

CABINET MEETING: 16 DECEMBER 2021

**ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING REVIEW / APPROACH TO FUNDING
FOR INTO WORK ADVICE SERVICES**

**EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS (COUNCILLOR SARAH
MERRY)
FINANCE, MODERNISATION AND PERFORMANCE (COUNCILLOR
CHRIS WEAVER)**

AGENDA ITEM: 6

Reason For This Report

1. To set out proposals for the future of Adult Community Learning service delivery in Cardiff in light of the reductions in Welsh Government grant funding.
2. To seek endorsement of the approach to future funding bids for the Into Work Service and to highlight the reduction in current funding as the European Social Fund comes to an end.

Background – Adult Learning

3. The Welsh Government allocates funding (the Community Learning Grant) to Local Authorities across Wales to provide Adult Community Learning to eligible learners.
4. The Welsh Government published the Adult Learning in Wales Policy in 2017, which lays out the five priorities that this grant-funded provision for Adult Learning should focus on. These are:
 - i. Engagement activity
 - ii. Digital skills
 - iii. Employability skills
 - iv. Essential skills
 - v. Welsh language
5. Cardiff Council, the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Adult Learning Wales and Cardiff and Vale College make up the Cardiff Learning Partnership. The three organisations work together to provide the best outcomes for learners; ensuring robust progression pathways and referral routes into further education or work, and also reducing duplication of the courses delivered.

6. In December 2018, the Welsh Government carried out a consultation and decided to change how the Community Learning Grant is distributed across Wales. This was despite strong representation from the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills. As a result of this redistribution, Cardiff Council's funding allocation will be reduced by a total of £694,386. This will be transitioned over five years, from April 2020. The past, present and estimated future Community Learning Grant allocation for Cardiff is illustrated in the table below.

Academic Year	Funding Allocated
2019 / 2020	£1,092,079
2020 / 2021	£1,037,475
2021 / 2022	£985,061
2022 / 2023	£788,049*
2023 / 2024	£630,440*
2024 / 2025	£504,352*
2025 /2026	£397,693*

**estimated future grant*

7. In addition, Welsh Government have advised that they plan to have in place a national strategic body for community-based Adult Learning by 2025. Therefore, local authorities may not manage any learning from this date.
8. Currently, £658,073 of the Community Learning Grant is budgeted for direct delivery costs. Management, IT, and administration costs equate to £197,458. £130,070 is spent on buildings and associated staff costs. Adult Learning was fully aligned with the Into Work Advice Service in 2017. This has helped to reduce management and administration costs.
9. Cardiff Council's Adult Community Learning supports learners achieve up to Level Two qualifications and delivers Digital Skills, Employability Skills and Engagement Activity courses. Cardiff and Vale College prioritise their Adult Learning on Essential skills which includes literacy, numeracy, Welsh and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).
10. Cardiff Council has three distinct programmes of learning within Adult Community Learning:

- i. Learning for Work - this is fully funded by the Welsh Government Community Learning Grant. These courses are free to learners if they are out of work or in part time work.
- ii. Disability Inclusion in Community Education (DICE) - this is partly funded by the Community Learning Grant for those who are eligible. These are entry level courses for learners with specific additional learning needs to help prepare for work. There is also a cost recovery model for recreational or engagement courses for those that are not eligible for the free courses.
- iii. Learning for Life - this is a full cost recovery model and funds recreational courses. These courses will not be affected by these changes.

Background – Into Work Advice Services

- 11. In addition to the reduction in the Community Learning Grant, there are also reductions in funding pending for the Into Work Advice Service. The Into Work Advice Service is funded through nine different funding streams. The service hosts fourteen employability projects. Four of these projects are funded through the European Social Fund. These projects support those who are furthest away from the job market and have the most barriers to entering employment. With the UK now having left the European Union, the European Social Fund will no longer be available for these projects from Autumn / Winter 2022. It is not yet known whether the UK Government's replacement for European Union funds (the Shared Prosperity Fund) will support employability activity, or whether this will continue to be separated into objective-led projects; nor is the amount or delivery mechanism known currently.
- 12. The Into Work Advice Service will have received over £6 million of funding between 2016 and 2022 from the European Social Fund; equating to a loss to the service of £1.1 million income each year. To date, this fund has supported 2,650 people with employment activities, over 900 people into employment and 1,226 people gain qualifications.

Issues

- 13. Currently the Into Work Advice Service receives over £1.1m a year from the European Social Fund to support individuals with the most barriers to employment and are furthest away from the job market. The dates that these ESF funded projects are currently expected to cease with their annual funding allocated are ;
 - 1. Communities for Work – March 2023 (£596k per annum)
 - 2. Journey 2 Work - September 2022 (£230k per annum)
 - 3. Skills@Work - September 2022 (£192k per annum)
 - 4. Inspire to Work - September 2022 (£124k per annum)
- 14. There is a significant risk to the service if any new funding allocation is below the £1.1m that Cardiff's Into Work Advice Service currently receives from the

European Social Fund. Any reduction could result in up to 500 less people being supported by the service each year as well as reduced employability mentors in the service overall.

15. There is still much uncertainty regarding the Shared Prosperity Fund which is to succeed the European Social Fund. Announcements with more detail on the Shared Prosperity Fund are expected by Central and Welsh Government on 20th December 2021.

Into Work Advice Services – Regional Approach to Employability

16. To help mitigate some of the impact in the reduction of funding for the Into Work Advice Service, the Regional Skills Partnership Local Authority Cluster Group has been working collaboratively to produce a new Regional Framework to guide how employability activities are delivered in the region in the future. With the ending of the European Social Fund funding in 2022, it is proposed that this framework will form the basis of regional applications for post-EU funding for employability. The Into Work Advice Service has previously made bids for external funding collaboratively with other local authorities in the Cardiff Capital Region, and this framework would further support this funding arrangement, while retaining local delivery through the Council's services.

Adult Learning Current Service and Proposed Delivery Model

17. Bidding regionally for any new funding that becomes available may help to mitigate some of the impacts on the funding reduction for the Into Work Advice Service, however, a full-service review was required for the Adult Learning service to understand how efficiencies could be made in light of the reduction in the Community Learning Grant. In the 2020/2021 academic year, 593 courses were funded through the Community Learning Grant. 4,166 people enrolled onto these courses. 95% of those who attended accredited courses passed and 45% of learners were from the most deprived areas of the city.

Current Delivery of Courses

18. Most courses have traditionally been delivered in weekly two-hour sessions for 10 weeks across the academic term only. For those attending recreational courses and Disability Inclusion in Community Education this works well. However, for people looking for work this is not swift enough. Obtaining a qualification for a new job could take up to 3 months. Also, if the learner wanted to join a class mid-term, this would not be possible and therefore they would need to wait until the start of the next term to attend. In previous years, there were many learners who were attending several Learning for Work courses with no clear progression into employment. As the Adult Learning team is now fully aligned with the Into Work team, clear progression routes have now been established.

Proposed Delivery of Courses

19. Some progress has been made with the introduction of shorter work skills

training over one or two full days. In addition, more sector-specific work skills training has been rolled out over a 5 day period, for example 'Get Into Care' and 'Get into Administration' courses. These courses provide all the qualifications required in a condensed period of time, but still produce very good pass rates illustrating the quality of the course is not compromised. There is an opportunity to expand this model further, thereby reducing costs and keeping courses accessible to as many people as possible. The hours of the service could be expanded too, into the evening and weekends right across the year rather than on a term-time only basis; again, being as accessible to as many people as possible.

Current Training Delivery

20. There is one generic Learning for Work team that delivers all of the grant funded courses. The tutors who currently deliver these courses are often part-time and sessional and deliver courses for just a few hours each week. This model of delivery is not responsive and there is more demand for more up to date digital courses to meet current requirements. To meet the needs of learners, and to develop the service, in line with funding reductions, the use of sessional tutors will no longer be required. Therefore, it is proposed to replace the part time / sessional Learning for Work tutor posts with specialist trainer posts that work throughout the year. The total number of tutors affected by this change is 14. Each tutor works between 2 hours and 21 hours a week on a term time only basis.

Proposed Training Delivery

21. It is proposed to create a work skills training team and a specialist digital team. This would allow all courses to be delivered over a shorter period of time, whilst still guaranteeing a high standard of training and accreditation. This would ensure that as many people as possible would be able to access the training they required, when they needed it. Specialist work skills and digital trainers would deliver these courses, allowing the flexibility required to meet new demands. To deliver this model, it is proposed to create a number of temporary trainer posts, in line with the funding allocation year on year.

Current Location of Courses

22. All courses have previously been delivered face-to-face in community settings including Hubs, libraries and schools. There is a standalone Adult Learning Centre in Severn Road, above Severn Road school, in the Riverside ward of Cardiff. This centre has been closed since March 2020, as a result of the first national lockdown, and has not reopened since. During lockdown, some courses have been delivered online, with tutor and trainer support. These have proved popular with some learners and there is an opportunity to expand this method of course delivery, for those that prefer to learn in this way.

Proposed Location of Courses

23. To ensure that funding is used on direct delivery costs, rather than on buildings,

it is proposed that all face-to-face grant funded courses are provided through existing community buildings. The proposed, newly adapted service would be delivered city wide and the current Severn Road Adult Education Centre would be retained by the Council's Education department for alternative use. This will reduce the associated costs with running a standalone building from Adult Learning budgets. Increasing the number of venues where training is provided would also help to improve the service in a way that makes it more accessible and convenient, bringing learning closer to people in the community. For learners that would prefer to access classes digitally, formal online supported courses, as well as YouTube Tutorials, would also be offered.

24. To understand the public views on these proposals, and to ask for their comments to help steer future delivery, a public consultation was carried out.

Public Consultation Results

25. The period of the consultation was between the 23rd of August 2021 and the 26th of September 2021. The consultation was available online and paper copies were available in Hubs and Libraries. The Advice Line supported individuals who needed help to complete the form. It was promoted on the Council website, as well as through various social media channels. Over 4,000 previous learners were also sent a direct online link to complete the consultation. In total, 1,312 responses were received. The consultation asked questions on how the future of the service should be delivered, taking into account the reduction in funding.

Headline Responses

26. 73.3% of those that responded to the survey had attended Adult Learning training. Of these:
 - a. 80% of individuals lived in the Southern Arc of the city
 - b. 81% were from an Ethnic Minority background
 - c. 70% of respondents that attended training were aged 35 or under.

It is pleasing to note that the consultation reached these groups of people who can sometimes be underrepresented.

Service Delivery of Courses

27. For learners that had attended Learning for Work courses, the most popular were First Aid, Manual Handling and Food Safety. These courses are held over one or two days. These results are encouraging as it demonstrates that people prefer these shorter work skills courses. This reflects our proposal for providing these shorter courses rather than over the traditional 10-week period.
28. 70% of those that had attended training had only attended between 1 and 3 courses and 2.5% had attended more than 5 courses. The low number of learners carrying out several courses is also encouraging. These courses are helping people to get the right skills for the job they want, more quickly.

29. 47.3% of respondents wanted to access learning face-to-face, while 36.2% and 30.9% respectively wanted to access learning in a hybrid model or online. These results also support the new proposal, whereby the option of learning online or in a hybrid model will be offered to learners who would prefer this.
30. The most popular time that respondents wanted to attend courses was on a Saturday morning and in the evenings. Again, this reflects our proposal which would allow the team to expand the times and days of training to better suit the needs of the learners.

Location of Classes

31. As part of the change to provision, it is proposed that the delivery would be city wide and that Severn Road Adult Learning Centre would be repurposed and retained by the Council's Education department for alternative future use. Respondents were asked how they felt about this proposal 83% were favourable, 7% were not favourable and the remaining 10% were indifferent. Therefore, an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that funds should be utilised for direct service delivery and not on buildings wherever possible.
32. 43% of respondents had previously attended training at Severn Road, of which 73% of those that had attended used public transport or their own vehicle to access this training. 15.9% had walked. This demonstrates that the majority of learners are having to travel some distance to access the training at Severn Road, and therefore courses would be more accessible if they were held within more community settings.
33. 94.4% of respondents would like to see Adult Learning provision provided in their local area. The most popular wards where respondents would like to attend training were Canton, Grangetown, Ely and Cathays. This also aligns with the proposal where training could be provided in more locations to ensure that there is provision right across the city.
34. Overall, the survey was supportive of the proposed way forward, although some changes have been made to respond to the comments received.

Proposed Way Forward

35. To increase community-based learning available in local areas using existing community buildings across the city This will improve accessibility and will focus the use of the reduced Community Learning Grant funding on direct service delivery, rather than buildings. Severn Road Learning Centre will be retained within the Councils Education department.
36. To replace the Learning for Work Tutor posts with new specialist Trainer posts that would be more reactive to the changing needs of the job market and 21st Century digital knowledge.
37. To continue to provide virtual learning, as well as online tutorials, alongside

face-to-face courses so learners can access training in the way that best suits their needs.

38. Course delivery will be expanded to include Saturday and evening learning.

Local Member consultation

39. Local Ward Members for Canton and Riverside wards were invited to attend a consultation in March 2021 with Officers and the Cabinet Member for Education Employment and Skills. Ward Members were disappointed with the proposal to repurpose the use of Severn Road Adult Learning Centre. However, it was understood that in order to keep more of the reduced funding aimed at direct service delivery, costs needed to be reduced elsewhere across the service. Eight other community locations and six schools were suggested where courses could be provided in the Riverside / Canton wards. Ward members were advised that refurbishment work had recently been carried out in Canton Library to enhance and expand existing facilities. This created two new training spaces and upgraded the existing training room, providing an additional twenty public access computers. Ward Members requested the exploration of the possibility of using space in Canton Library, occupied by the Police. Officers met with the Police, but unfortunately due to accessibility issues, this space was not a conducive location for learning. Ward Members were keen for the Adult Learning Centre building to be utilised and not to be left empty and requested Officers to contact the Estates and Schools team to ensure the building was put to best use, should the proposals be agreed.

Reason for Recommendation

40. To put in place new arrangements to meet the changing requirements of Adult Community Learning, ensuring that the reduced funding from the Community Learning Grant is used for direct service delivery across the city.
41. To continue to work with other Local Authorities to bid for funding for employability services post European Social Funding; ensuring that Cardiff can continue to support those that need help to look for work.

Financial Implications

42. As illustrated in Paragraph 6, the distribution allocation of the Community Learning grant will reduce available funding by 20% each year through to 2025/26 when grant funding levels will be at 36% of the 2019/20 allocation. Continued, careful consideration needs to be given to the resource required in order to ensure costs remain within the funding provided.
43. Looking forward, consideration would need to be given to the impact on future funding for local authorities in the event of any future proposals in respect to a national strategic body for community based adult learning by 2025.
44. The report also outlines the service response to uncertain grant arrangements such as European Social Fund. As these proposals are developed any financial

impacts need to be identified so that they can be managed within the overall funding available

Property Implications

45. Strategic Estates note the intent to declare Severn Road surplus to service requirements. SED will work with the service and will, subject to approval, review future options for the property through the established asset management governance. SED understands the intent to focus delivery of services in existing assets and will work with the service to understand any relevant investments or property improvements, aligned with Council's ongoing asset review process.
46. Education have indicated that they would wish to retain the Severn Road Adult Centre building to ensure the flexibility to reorganise education provision is retained to support the planning of school places. The adult centre is located at Severn Primary School which is a constrained urban school site. The release of the facilities would afford various opportunities that would support improved community focussed primary organisation and/or provide scope to develop further Additional Learning Needs provision through a Specialist Resource Base which is a key priority for the city currently. The building would need some investment in order to be utilised for these purposes in future.

HR Implications

47. Initial consultations with the trade unions and affected staff have taken place, and this will continue following Cabinet's decision. Any restructure proposals, including the deletion of current posts and creation of new posts will be carried out in line with all corporately agreed processes, and take due notice of any legislative requirements.

Legal Implications

48. These proposals have been subject to a consultation process. Therefore, members must ensure that they have considered the consultation responses, and taken them into account, before a decision is made.
49. The decision about these recommendations has to be made in the context of the Council's public sector equality duties. The Council also has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties, Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. The Protected characteristics are: age, gender reassignment, sex, race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, disability, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, religion or belief – including lack of belief. If the recommendations in the report are accepted and statutory notices are published, the Council will have to consider further the equalities implications and an Equality Impact Assessment may need to be completed.

50. The Council has to be mindful of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards when making any policy decisions and consider the impact upon the Welsh language.
51. The Council has to consider the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and how this strategy may improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree the approach to the future delivery of Adult Community Learning as set out in this report. This includes the repurposing of Severn Road Adult Learning Centre, which would be retained within the Councils Education department, allowing a greater provision of training in existing community settings across the city.
2. Endorse the principle of a regional approach of bidding for funds for the Into Work Advice Service, post-European Social Funding.

SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Jane Thomas Director Adults, Housing and Communities
	10 December 2021

The following appendix is attached:

Appendix 1 - Adult Learning Consultation Report Findings.