a Quality Improvement Plan that sits alongside the Adult Learning Strategy

2.9 Legal Implications

2.9.1 A function of Local Authorities under the Education Act 1996 is to provide opportunities for the education of adults. The arrangements for securing and/or delivering the education provision are the decision of the local authority. The proposals set out in the Adult Learning Strategy will support the delivery of the Local Authority's functions in relation to adult learning.

2.10 Financial Implications

2.10.1 The Adult, Community and Family Learning Service is fully funded via the Skills Funding Agency. Current baseline funding for academic year 2016/17 is £665436. The commissioning process includes a Pound Plus approach to maximise additional income (i.e. seeking to generate additional income or value over and above the core funding). Providers generate additional income above the core funding through a variable fee policy and collecting fee income where possible. The Prospectus issued to those on the Framework of Preferred Providers requires providers to raise fee income where possible, with full fee at the provider's discretion and concessions for those receiving a set range of benefits. Any fee income is used to lower the subsidy from the core funding.

2.10.2 Over the next two years the intention is that the Adult Education Budget (AEB) from the Skills Funding Agency will be devolved to the London Region, with a subsequent system of commissioning as yet to be decided. The Adult Learning Strategy seeks to position the Service in order to access future funding.

2.10.3 Although there is some uncertainty around future funding allocation under devolution agreements, the funding for 2016-17 has been confirmed and it is anticipated that no significant changes will be made to that for 2017-18. Therefore the delivery of priorities set out in the Strategy covering the period 2016 to 2018 can be met from the external funding.

2.11 Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

2.11.1 Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? Yes

2.12 Council Priorities

2.12.1 The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

The report incorporates the administration's priorities of:

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for communities
- Making a difference for local businesses
- Making a difference for families.

2.12.2 The aims and actions of the Adult Learning Strategy incorporates the following priorities:

Protecting the Most Vulnerable and Supporting Families

- Building on the Harrow Active Minds project with Mind in Harrow to deliver and evaluate community learning programmes for adults with mild to moderate mental health problems
- Securing through the Community Learning Provider Framework a range of adult learning programmes delivered by organisations working with the most vulnerable, including mental health service users and adults with learning difficulties and disabilities
- Delivering Functional Skills English and Maths programmes and English language programmes in schools to parents with the aim of improving pupil achievement as well as parents' skills
- Delivering learning programmes through providers such as Relate and HOPE to support targeted families and develop employability skills

Building a Better Harrow

- Deliver Community Learning programmes targeted at those disadvantaged and furthest from learning and/or the workplace

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jessie Man	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 3 August 2016		
Name: Sarah Inverary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 11 August 2016		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO, as it impacts on all Wards
EqIA carried out:	YES
EqIA cleared by:	Dave Corby Chair of the Directorate Equality Task Group – Regeneration and Planning

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Geoff Trodd, Service Manager, Telephone 0208 416 8805
geoff.trodd@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: Adult Learning Strategy 2016-18 (see enclosure)

**Call-In Waived by the
Chair of Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]