

## Decision Record – Adult and Community Learning Fees Structure 2016-17



<b>Cabinet Portfolio Holder taking the decision</b>	Cllr Colin Hayfield Education and Learning
<b>Date of Decision</b> (not before 15 July 2016)	

### Decision Taken

That the Portfolio Holder approves the Adult and Community Learning Service (ACL) fees structure proposed for August 2016 to July 2017.

### Reasons for Decisions

The agreement of the Portfolio is required to increase these fees.

### Background Information

Warwickshire County Council (the Council) has a contract with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to provide adult and community learning services to learners across the county. ACL receives the majority of its funding from the SFA, although a small proportion of its income is achieved through enrolment fees from learners. ACL provides accredited courses and non-accredited courses for learners aged 19 plus.

In accordance with its contract with the Skills Funding Agency, ACL provides some courses (including English, Maths and Family Learning) free of charge to the learner. Other courses targeting priority learners, such as discrete provision for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities, are made free of charge at ACL's discretion, in line with the government policy of "focusing public funding on people who would not otherwise have access to learning and maximising income from learners who can afford to pay" (New Challenges, New Chances, BIS, 2011). No changes to the funded (and, therefore, free of charge) courses are proposed.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) modified its funding for further education courses with effect from August 2013 and highlighted a requirement on providers, particularly in non-accredited learning, to collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use this where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.

#### ACL Funding Position

ACL will receive £1.56 million in funding from the SFA in academic year 2016/17. This is £80,000 (5%) less than two years ago, with a similar reduction in the previous year. ACL received £34,447 in fee income in the academic year 2014/15 (the last full year for which figures are available).

#### ACL Fees and History

ACL has three levels of fees:

- Full fee – for those learners who do not fit any of the remission categories
- 60 plus fee – a 50% reduction for those who are aged 60 years or over
- Fee for those who are in receipt of one of the following benefits: ESA, Housing/Council Tax Benefit, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, JSA, Pension Credit, Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit – courses are free (although on some courses a resource fee is still payable).



In 2014/15 ACL took 2135 enrolments on potentially fee-paying courses. Of these:

- 11% paid full fees
- 43% paid 60 plus fees
- 22% paid no fee due to meeting one of the remissions criteria
- 24% were on a free course funded by the SFA.

The current fee level has been in place for at least 8 years and in light of funding reductions and changes in SFA funding rules, it is now appropriate to review it, in order to try to at least maintain the level of provision within the county.

**Financial Implications**

A potential fee income increase of £12,000

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<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	Councillor Colin Hayfield

**Checklist**

<b>Urgent matter?</b>	No
<b>Confidential or Exempt?</b>	No
<b>Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?</b>	No

**List of Reports considered**

Link to published proposed decision report:

<https://democratic.warwickshire.gov.uk/cm5/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/645/Meeting/3726/Committee/555/Default.aspx>

**List of Background Papers** - please include a contact for access to background papers

None

**Members and officers consulted or informed**

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Colin Hayfield  
 All Strategic Directors  
 Legal – Jane Pollard  
 Finance – Liz Foirmstone, John Betts  
 Equality – Belinda Blake  
 Democratic Services – Paul Williams

Children & Young People OSC – party spokes:

Councillors Dave Parsons, Julie Jackson, Clive Rickhards, Chris Williams