

**CABINET  
FRIDAY 22 MARCH 2002 AT 2.00PM**

**SUBJECT: ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING PLAN 2002-2003**

*Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families*

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**1. Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek the agreement of the Cabinet to the draft Adult and Community Learning Plan 2002/03, prior to submission of the Plan to County Council for approval on 26 March 2002, and report on the progress to date of the Adult and Community Learning Plan for 2001/2002. Proposals are made as to how adult and community learning can be developed in the future on which the Cabinet's views are sought.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 The report provides a brief summary of how adult and community learning has developed over the last few years. It explains how the funding regime has changed and the current two-year LSC funding guarantee for local authorities.
- 2.2 The progress on the Adult and Community Learning Plan for 2001/02 is described, together with how the issues which have arisen are being addressed.
- 2.3 The key elements of the draft Adult and Community Learning Plan for 2002/03 are set out, showing how these align with the Learning and Skills Council's funding priorities.
- 2.4 Lastly the report summarises issues for the future in relation to Adult and Community Learning and the role of the local authority.
- 2.5 A report on this subject was considered by the Strategy Panel on 8 March 2002. Comments from the Panel will be reported separately.
- 2.6 The full draft of the Adult and Community Learning Plan will be circulated to Members separately as soon as it is available.

### **3. Conclusions**

The Adult and Community Learning Plan 2001/02 reflects the move to a new and more appropriate curriculum for adult learners in Hertfordshire who have not traditionally engaged in learning. The Plan for 2002/2003 reflects local authority and Learning and Skills Council priorities.

Cabinet is asked to:

- i) Endorse the draft Adult and Community Learning Plan for 2002/03 and recommend it to Council for approval.
- ii) Approve the action points set out in Appendix 4
- iii) Consider the future role of the local authority in relation to Adult and Community Learning.

### **Background**

#### **4. Adult Learning and The Learning and Skills Act 2000.**

- 4.1 The nature of adult education has undergone substantial changes over the last decade. When the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) was established in 1992 it took responsibility from local education authorities for funding courses in colleges and other institutions which led to a qualification. These were called 'Schedule 2' courses. The LEA retained responsibility for 'Non-Schedule 2' courses or non-vocational education. These were courses which ranged from floristry, craft work and French and Spanish for beginners to yoga and keep fit classes.
- 4.2 In Hertfordshire Non-Schedule 2 courses have been primarily delivered by the four colleges of education, the University of Hertfordshire and the Worker's Educational Association. This compares with other LEAs which had separate colleges for Non-Schedule 2 provision. When the colleges left the LEA, the LEA continued to fund them for Non-Schedule 2 provision by means of a contract. Since 1992 the contract has been adjusted and now the colleges run the courses on a self financing basis with the LEA subsidising only those on means-tested benefits at a cost of £147,000.00 per annum.
- 4.3 In addition to this charge the government's 'Learning Age' Green Paper, published in 1998, emphasised the importance of life-long learning for all, with learning as the key to prosperity. This has resulted in adult learning providers reviewing their adult education programmes. This has led to a move away from the traditional adult education programmes to more basic skills and 'first rung' learning opportunities devised for adults who are not attracted to learning. In addition increased ICT provision is being made available to respond to the demands of a more technological society.
- 4.4 The Learning and Skills Act 2000 triggered further changes. The Act replaced the FEFC and the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) and provided for the establishment of a Learning and Skills Council (LSC) from April 2001. The 'Non-Schedule 2' courses became known as 'Adult and Community

Learning'(ACL). The LSC now funds all ACL provision, through contracts between local LSCs and the local authority.

4.5 In Hertfordshire the majority of ACL programmes continue to be secured by the Authority through contracts with the four further education colleges. The LEA acts primarily as an enabler and contributor to adult and community learning. It is not a major direct provider. Therefore the authority's overall aim for adult and community learning is 'to contribute to the provision of local opportunities for adults to learn and develop through life' (ACL Plan 2001/2002). The Authority seeks to achieve this in a number of ways:

- a) By using County Council resources to support the development of learning opportunities.
- b) By using County Council accommodation as the venues where local learning opportunities that are accessible to local people can be provided by the authority and others.
- c) Through securing learning provision for those groups not catered for by other post-19 providers.
- d) By securing access to basic and key skills for those that are least skilled or qualified.
- e) By developing and extending family learning opportunities.

4.6 The Secretary of State provided a guarantee that, from 1 April 2001 until the end of the academic year 2002/03, the LSC would give each local authority a level of funding comparable to net expenditure in 1998/99 on adult education under the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), providing contracting conditions remained the same. This guarantee is conditional upon LEAs producing and implementing satisfactory ACL plans. Whilst the Secretary of State has not yet extended the guarantee of funding beyond 2002/03, both the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the LSC see continuing LEA involvement in ACL as vital. This is not simply as managers of local contracts, but as local strategic partners with an in-depth knowledge of their communities and experience of meeting the needs of local people.

## **5. The Adult and Community Learning Plan 2001/02**

This section of the report sets out the ACL funding and the authority's Local ACL Funding Agreement with the LLSC. It goes on to describe the progress in delivering the Plan for 2001/02.

### **5.1 ACL Funding for 2001/02**

There are two funding streams for the ACL Plan 2001/02:

- a) The core budget, the total allocation for which for the first period of the guarantee, 1 April 2001 to 31 July 2002, was £2,290,215. This funding stream covers the following expenditure:
  - 'Notional' allocations to those individual HCC internal providers who are assigned to ACL provision (these include the Youth Service, Countryside Management, Adult Care

- Services' Day Centres, Community Information/libraries and ACL and family learning programmes in schools)
  - Concessionary fees for students eg unemployed, disabled people who attend the wide range of non-vocational courses run by the four further education colleges and the University of Hertfordshire
  - Programmes run by the Worker's Educational Association (WEA)
  - Oaklands College provision for those with profound and compound learning difficulties
- b) A Standards Fund component of £202,938. This strand funds the development work required to deliver the Plan.

## 5.2 **The Local Funding Agreement for 2001/2002**

The local LSC is required to draw up a Local Funding Agreement with the local authority for the period of the Plan. This comprises the target figures for learner numbers for each of the terms of the plan and a set of locally agreed performance indicators and targets. The agreement for the period April 2001 to July 2002 is attached at Appendix 1.

## 5.3. **The Adult and Community Learning Plan 2001/02**

The Plan for the first year covers the 16-month period 1 April 2001 to July 2002. It is divided into a number of sections, which include:

- The LEA's rationale for spending
- How coherence will be achieved across the county
- How quality of provision will be managed
- How learning will be made accessible to students
- How the delivery of programmes will be managed and monitored

These sections are set out in Appendix 2. The next part of the report describes progress on the Plan to date.

## 5.4 **Progress against targets**

The actual number of learners in 2000/01 was 11,235. The forecast figure for 2001/02 has been set at 15,735. The current estimate of out-turn is 13,590. The main reasons for the shortfall are:

- The need for a revised, downward target for WEA numbers
- Slow start-up of Standards Fund strand

Progress against targets for each provider is set out in tabular form in Appendix 3 with action to address shortfalls where appropriate.

## **6. LSC Requirements and The Adult and Community Learning Plan 2002/03**

- 6.1 The Plan for 2001/2002 was agreed with the DfES. The Plan for 2002/2003 is the first opportunity for planning to be carried out in conjunction with the local LSC. The Plan must contribute to what the local LSC is seeking to achieve through its strategic plan.
- 6.2 The full Adult and Community Learning Plan must be submitted to the local LSC by 28<sup>th</sup> March 2002. Please find attached a summary of the final plan at Appendix 4. It highlights the key elements and the staffing implications for the local authority. The full draft of the Plan will be circulated to Members as soon as it is available.

## **7. Preparation for Future Funding Arrangements**

- 7.1 After 2002/2003 the LSC's local authority guarantee of funding for Adult & Community Learning ends. We will need to consider in discussion with the LSC what future ACL provision will look like.
  - 7.1.1 CSF will wish to ensure that its plans for local preventative strategies, introducing 'extended schools' and rolling out Diversity Pathfinder programmes in Specialist Schools are supported by its ACL plans. There is scope for clearly aligning ACL with these initiatives and maximising the opportunities they afford for involving larger numbers of parents and carers in their children's learning, as well as raising the educational achievements of both children and adults in provision such as family learning.
  - 7.1.2 A common funding approach is being developed by the LSC for all sectors of post-16 provision. The aim is that by 2003/04 the adult and community learning sector will be funded on the same principles as other sectors. The local authority will need to examine the impact this may have on its ACL funding in the future.
  - 7.1.3 As part of the common funding approach it is envisaged that adult learners will continue to make a substantial contribution to the costs of their learning where they are able to do so. Public funding will be available to encourage providers to offer and increase first rung learning opportunities to disadvantaged learners at no or low cost. The authority may wish to review its concessionary policy in the light of this guidance.
  - 7.1.4. The authority is currently exploring a range of outreach and community based provision delivered by colleges, voluntary and community organisations and local authority services such as Adult Care Services. The LSC will be considering how it might support such development work in the future. The local authority will need to be clear about its strategic objectives in this respect so that it can maximise any support the LSC has to offer.
- 7.2 In conclusion the future for ACL and the local authority role will be underpinned by a number of principles:

- The extent to which the local authority sees itself as a key player in adult and lifelong learning in the county
- The ability of the Authority to integrate ACL into its existing policies, for instance Out of School Hours Learning and Parenting Strategies
- The place the authority perceives ACL has in community strategies
- The extent of growth in family learning which is envisioned for Hertfordshire schools

It is suggested that a report be brought to a future Strategy Panel which sets out proposals for a way forward following discussions with the LSC on the above issues.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The local authority funding application to the LSC submitted in December 2001 totals £2,267,278. The authority will continue to provide a matched funding element equivalent to Standards Fund in 2001/02 - £202,938.
- 8.2 A provisional LSC allocation of £215,918 has been received for Minor Works and Disability Discrimination Act 1995/Special Educational Needs Disabilities Act compliance. Information from the LSC on allocations for Family Learning and Management Information Systems/Infrastructure is expected in March 2002.

## **Background Papers**

- 4 *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: a framework for consultation (June 2000)*
- 4 *Thematic Review of Local Education Authority Adult Learning Plans (May 2002)*
- 4 *The Learning and Skills Council: Strategic Priorities (letter from David Blunkett to Bryan Sanderson) (9 November 2000)*
- 4 *Common Inspection Framework - for Inspecting Post-16 Education and Training (February 2001)*
- 4 *The Council's National Framework for Reviewing the Performance of Providers - a briefing document (September 2002)*
- 4 *Continuous Improvement in the Quality of Provision and Learners Performance Post-16 - Guide for Providers on Self-Assessment (October 2001)*
- 4 *Skills for Life: Adult Basic Skills Strategy*
- 4 *Secretary of State's Guarantee Letter (December 1999)*
- 4 *This is set out in the LSC Circular 01/13: Post-16 Funding Arrangements for 2002/03 issued in October 2001.*