

Meeting:	Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Date:	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2006
Subject:	Adult & Community Learning Scrutiny Review
Responsible Officer:	Director of Learning & Community Development
Contact Officer:	Geoff Trodd
Portfolio Holder:	Bill Stephenson
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

## **Section 1: Summary**

### **Decision Required**

To receive an interim update from Adult Community & Family Learning (ACFL) to the recommendations of the Lifelong Learning (LL) Scrutiny Panel Review on Adult and Community Learning

### **Reason for report**

An interim report was requested by the LL Scrutiny Panel.

### **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 recommendations of the review contribute to the achievement of these priorities by considering the future shape of the service and by ensuring the services

provided reflect local need. The response and intended actions of the ACL Service seek to ensure that the service can develop in order to best meet the needs of local people and communities in the future

### **Cost of Proposals**

1. The indicative allocation from the LSC shows a reduction in the ACL budget of around 7% for 2006/7. Effects on delivery are being minimised by a range of measures set out in the response
2. The recommendation on re-branding of the adult and community learning service, including the web-site, have a costing of around £12k that cannot be met from current budgets.
3. The recommendation on developing a higher profile link from the council web-site has a cost implication currently being discussed with the Communications Unit
4. 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
5. The reduction of the LSC budget requires an increase in fees at a sustainable and competitive rate. Fees for 2006/7 have been set accordingly. There will be a consultation before fees and concessions for 2007/8 are set

### **Risks**

The risks to Personal and Community Development Learning is high as the priorities set for the LSC are changed. Further changes are due to national and regional priorities and funding..

### **Implications if response to recommendations rejected**

This is an opportunity for the Sub Committee to help shape the actions being taken to improve the services to local residents.

## **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. The final report was presented at Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

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

The report explored 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 considered 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.

The response sets out proposed actions in order to take the recommendations forward.

## 2.2 Options considered

Appendix A outlines the actions and options considered against each recommendation.

## 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. The response sets out further consultation over 2006/7 on levels of fees and concessions. Consultations take place regularly with providers and stakeholders through existing forums. The Learning & Skills Council is the major funding body and is consulted on any change in direction to the ACL service.

## 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.

## 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 A Response from ACFL to the recommendations of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel

**Background Documents:**

Response by Harrow ACL Service to the recommendations of the Report of the Scrutiny Review Group on Adult and Community Learning in Harrow