

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee**

**Cabinet**

**Date of Committee**

**15 June 2006**

**Report Title**

**Adult and Community Learning  
Development Plan 2006/07**

**Summary**

All Local Authority Adult Education Services that are funded by the Learning and Skills Council are required annually to draw up Adult and Community Learning Development Plans for the period of their next contract with the LSC - in this instance for the period August 2006 to 2007. This plan builds on the work carried out through previous plans. The report was considered by the Adult & Community Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 17 May 2006.

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**Would the recommended  
decision be contrary to the  
Budget and Policy  
Framework?**

No.

**Background papers**

None

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-**

Details to be specified

- Other Committees  Adult and Community Services O&S Committee
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members  Cllr Richard Dodd, Cllr Jose Compton
- Cabinet Member  Cllr Colin Hayfield, Adult and Community Services
- Strategic Director  Graeme Betts, Strategic Director for Adult, Health & Community Services
- Legal  Alison Hallworth, Senior Solicitor

- Finance  Philip Lumley-Holmes
- Other Chief Officers  .....
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  .....

**FINAL DECISION NO**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  18 July 2006
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

## Agenda No

**Cabinet - 15 June 2006.**

### **Adult and Community Learning Development Plan 2006/07**

#### **Report of the Chair - Adult and Community Services O&S**

##### **Recommendation of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

That the Cabinet recommend to full Council, the adoption of the Adult and Community Learning Development Plan 2006/07.

#### **1. Views of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Adult Health and Community Services outlining the Adult and Community Learning Development Plan, which would run from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. *[A copy of the Plan is attached for Cabinet Members only. The Plan can be viewed on the Committee Administration System and on the Warwickshire Web].*

Peter Sutton noted that the Plan had been developed in consultation with the LSC and that the Service was grateful for the help received from the LSC in trying to mitigate the changes brought about by the funding cut from the LSC. He noted the following points:

- i. The programme would have to be adjusted to accommodate the 9% loss in income in real terms from the LSC.
- ii. Warwickshire would be required to introduce fees for the first time, by 1 August 2006. This was driven by central Government policy that those learners who were able to, should contribute to the cost of their own learning.
- iii. There was a requirement to broaden the range and mix of the current provision, which concentrated on essential skills, ICT and family learning to disadvantaged communities. The range of provision would need to include adult "leisure and pleasure" courses previously provided by FE colleges.

- iv. The Plan reflected the impetus to develop partnership working focussing on locality work.
- v. There were a range of implications for the shift to mainstream provision, including the impact on the market place, staff and the service as a whole.
- vi. The service had annual targets in terms of learner numbers and their contracts with the LSC would be threatened if these numbers were not sustained.
- vii. Disabled learners and learners in disadvantaged areas on benefits needed to be protected.
- viii. The service was anxious to support older learners and hoped to have a greater engagement with this group through the “leisure and pleasure” market.
- ix. The Plan provided a good basis as a policy that would be able to react to any future changes in grant.

Jas Dhillon and John Dwyer of the Learning & Skills Council gave a presentation outlining the LSC role in funding and planning of Adult Learning in Coventry and Warwickshire. The following points were highlighted:

- a. Government’s prime obligation was 16-19 and learners achieving their first Level 2 with skills for life being a top priority.
- b. The LSC did not fund all learning provision but was involved with planning together with providers such as Local Authorities, 6<sup>th</sup> Form Colleges, FE Colleges and work based learning.
- c. 7 Area Partnership Teams were being set up across Coventry and Warwickshire to allow for a closer and more specific focus within local areas for implementation across the whole LSC remit.
- d. Targets for fee income were expected to increase and providers needed to be working towards a strategy to target learners able to pay.
- e. The County Council needed to be represented on the newly formed Regional Group, which would hold quarterly meetings looking at implementation strategies and a common approach in the context of the West Midlands Regional Strategy.
- f. There were some exemptions to fee paying including 16-19, learners receiving benefits, basic skill learners and those studying for their first full Level 2 qualification.
- g. 2006/07 would be considered a transition year with some flexibilities to assist providers move forward with the changes.
- h. The LSC would like to help facilitate discussions around offers of “Learning for Personal Development and Well Being” by the County Council and other organisations.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- 1. Members agreed that the new system would be difficult to monitor and requested regular reporting to the Committee.
- 2. There was a need to ensure that processes were not overly bureaucratic in order to sustain learner numbers through easy access, cost effectiveness and reasonable fees.

3. The service needed to maximise every source of funding available from both outside sources and other areas of the County Council in order to alleviate the position.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Cabinet the adoption of the Adult and Community Learning Development Plan 2006/07 and recorded their support of the proposed charging system.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Since 1999, Local Authority Adult and Community Learning Services have been required to deliver their adult education provision against targets and priorities set out initially in a Lifelong Learning Plan, subsequently in an Adult and Community Learning Plan and, this year, in an Adult and Community Learning Development Plan that is written to a format prescribed by the local Learning and Skills Council.
- 2.2 Funding for adult education is awarded by the Local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC) on the basis of the plan. The attached plan, written to reflect the requirements set out by the LSC, builds on the work carried out against the previous plans. The strategies, priorities and targets are in line with Central Government priorities and targets and with those of the Coventry and Warwickshire LLSC Strategic Plan. The Plan is required to secure funding amounting to £1,776,000 from the LLSC, which is a reduction of some 9% in real terms compared to funding allocated for 2005/06.
- 2.3 Whilst the plan continues the general pattern of provision that the service has delivered since its inception it features two important changes from previous years. Firstly, it responds to the requirement of the LSC to deliver core provision under two new headings – ‘First Steps Learning’ and ‘Personal and Community Development Learning’ (PCDL) – in the ratio of one third First Steps to two thirds PCDL. The latter category comprises essentially learning for leisure and pleasure and LLSC expects the service to increase the range and depth of this provision to deliver courses in a wider range of curriculum areas than hitherto, and across all areas of the county rather than focussing on disadvantaged communities.
- 2.4 Secondly, the LLSC wishes the service to implement a system of charging fees to learners as part of a national policy of requiring those learners who can to contribute to the cost of their own learning to do so. A commitment to doing so is made in the plan itself and a proposal for such a system is submitted with this report - attached for Cabinet Members.

CLLR FRANK MCCARNEY  
Chair - Adult and Community  
Services O&S

Shire Hall, Warwick  
26 May 2006

**Warwickshire County Council**  
**Adult and Community Learning Service**

**WARWICKSHIRE ADULT AND  
COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**2006/7**

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**Warwickshire County Council  
Adult and Community Learning Service**

**WARWICKSHIRE ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**2006/7**

**1. Introduction**

1. Following the splitting of the pre-existing Community Education Service into two parts, the Adult and Community Learning Service became a freestanding service located within the Education Department of Warwickshire County Council on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2005.

2. The service has since been restructured in response to both recommendations in the report of the Adult Learning Inspectorate following a successful external inspection in 2004 and internal reviews undertaken by the County Council. This process was completed in February 2006 when a new post holder took up the final one of a series of senior posts that had become vacant during this process.

3. The service is about to take a different place, from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, within the Warwickshire County Council structure following a process of modernisation that has seen 9 departments restructured into 6 directorates. The service will no longer reside within the (former) Education Department but will move into the new Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate alongside Libraries, Heritage and Adult Social Services. This will enhance the ability of the service to develop new partnerships and engage new groups of learners in line with LSC priorities.

4. Furthermore, the remit of the service will change over the course of this plan to enable a broader range and mix of provision to be delivered compared to previous years. It will develop a range of programmes to accommodate the redefinition of provision into either First Steps or Personal and Community Development (PCDL) learning. It will deliver programmes directly, but also work with other providers – particularly colleges of further education – to meet local need.

5. The strategic priorities of the service are to deliver learning which encourages opportunities for personal and community development and the participation of all members of the community in a process of lifelong learning. This puts into practice the County Council mission statement for lifelong learning which is:

‘Warwickshire County Council believes that lifelong learning enables local people to play active and positive roles within their families and local communities as well as contributing to the cultural side of life and the economic well-being of the County’.

**Summary of provision**

6. The Adult and Community Learning Service secures provision through: outreach and community development work; direct delivery of Essential Skills, Family Learning and Information and Computer Technology programmes which includes both first rung activity and some accredited courses; and by awarding monies to groups and organisations from statutory, voluntary and community sectors to secure adult learning in accordance with the service’s plans and procedures.



7. The service will:

- identify and target non-learners, in order to signpost them to relevant provision or to support by determining their learning needs through the work of Adult and Community Learning Development Workers;
- deliver learning opportunities focused on Essential Skills, Information and Communication Technology, Family Learning, Literacy and Numeracy and other skills development targeted to the service's priority groups in community locations to further the process of developing learning communities and widening participation. The service recognises the importance of using Family Learning and ICT provision as a means of progressing learners into Essential Skills learning. Furthermore, the service will offer a broader range and mix of provision by addressing the needs of learners in a wider range of curriculum areas than previously and in a wider range of geographical locations.
- award grants to voluntary, community and statutory providers to deliver learning to learners from priority groups and areas.

8. Learning opportunities are currently delivered by five area teams based in the five district and borough council areas that make up the county of Warwickshire.

## **2. Strategic Commentary**

1. The provision to be delivered meets needs and policies for learning and skills as set out at the Annual Planning Review Meetings and in the Strategic Area reviews carried out by the LLSC, in the current LSC Annual Plan and as expressed in national LSC statements of priorities. Plans also draw on the service's Self-Assessment Report and take into account the implications of County Council modernisation and the alignment of the service within its new strategic directorate.

2. The key priorities that the service has for 2006/7, when core funding (including NLDC funding) for the service has been reduced by some 9% in real terms and Family Learning funding has not been increased in line with inflation, are to sustain as much 'traditional' provision as possible whilst delivering a wider range and mix of provision in response to LSC requirements. The introduction of a system of charging fees to learners will be a further major priority that sits alongside the other two.

3. The 'traditional' work of the service has been to focus on delivering learning opportunities in disadvantaged communities and across a relatively narrow range of curriculum areas, notably Essential Skills (literacy, numeracy and ESOL), Family Learning and ICT. It has also worked with, and funded, voluntary and community organisations to deliver learning programmes on its behalf.

4. The split of the core funded work of the service into two parts, First Steps learning and Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL), as required by LSC, will have a major impact on the work that the service is able to undertake, not least because of the required split of one third First Steps and two thirds PCDL. The LSC requirement that courses and programmes will have to be identified as falling into one or other of the two categories, according to provider intention, will act as a constraint because, in the past, learners with different motivations have been able to attend the same programmes.

5. For instance, learners who are motivated by the desire to acquire skills which will ultimately help them to secure employment or move into further, more advanced learning (First Steps) will no longer be able to sit in the same class as those wanting to learn for pleasure (PCDL). This will have a particular impact on ICT programmes that have, in the past, been able to cater for both types of learner simultaneously.

6. The other change that will have a significant effect on the programme to be offered is the requirement, set out in the Provider Strategic Briefing, to deliver 'a balanced range of provision and learners'. For a service that has been accustomed to working primarily in disadvantaged communities and across a narrow curriculum range, this will mean developing new provision in terms of subjects, locations and client groups and will place considerable demands on staff, individually, and on staffing arrangements.

*Meeting LSC needs and priorities*

7. The service will meet the needs and priorities of the LSC in the following ways, by:

- Widening participation
- Broadening the range and mix of provision
- Implementing First Steps and PCDL provision
- Developing Information Advice and Guidance services
- Introducing fee charging
- Driving up skills in relation to literacy and numeracy
- Maintaining high quality Family Learning provision

8. We will continue to widen participation by engaging with non-traditional learners in less well-off communities through local development work and delivery of programmes. We will continue to offer a range of Essential Skills, ICT and Family Learning programmes as our core offer, but will supplement this with an increasing range of subject areas as we develop more Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) programmes across the wider community.

9. The service has, for the first time, been allocated Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) funding and this will be targeted at the most disadvantaged communities in which we work. It will be used particularly to offset the consequences of moving funding to enable the broadening of the service's range and mix of provision and will enable both First Steps and PCDL learners to have access to as wide a range of programmes as possible.

10. The consequence of broadening the range and mix of our programme to meet the expectations of LSC is, in an era of reducing total funding, likely to bring about a reduction in the volume of work delivered in disadvantaged areas, particularly if the introduction of a fee charging system leads to a reduction in the number of learners (see section below on 'risks and issues').

11. We will broaden the range and mix of provision to meet the demand for PCDL opportunities - largely for 'leisure and pleasure' courses which are currently offered almost entirely through the provision made by further education colleges. We recognise the need to do so in the light of college funding priorities, which are reducing the amount of funding that they have for PCDL programmes, and are in detailed discussion with all three Warwickshire colleges about how we can work together to make the best possible provision across the county.

12. One consequence of this will be the need to reduce the volume of our work in other areas and this is likely to be in the level of ICT programmes the service delivers and in the amount of sub-contracted work to voluntary and community organisations.

13. Furthermore, we note the recently published FE white paper 'Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances' where it states "As general FE colleges focus on the core economic provision, local authority and voluntary providers may focus on wider personal and community programmes.....", and will plan for the medium to long term with this expectation in mind.

14. We will implement both First Steps programmes in which progression and/or qualifications are the primary aim and distinguish them from PCDL programmes where learning is non-accredited and there is no expectation of progression. First

Steps provision will include the Essential Skills programmes delivered by the service and programmes for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities.

15. We intend to broaden the range of work that we offer as a consequence of the county council's recent restructuring which places the service in the same organisational grouping as the Library Service and Adult Social Services. This will provide enhanced opportunities for the service to deliver new programmes aimed at the client groups that these other services cater for and to use facilities and resources more effectively.

16. The service will continue to develop its ability to provide IAG and, in particular, will complete the process of gaining Matrix status for all five of its area teams. Rugby has already obtained this award and Warwick has its formal assessment at the beginning of May. We intend to have achieved the standard in all five areas by the end of the calendar year and will then seek the funding available to provide advice and guidance in a more structured fashion.

17. The service will introduce a fee charging system from the beginning of the new contract year in August in order to implement the requirement that those learners who are able to do so meet a proportion of the cost of their own learning. We will attempt to establish a system and level of fees which generates a significant amount of income for the service, which removes the need to pay for those learners who are least able to do so and which does not have the effect of discouraging a large number of learners from studying.

18. Proposals are currently being prepared to go before the County Council to obtain approval from members and will be shared with the LSC at the earliest possible opportunity.

19. Driving up literacy and numeracy skills has been a role that the service has performed throughout its existence and this will be an important part of our work in the year to come. We have well-established provision that caters for the needs of both pre-entry level learners and for those capable of achieving success at National Test levels and we will continue to offer this Essential Skills (ES) provision at a similar level to the current one. In doing so we will be addressing both national and local priorities and will continue to develop two particular areas of ES work.

20. The first of these is to continue the development of provision for public service workers, which is already being delivered to Teaching Assistants and Attendance Coordinators, and to attempt to engage more manual workers across the sector. The second is to participate fully in the consortium of Warwickshire FE colleges and the ACL Service that has been set up to coordinate the delivery of Probation Service work in the community.

21. This latter work is an expanding area in terms of its funding and will give the service the opportunity to build on our experience of piloting successful new programmes over the course of the last twelve months.

22. Family Learning (FL) will continue to be a major part of the work of the service within the ring-fenced funding that has been allocated for the year. We will continue the existing broad pattern of provision within wider Family Learning and Family Learning, Literacy and Numeracy programmes and seek to enhance the extent to which learners progress into mainstream ES provision.

23. As part of the process of continuous quality improvement for this area of work we have commissioned an external consultant to carry out a review of the effectiveness of the provision and its impact on learners' lives. This will be completed before the end of the calendar year and will inform the development of the work in the medium and long term.

*Effectiveness in enabling all learners to achieve*

24. The service acknowledges the expectations set out in the Agenda for Change that all providers will seek to raise quality and efficiency year on year and that specific measures need to be put into place to enable this to happen. A number of actions to enable the service to do so were identified in its Self-Assessment Report that was produced in December of 2005. The major ones were to:

- Carry out greater analysis and use of data for planning and target setting
- Continue development of QA documentation
- Develop a system of peer observation for delivery staff to exchange good practice
- Implement a system of continuous observations of teaching and learning
- Carry out a staff and curriculum development programme following 06/7 funding changes
- Measure successful programme completion through achievement of learning goals
- Develop the quality of Essential Skills and ICT provision through improved curriculum coordination
- Ensure the quality improvement loop is closed by systematic monitoring, evaluation and action planning
- Further develop progression routes and partnerships

25. Since then, through the support of the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), and the LSC itself, the service has begun a process of developing its self-assessment reporting, with the support of an external consultant funded by the LSDA. This is expected to lead to improvements both in the self-assessment process itself and in the underlying mechanisms that enable self-assessment to take place.

26. The ultimate consequence of implementing these measures is to raise the quality level of the service offered to learners and to thereby make it more effective in enabling learners to achieve. However, there is an ongoing process of quality improvement that occurs through the work of the service's Curriculum Coordinators who support delivery staff and managers in the work that they do. Following the reorganisation of the service over the last twelve months and the appointment of two new coordinators with the most recent arriving in February, the service is now well-equipped for a phase of curriculum and staff development which will enhance the ability of learners to achieve their objectives.

*Efficiency in the use of resources to achieve agreed plans*

27. The reduction in core grant to the service that has occurred as a consequence of national reductions in funding and how it is distributed will have an inevitable impact on the volume of work that the service can deliver. In particular, this will mean a reduction in the amount of part-time delivery work that the service can afford – the alternative being to reduce the numbers of full-time staff, which would be very expensive in the short term, and a reduction in the amount of work carried out by community and voluntary organisations funded by the service.

28. These reductions will be targeted on that provision which is the least efficient in terms of learner numbers related to cost, whilst we attempt to preserve a broad and balanced programme for all of our client groups. At the same time, we will try to set fee levels that are 'efficient' in a purely economic sense in that they generate the highest level of income possible consistent with minimising damage to user numbers and thereby the fabric of the service.

29. In particular, working in partnership with FE colleges, we will seek to maintain as much PCDL provision across the county as possible and with the greatest efficiency in the use of resources by targeting the offer of programmes to where numbers are highest and demand is at its greatest.

30. We will adopt 'internal' methods for raising levels of cost-effectiveness in a number of ways, particularly by encouraging the formation of larger groups of learners and by raising staff productivity levels. We are currently formalising staff roles and responsibilities in ways that will lead to higher levels of individual output and engagement with learners, which we hope will offset some of the consequences of reducing funding levels.

31. The service has developed its own system of financial management over the last twelve months to supplement that which is provided by central county council support and this is now helping us to become more and more effective in our control over and use of resources.

### *Risks and issues and their management*

32. The main risks and issues faced by the service are:

- The possible negative consequences of introducing programme fees
- Fragmentation due to the introduction of FS/PCDL structure
- Expansion into unfamiliar areas of work
- The challenges of working in effective partnerships with colleges of FE
- Spreading the effort of the service too thinly

33. It is crucially important that the scope and level of the fee charging system that will be introduced does not damage the ability of the service to attract learners and meet its anticipated level of activity. Experience elsewhere by other services and institutions indicates that the consequences of doing so are unpredictable and that it may have the consequence of reducing learner numbers significantly – or, at the other extreme, leaving them virtually untouched. It will also impose a new, and costly, administrative burden on the service.

34. However, given that the focus of the work of the service has always been in disadvantaged communities where learners are least able to pay, and that it is likely to be more problematic to introduce fees in the first place than raise their percentage levels, we will propose to implement a system which is conservative in the first instance and offers as many fee remission categories as possible. We will support this by careful communication to learners about the justification for introducing fees and the value of the service, notwithstanding the requirement to pay a contribution towards its cost.

35. Dividing the core funded work of the service into PCDL or First Steps programmes, according to provider intention, creates a risk of fragmentation. Because current courses are likely to include learners who are differently motivated one from another and who may in future fall into either of the new categories, we will need to put on two separate programmes where one sufficed previously. This would be particularly the case for our ICT provision where 'leisure' learners share introductory courses with those starting on the road to qualifications.

36. This will lead to smaller class sizes that are inefficient and uneconomic unless we can deal with the issue by rescheduling programmes and possibly by promotional methods which will help increase the total flow of learners.

37. Moving into unfamiliar areas of work as a consequence of broadening the range and mix of provision will place extra demands on the service that will have to be effectively managed. There are parts of the county where the service has no tradition of working, due to its present focus on disadvantaged communities, and it will take time and effort to build up local networks of facilities and resources for delivery, for promotion and for contact with community groups.

38. Similarly, working in new programme areas will mean recruiting and training new staff and developing appropriate curriculum coordination services and quality improvement processes. This work will fall mainly upon service managers in the five areas who will already have a set of new challenges to address because of the



contract changes so there will need to be careful priority setting for the next twelve months, and central coordination, if we are to avoid this having any impact on the service's ability to perform its central function of delivering effective learning.

39. Relationships with the Warwickshire FE colleges have been variable in the past not least because the funding and contracts system of the LSC has placed colleges and ACL in competition for learners, and because expectations about the respective roles of the colleges and us have not been totally clear. However, the impact of the new funding regime has been to help bring the two of us together as colleges see themselves as unlikely to be able to run PCDL programmes unless they are at full cost recovery fee levels. This will push up learner fees to a level that is likely to cause many courses to be closed.

40. Colleges are therefore currently willing to work with us to enable us to take over some of this provision, which in return will enable us to broaden our curriculum offer and keep programmes in existence for local people that would otherwise disappear. Thus, at least some of their infrastructure is maintained for a time when the funding regime changes again and new arrangements can be worked out.

41. Closer working relationships will encourage referral of learners between colleges and ourselves and will enable progression for learners, particularly from our community-based programmes into mainstream college provision, and so everybody benefits. Making this relationship work and develop will be crucial, therefore, for the success of the service because if it doesn't occur the service will find it very much more difficult to implement a proper range of PCDL learning. To prevent this we will make the cementing of these relationships a primary objective for area managers and central staff who work with the colleges.

42. Finally, the changing nature of the service's operation and the potential for working with new and expanding groups of learners could lead to a failure to achieve simply by trying to chase too many targets simultaneously, particularly as funding is reduced from previous years. We will therefore need to prioritise carefully the work that we undertake and not attempt to achieve too much too soon in the areas of new work but bring about a transition beyond just the course of the next twelve months.

### **3. Improvement Indicators**

1. A number of improvement needs and associated indicators have already been identified in the self-assessment process but there are several further ones that the service will address during the coming year, implied by this plan, as follows.

#### *Fees collection system*

2. We will introduce a scheme of fees, and the appropriate systems to administer them, with an initial target of achieving 5% of core funding from fees in the first twelve months of operation, from August 2006.

#### *Recording progression*

3. We will develop a system for recording and tracking learner progression across programmes, particularly into Essential Skills study, and for tracking the progress of First Steps learners in order to help meet the 'NIACE 10 steps' criteria for evidencing that the provision is an effective route for progression.

#### *Self-assessment process*

4. We will improve the service's self-assessment process, using LSDA/QIA consultancy opportunities, to ensure a robust process built up from assessment at local level in time for the next self-assessment at the end of the calendar year.

#### *Increasing the breadth and mix of the service's offer across communities*

5. We will develop new programmes, particularly within PCDL provision, and in a range of new venues, so that at least 10% of programmes delivered over the new contract year are of distinctively different types and/or in distinctively new locations.

#### *Gaining benefit from county council reorganisation*

6. The new alignment of the service within a strategic directorate for Adult, Health and Community Services will create opportunities for the development of new work around the needs of older people, by offering opportunities to library users and through the Culture and Heritage services. We will attempt to introduce four new programmes, in each of the five areas of the service, that take up these new opportunities.

## ACL Provider Planning Assumptions

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
	Learners	Learners	Learners	Learners	Learners
	Volumes	Volumes	Volumes	Volumes	Volumes
<b>Young People (16-18)</b>					
<b>Total Learners</b>	157	190	190		
	Volumes	Volumes	Volumes	Volumes	Volumes
<b>Adults (19 and over)</b>					
PCDL - Personal and Community Development Learning	2261	2700	2414		
First Steps	1131	1360	1207		
Wider family learning <b>and</b> Family literacy language and numeracy	1001	1062	1062		
Neighbourhood Learning in deprived communities	0	0	289		
<b>16-18 and 19+ Totals</b>	4550	5312	5162		

NB Subject to review when the impact of fee charging can be assessed

## Warwickshire County Council

### Adult and Community Learning Service

#### Charging fees to learners

The implementation of a policy for charging fees to learners from August 2006 is a requirement for securing our funding from the Coventry and Warwickshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

The service has no tradition of charging fees to learners and all learning has previously been free at the point of delivery. No charges have been made to learners in the past for incidental costs such as materials or assessment costs on accredited programmes.

Any policy has to take account of four factors. These are:

- the requirement of the national and local LSC that we charge fees
- the need to keep fees as low as possible to prevent the loss of a large number of enrolments, particularly in the deprived communities where the service concentrates its efforts, and to protect those whose means are limited and for whom fees would be a significant burden
- the need to have some consistency with fees charged historically by further education colleges with whom we are developing partnerships
- the need to generate enough fee income to not only cover collection costs but to help meet the reductions in grant that the LLSC are implementing nationally.

We therefore propose a charging system based on the following set of proposals and system of remission.

#### Proposed charging system

The categories for charging, proposed in the table that follows, would mean that about 55% of all enrolments would be chargeable in future. The main requirement to pay would fall on learners who are learning for personal development – generally leisure and pleasure – rather than on those who are seeking to acquire skills to get work, or to go on to further learning after their initial engagement with the service.

The learning of these latter groups would be protected, as would the learning of people with learning difficulties or disabilities and those with mental health issues. These groups are amongst those with the greatest need and are the most likely to give up learning due to increasing cost.

The learners we engage with through wider family learning programmes based in schools in the less well-off parts of the county, using ring-fenced funding, will be protected from paying fees as a result of DfES restrictions on charging. Essential Skills (literacy, language and numeracy) learners will be similarly treated, again because of DfES policy.

Category	Area of learning	Provision type	Proposal
First Steps Learning  NB. One third of core funded learning must fall within this category	First Steps	Learning offered as an initial entry point into learning from which learners are actively encouraged and supported to progress	No fees but learners pay accreditation and materials costs if applicable
	Skills for Life	Literacy, Numeracy and English for Speakers of other Languages	No fees (Fees cannot be charged to these learners as a matter of DfES policy)
	Skills for Work	Provision which may lead to qualifications and will help learners obtain voluntary or paid work	No fees but learners pay accreditation and materials costs if applicable
	Skills for Independent Living	For adults with learning difficulties or disabilities, or recovering from mental health problems	No fees but learners pay accreditation and materials costs if applicable
Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)  NB. Two thirds of core funded learning must fall within this category	Learning for Personal Development and Wellbeing	The whole range of non-assessed adult 'leisure and pleasure' programmes	Fees to be paid and assessment and materials costs if applicable
	Learning for Active Citizenship and Community Development	Community based learning to build skills, knowledge and understanding for community participation and involvement	Fees to be paid and assessment and materials costs if applicable
Family Learning  NB. Ring-fenced funding is allocated to	Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN)	Literacy, Numeracy and English for Speakers of other Languages	No fees (Fees cannot be charged to these learners as a matter of DfES policy)

	Wider Family Learning	Programmes to engage children and their family members across a wide range of topics in order to widen participation and lead on to FLLN programmes	No fees (Fees cannot be charged to these learners as a matter of DfES policy)
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### Fee level and remission

We propose that a standard fee of £3.00 per course hour be implemented on all PCDL programmes directly delivered by the service. For a typical 10 week two hour programme such as 'Computers for the Terrified' the charge to the learner would be £60.00 where previously there was no charge

We also propose that costs of accreditation (exam registration and entry etc.) and materials are met by learners on all programmes where they exist, unless the learner falls into one of the remission categories below, except Skills for Life courses - Essential Skills and Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy and also Wider Family Learning where charging is not permitted.

Where the service operates in partnership with further education colleges to support courses and programmes which colleges are no longer able to run under the new funding arrangements, we propose that learner fees are set at the college's pre-existing rate which has come to be accepted by their learners over a period of time. These currently vary between £1.46 and £7.80 per course hour, depending on the subject and location.

Where we deliver learning programmes for other organisations, either to their employees or clients, we propose to negotiate fees to be paid by the organisation in line with market forces that apply.

Where we fund voluntary and community organisations to deliver learning programmes on our behalf, we will agree fee levels consistent with the proposals in the table above for charging our own learners.

We propose that 50% fees are remitted for learners who live in the most deprived areas of Warwickshire as determined by the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. There are 37 'Super Output Areas' (sub-divisions of district and borough council wards) that fall into the top 30% of most deprived SOA's in England, including 26 in Nuneaton and Bedworth, 4 in Rugby, 2 in North Warwickshire and 5 in Warwick District. We will remit 50% of fees for learners who live in these areas (see the following web page for details of the areas)

[http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/43B3A7B936D264F880256BB900332857/\\$file/Super+Output+Area+Level+Results.pdf](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/43B3A7B936D264F880256BB900332857/$file/Super+Output+Area+Level+Results.pdf)

We also propose that fees and other costs are remitted as in the table that follows, according to the status of the individual. This is designed to protect learners on means tested benefits, who are least able to meet the costs of their own learning, and afford a measure of relief to older learners who are an important client group for the service.

Category	Fee level
Income Support	No fee
Job Seekers Allowance	No fee
Working Families Tax Credit	No fee
Pension Credit	No fee
Housing/Council Tax Benefits	No fee
Unwaged dependents of any of the above	No fee
Incapacity benefit	No fee
People over 60 years of age	50% fee