

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	16 February 2006
Subject:	Adult & Community Learning Scrutiny review
Responsible Officer:	Director of Learning & Community Development
Contact Officer:	Geoff Trodd
Portfolio Holder:	Education and Lifelong Learning
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part I

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

1. To approve the report and recommendations of the scrutiny review group

Reason for report

To provide Cabinet with the findings of the Scrutiny Review group and enable Cabinet to approve the recommendations

Benefits

The provision of an adult and community learning service impacts across all of the Council's priorities and particularly Strengthening Harrow's Communities, a True Learning Community and Impacting Through Partnerships. The review contributes to the achievement of these priorities by considering the future shape of the service and by ensuring the services provided reflect local need.

Cost of Proposals

1. The recommendations on re-branding of the adult and community learning

- service, including the web-site, and of developing a communications plan with the Communications Unit, have a cost implication
2. The future direction of the Service may mean less reliance on LSC funding and accessing other means of supporting provision, particularly that for Personal and Community Development Learning

Risks

If a decision is not reached on the recommendations this could result in a reduced opportunity to influence the future development of the Council's adult and community learning service

Implications if recommendations rejected

If the recommendations are rejected the opportunity for the Council to enable a viable and responsive adult and community learning service to meet the major changes in the planning and funding of provision will be diminished

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

At its meeting on 19 April 2005 the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee agreed to undertake a review of the Council's adult and community learning service, with a particular focus on models of delivery and fee levels.

Nationally there are major changes planned in the funding and planning of adult and community learning provision by the Government and the Learning and Skills Council. These include a reduction in funding for 2006/7 for much of adult learning, a future national redistribution of funding and the construction of a national framework for Personal Development learning

This report explores the way in which the adult and community learning service should respond to these challenges, in particular in the areas of fees and concessions and in communications. The report also considers how the service and Harrow Council can consider future direction in order to ensure it can best meet the needs of local people. The key issue is how to fund provision that will fall outside of the framework of the Learning and Skills Council but provide services that local people can benefit from in order to make Harrow a true learning community.

2.2 Options considered

The Scrutiny Panel looked at a number of other providers, including those within London West, to benchmark Harrow ACL's provision

2.3 Consultation

Consultation with learners was undertaken through visits by the Scrutiny Panel to a number of classes and through a learner survey distributed via classes and put on the Council web site. Three learners were also co-opted to the Scrutiny Panel.

2.4 Financial Implications

The recommendations, including the re-branding of the service in publicity material and web site, have short to medium term financial implications. The future direction of ACL will also have possible long-term financial implications. These financial implications are not currently included within the medium term budget strategy.

2.5 Legal Implications

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires local authorities to provide adult and community learning services.

The Constitution (Overview and Scrutiny Rule 16) provides for the Executive to consider a report of the scrutiny review group and to determine recommendations thereon.

2.6 Equalities Impact

The Adult and Community Learning Service collects and monitors Equality and Diversity Impact Measures to inform future planning. Its role in widening participation is explored in this report

2.7 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

No specific implications. Continuing to have high levels of participation in learning contributes to Safer Communities

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Appendix 1 - Report considered by the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Su-Committee (circulated in the Cabinet Supporting Documents Pack)

Appendix 2 – Reference from the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee (circulated separately)