

**TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER for CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING
18 MARCH 2014**

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR COMMUNITY LEARNING FOR 2013-2014
Head of Community Learning and Skills**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Development Plan for Community Learning and Skills for approval by the Executive Member as a basis for receiving grant funding from the Skills Funding Agency in the academic year 2013-2014. The report has been delayed due to a changeover in key officers.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The Executive Member approves the Development Plan for Community Learning and Skills 2013-2014 as the basis for receiving funding from the Skills Funding Agency.**
- 2.2 **The Executive Member approves the model of three year strategic Development Plans plus an annual Delivery Plan in subsequent years.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To obtain agreement to the Development Plan for the delivery of learning opportunities to the community for 2013-2014.
- 3.2 To approve a medium term approach for strategy and delivery documents for future years.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 This plan reflects the contractual requirements issued by the Skills Funding Agency as a basis for claiming funding and therefore there are no alternative options.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Skills Funding Agency Funding

The planning, provision, management and quality assurance of Community Learning and Skills in Bracknell Forest is funded by the Skills Funding Agency under an annual contract secured by negotiated targets for learner outcomes.

For the academic year 2013-2014, there has been a change in funding arrangements with almost 25% of the funding dependent on eligible learners remaining on courses and achieving qualifications. For previous years, nearly all the funding was made available in terms of a grant.

The Skills Funding Agency has allocated £500,513 to fund the activity described in this plan. This is paid by a flat monthly profile. £378,295 is a Community Learning grant income and £122,218 relates to an Adults Skills Budget dependent upon eligible learners remaining on courses and achieving qualifications. The Community Learning grant is technically subject to unspecified year-end claw-back for unspecified shortfalls in delivery, although it is more likely that the outcome of under-delivery will be a reduced grant in 2014-2015. The Adults Skills Budget is very specifically linked to specified performance known as formula-funding. This element

of the funding is very clearly subject to claw-back if the Skills Funding Agency targets are not met.

The Adult Skills Budget provision represents a different way of working, with greatly increased emphasis on the delivery of qualifications to eligible learners. It is important to recognise that it is possible that targets may not be met during this first year of operation because of fundamental changes to delivery mechanisms. If this is the case, there will be a corresponding under-spend on the marginal costs associated with course delivery. There is also some scope for overhead costs to be re-allocated from the Adult Skills Budget to the Community Learning budget and there is also some scope to reduce the rental income paid to the Open Learning Centre.

5.2 Community Learning Trust

In December 2011 the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published the New Challenges, New Chances Investment Statement which set out revised plans for the future of adult learning which include the formation of community learning trusts. The Community Learning Trust covering the Bracknell Forest area will involve the Council, Wokingham Council, Bracknell and Wokingham College and other relevant parties collaborating to plan and coordinate the provision funded by the Skills Funding Agency. The mechanism for this collaboration will be in place for the next academic year. This plan paves the way for this new way of working.

5.3 The basis of this plan

Given the time period relevant to this plan, no material changes have been made to the 2012-2013 Development Plan. The recommendations from the Family Learning Strategy (published April 2013) and the recommendations of the Ofsted report (December 2012) have been added.

This plan has been designated as a transitional plan for the academic year 2013-2014. It is proposed that a new three year strategic Development Plan, with an annual Delivery Plan be introduced from 2014-2015 onwards. This will facilitate longer terms plans and prompt strategic direction specifically aligned to the Council's medium term objectives.

5.4 Three year strategic development plan model

Although the Skills Funding Agency contract is on an annual basis, it is important to have a longer term strategy in place in order to:

- i) examine and detail the rationale for the Council contracting directly with the Skills Funding Agency rather than withdraw its involvement thus relying on other agencies to provide community learning
- ii) research and analyse the longer term requirements for community learning in the Bracknell Forest area, together with trends in delivery methods
- iii) provide focus for more cost-effective methods of delivery which require longer term plans in place in order to achieve the necessary outcomes.

For these reasons a model of a three year development plan has been recommended. Annual delivery plans will ensure that focus and momentum is maintained on a year-to-year basis.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1 The Borough Solicitor notes the contents of this report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that the grant allocation from the Skills Funding Agency is sufficient to meet the activities in the Development Plan and that processes will be put into place to adequately reduce expenditure if it seems likely that the grant funding will be reduced.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The plan seeks to achieve the best possible outcomes for any adult who is receiving a service, taking into account all factors related to ethnicity, religion, language, culture and disability. The provision of services made through the plan will be monitored by officers using the learner data collected. A full EIA was completed for the academic year 2012 – 2013.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 There is a financial risk of not meeting the Skills Funding Agency targets and that funding is clawed back at the end of the academic year. Regular financial forecasts will be put in place which will be reviewed as part of the monthly financial monitoring and remedial action taken as appropriate.

This plan must support the objectives for Community Learning and Skills and ensure provision matches the needs and aspirations of learners and the community.

All data and information related to the delivery of this service remains the property of the Council and is held in a secure and transferable form.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action and the Community Cohesion Group were consulted with regard to adult learning in 2012-2013. This current plan has not changed the nature of the provision and further consultation has not taken place for this academic year.
- 7.2 The Learner Forum and adult learning tutors were consulted on planned provision for the academic year 2011-2012. The nature of the provision has not changed since then and no further consultation has taken place.

Method of Consultation

- 7.3 Discussion and working groups

Representations Received

- 7.4 None

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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