

## **Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 21 June 2023**

### **Community Learning Ofsted Inspection and Accountability Agreement 2023-2024**



**Councillor Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills said,**

“Our Community Learning Service provides an excellent service to thousands of people across the county and fully deserved to receive a Good Ofsted rating.

“It recognises the hard work and dedication of our staff and learning providers in the delivery of the courses which make a real difference to people’s lives.

“The inspection provides us with the assurance that we are providing a quality service to our learners and has also helped us identify ways in which we can further develop and improve our provision.

“Now we are using the findings in the report to set out our plan for the service for the coming year in the accountability agreement, including key aims, targets and outcomes that demonstrate our contribution to local skills needs.”

#### **Report Summary:**

The report provides a detailed overview of the outcome of a recent Ofsted inspection, demonstrating how the Service contributes to Staffordshire County Council’s (the Council) vision and priorities. The Service strives to continue to improve the lives of Staffordshire residents and the local economy by providing a range of lifelong learning opportunities and is presenting an annual accountability statement for approval.

#### **Recommendations**

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. commends the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection and the contribution to Staffordshire priorities,

b. and approves the accountability statement for the 2023-2024 academic year.



## **Cabinet – Wednesday 21 June 2023**

### **Community Learning Ofsted Inspection and Accountability Agreement 2023-2024**

#### **Recommendations of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills**

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. commends the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection and the contribution to Staffordshire priorities,
- b. and approves the accountability statement for the 2023-2024 academic year.

#### **Local Member Interest:**

N/A

#### **Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills**

##### **Reasons for Recommendations:**

1. The Council receives funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for Community Learning through the Adult Education Skills Budget to provide training and education to Staffordshire residents. The Council is responsible for the delivery of commissioned provision as the Lead Provider.
2. The purpose of Community Learning is to improve the lives of Staffordshire residents and the local economy by providing a range of lifelong learning opportunities. The acquisition of knowledge and skills is a key component of strategies to improve health, reduce dependence, increase economic prosperity, address inequality and realise our aspirations for a better future.
3. Community Learning is predominantly commissioned to a range of local providers including schools, colleges, third sector organisations and local community groups, with a small proportion delivered by the Council's Direct Delivery Unit. Learning is delivered via four (4) main strands of delivery:
  - a. Community Learning Framework (2019 – 2023),
  - b. Community Learning Trust Responsiveness Fund,
  - c. Wider Family Learning Grants for Schools,

d. and Direct Delivery (non-accredited and accredited Adult Skills).

4. In 2017 Ofsted undertook a 'short' inspection of the Service which received a 'good' rating against the Common Inspection Framework.
5. In 2019, Ofsted introduced the Education Inspection Framework (EIF), which evaluates the overall effectiveness of education. Ofsted carried out a 'full' inspection of the Service, 31st January to 2nd February 2023.
6. Ofsted inspectors were assisted by the Head of Adult Learning and Skills, as Nominee and the quality team. Inspectors took account of the Service's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders and examining documentation and records. Key judgements were applied as follows:

a. <b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
b. The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
c. Personal development	<b>Good</b>
d. Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
e. Safeguarding	<b>Effective</b>

### **Service contribution to the Council priorities**

7. Participation in lifelong learning provides opportunities to develop skills, confidence, motivation, and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds, supports individuals to progress towards formal learning or employment and to improve their health and well-being, including mental health.
8. The Community Learning 2021-2022 self-assessment report was presented to the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 and reported the Service successfully engaged 2,791 Staffordshire residents in community learning programmes, demonstrating good use of public funding by delivering programmes to adults who would most benefit from learning as identified by our targets for learner demographics.
9. Approximately 50% of enrolments came from learners who live in the targeted wards with most of the commissioned Providers attracting at least 30% of such enrolments, and many significantly higher.

10. Approximately 55% of enrolments were from learners whose highest qualification is below a Level 2, or who do not know what qualifications they have. Adult Skills provision, Digital and Employability courses attracted more learners with low skill levels (99%, 65% and 54% respectively).
11. 39% of all learners reported that they had developed their digital skills, 33% had developed their English skills and 22% had developed maths skills. 26% reported they have developed skills and confidence to help get a new job.
12. Of those learners who were unemployed and looking for work at the start of their course, 30% progressed into work, with a further 5.3% in volunteering positions and 4.6% in further learning.
13. 59.5% of learners surveyed report the course helped them to learn and work independently and to make independent decisions.
14. 68.5% of all learners reported the course had helped them to support a child or other family member's learning; this rose to over 80% in Family Learning courses.
15. 79.5% of learners reported the course helped them to stay physically and mentally well.

### **Ofsted Inspection Outcomes**

16. The inspection process highlighted key positive outcomes the service is achieving in Staffordshire, including:
  - a. Learners benefit from teaching and support from well-qualified and experienced tutors, who use their knowledge and experience effectively to teach them the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to progress.
  - b. Learners value the flexibility that their courses offer. Many learners who are returning to education after a significant break can access local provision that supports them in returning to learning.
  - c. Learners gain significant benefits from their courses.
  - d. Learners benefit from well-developed links with local community organisations. Staff nurture effective links with a range of partners. They support learners to get quick access to the critical services they need to support their wider lives.

- e. Leaders successfully work with a range of subcontractors to shape their curriculum. They ensure that curriculum planning takes account of relevant local council priorities. Leaders prioritise their provision to take place in areas of high deprivation. As a result, leaders positively support the focus for economic prosperity across the communities in which they work.
- f. Leaders work closely with key stakeholders to select the content of their curriculum.
- g. Leaders and tutors plan the curriculum carefully so that it builds on learners' knowledge, skills and behaviours over time.
- h. Tutors provide helpful opportunities for learners to recap and revisit their learning and provide regular opportunities for learners to apply theory to practice. This supports learners to make progress over time.
- i. Learners are prepared well for their next steps in employment, education or further training.
- j. Tutors support learners to develop positive attitudes to their learning and create a positive environment for learning that harnesses respect.
- k. Managers and tutors evaluate the quality of individual courses effectively through a well-designed quality review process. The use of learners' feedback enables managers to routinely monitor the impact of programmes in meeting identified needs and, where necessary, to take swift action to improve provision where it is not in line with the high expectations set by leaders.
- l. Leaders set realistic and challenging key performance indicators for the teaching of community learning programmes. This includes effective oversight and contract monitoring of all provision, including that delivered by subcontractors.
- m. Governors are ambitious for the service. They have a wide range of knowledge and expertise, which they use well to hold senior leaders to account. This supports leaders to continually reflect on their provision and to take further steps to improve it.
- n. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have high regard for the safety of learners. Staff receive regular and useful training. Clear policies and procedures are in place for reporting of any safeguarding concerns. Leaders work closely with organisations to help inform their understanding of local risks and they help learners to improve their understanding of risks.

- o. Learners rightly feel safe when they study. They know how to report any concerns they may have. Learners are confident to discuss with tutors any challenges they are facing in their wider lives. Leaders and tutors know their communities very well.

### **Areas for improvement**

- 17. The inspection process also highlighted useful areas for improvement that should both benefit our learners and help support our journey to outstanding, including:
  - a. Leaders should ensure that where learners already have existing knowledge, skills and experience in their areas of study, tutors encourage these learners to set challenging learning goals so they can make the progress of which they are capable.
  - b. Leaders should ensure that the process for recognising and recording progress and achievement is rigorous across all curriculum areas so that it is always clear as to the progress that learners make.
  - c. Leaders should ensure that all learners are routinely supported to develop their English and mathematical skills, enabling them to use these skills to support their wider lives and prepare them well for their next steps.
  - d. Leaders should ensure that all improvement actions are clear and precise, supporting rapid improvement in the few areas that require it.

### **Accountability Statement**

- 18. In the Skills for Jobs White Paper, the Department for Education (DfE) set out the government's vision to transform further education. This was followed by two funding and accountability consultations which described how the system would be reformed. The accountability agreement is a new product emerging from these reforms. It is a two-part document setting the overall expectations of Providers in return for the DfE's funding investment.
- 19. The agreement forms part of the wider set of reforms underway to transform the skills system, so it better supports young people and adults to develop the skills they need to get a good job and ensuring a clearer focus on the delivery of outcomes. The agreement allows Providers to focus in on what and how they intend to deliver to support local, regional and national needs.



20. Part one of the agreement (the accountability framework) replaces the existing, annual, grant funding agreement. DfE will use it to set out national skills priorities as well as the essential terms and conditions that Providers need to meet in return for funds. It also retains the required levers to ensure the effective management and assurance of public funds, the protection of learners as well as requiring sound governance.
21. Part two (the annual accountability statement) is a new document that is owned by the Provider. It sets out a small number of outcome targets focused on curriculum changes and adaptations to provision planned for the coming year. These targets reflect how the Provider is contributing to priorities outlined in Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), being led by Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) working with employers, Providers and local stakeholders including Mayoral Combined Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and other agencies; and to the national skills priorities that the DfE have articulated in the accountability framework (part one).
22. Completion and receipt of the annual accountability statement is a requirement of funding which is set out in the accountability framework.
23. The content should include our key aims, targets and outcomes for the year ahead that demonstrate our contribution to local skills needs and must be signed off by the Governing Body.
24. The Community Learning Service's accountability statement is our delivery plan for the 2023-2024 academic year and draws on the strengths and areas for improvement identified during the self-assessment process, the recent Ofsted inspection and our ambition to effectively contribute to Council's overarching strategic priorities and the local and national skills priorities.
25. The delivery plan provides an accessible entry point for our adult learners, providing opportunities to develop more essential skills up to Level 2 in English and maths and Level 1 for digital, upskill and reskill in key sector areas and receive support to progress and be successful in their lifelong learning journey. The plan includes the Community Learning Framework 2023 – 2027 and will consist of the following curriculum areas:
  - a. Wellbeing and Independence,
  - b. Community and Family Progression,
  - c. English, maths and digital,
  - d. and Science, Technology, Engineering and Technology (STEM) and Vocational Learning.



26. In addition, we will target those adults who are least likely to engage in adult learning through:
- a. the Community Learning Responsiveness Fund,
  - b. Wider Family Learning Grants for Schools,
  - c. and direct delivery of accredited Adult Skills provision.
27. It is a funding requirement to seek approval of the accountability statement from Cabinet and submit the statement to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by the 31 July 2023 for funding to be released to the Council.
28. The accountability statement can be located in Appendix 1.

### **Legal Implications**

29. The commissioning cycle included collaboration with legal colleagues to ensure the following legislation and regulations were adhered to when developing the Community Learning Specification 2023 – 2027, the Framework Agreement and Call-off Contracts and the ITT Questionnaire:
- a. ESFA Adult Education Budget: [funding and performance management rules](#) as published and amended from time to time,
  - b. [Subcontracting Funding Rules](#) for ESFA funded post-16 (excluding apprenticeships) as published and amended from time to time,
  - c. and the ESFA [Subcontracting Standard](#).

### **Resource and Value for Money Implications**

30. Implemented an open tender process in line with the Council's Procurement Regulations and the Public Contract Regulations to secure good value for money. This has included the completion of pricing and sourcing strategies.

### **Climate Change Implications**

31. A Community Impact Assessment for the Community Learning Framework 2023 - 2027 was completed 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Provision delivered will include some online delivery of programmes, informing residents of the climate change agenda, delivering elements of sustainability within wider subject areas, utilising active travel, and delivering elements of learning within green spaces in the local communities we serve (where applicable).
32. Learners will be informed of the Climate Change agenda and the mission to make Staffordshire sustainable and our commitment to achieve net

zero carbon emissions through links to the Councils website as part of the process of informing adult learners about local services available during the delivery of courses. In addition, courses are accessible in local communities promoting and enabling active travel.

## **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – SCC Accountability Statement 2023 – 2024

Community Impact Assessment (CIA)

- [Ofsted Inspection Report](#)
- [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#)
- [Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) – Community Learning Annual Self-Assessment Report

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