

# Cabinet

11 May 2023

## Adult and Community Learning Accountability Agreement (2023-24)

### Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the Accountability Agreement (2023/24) for Warwickshire County Council's Adult and Community Learning Service (ACL), attached at **Appendix 1**; and
- 2) Authorises the Strategic Director for People to submit the Accountability Agreement to the Department for Education by 31 May 2023

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Warwickshire County Council (WCC) provides adult education through its [Warwickshire Adult and Community Learning Service \(WACL\)](#). The Service is part of Education Services.
- 1.2 The Service provides formal and informal learning programmes to adults aged 19+ across the County in over 30 inclusive learning environments in a wide range of community venues, many of which are within the County's areas of highest need. Courses offered include English, Maths, ESOL (English as a second language), IT, Languages, arts and crafts, and courses for adults with learning difficulties. Family Learning activities are also provided for parents and their children, with most of these activities organised through primary schools, targeting schools with the highest levels of need.
- 1.3 The Service was inspected by Ofsted in October 2022 and their report<sup>1</sup> shows that the service maintained its 'Good' judgement.
- 1.4 An annual Accountability Agreement is a new product emerging from the government's Skills for Jobs White Paper. It is a two-part document setting the overall expectations of providers in return for the Department for Education's (DfE) funding.

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<sup>1</sup> Warwickshire Adult & Community Learning Ofsted report  
<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50198591>

- 1.5 Local authorities delivering adult education provision in excess of £1m are required to create and submit an Accountability Agreement for the academic year 2023 to 2024 and publish it on their website. The council's Adult and Community Learning Service receives approx. £1.61m Adult Education Budget per academic year and therefore is required to produce and submit an Agreement to the DfE by 31 May 2023.
- 1.6 This report seeks Cabinet's approval for Warwickshire County Council's Adult and Community Learning Service's Accountability Agreement (2023/24) attached at Appendix 1.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The submission of the annual statement is an essential stage to releasing the Adult Education Budget grant funding to Warwickshire County Council.
- 2.2 Non-compliance could lead to intervention from the Department for Education, which could include a review of leadership and/or governance.

## **3. Environmental Implications**

- 3.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1 The Service is predominantly funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) provided by the Department for Education and Skills Funding Agency. Over the last ten years this has been fixed at around £1.61m per year. The funding is split between funding for qualifications and Skills (£468k) and for Community Learning (£1.141million), which tends to be non-qualification based. In addition, the service generates income from learner fees and occasionally through external grants. The service is therefore dependent on the AEB for successful delivery of its provision.
- 4.2 The [Skills for Jobs White Paper \(2021\)](#) set out the government's vision to transform adult and further education. This was followed by two funding and accountability consultations which described how the system will be reformed and included the introduction of annual accountability agreements.
- 4.3 The Accountability Agreement is a two-part document setting the overall expectations of providers in return for the Department's grant funding. The agreement allows adult education providers to focus in on what and how they intend to deliver to support local, regional, and national needs.

- 4.4 The agreement will be used by the Department for Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to secure assurance about the use of public funds and protection of the learner.
- 4.5 The first Accountability Agreement is to be submitted to ESFA by 31st May 2023. The ESFA will review all Accountability Agreements in Autumn 2023 and provide feedback to enable further development prior to submission of the following year's agreement.
- 4.6 From Summer 2024, the ESFA will hold providers to account for the measures set out in their Accountability Agreement and future funding will be dependent on achievement of measures.
- 4.7 Providers are expected to identify a small number of outcome targets focussed on curriculum changes and adaptations to provision planned for the coming year. These targets reflect how the service is contributing to Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) priorities and national priorities.
- 4.8 The accountability agreement must be signed off by the provider's Governing Body or equivalent. In the case of Warwickshire County Council's adult and community learning provision, this is Cabinet.

### **Warwickshire County Council's ACL Accountability Agreement**

- 4.9 Warwickshire's ACL Accountability Agreement is largely based on the service's Statement of Intent (2022-25) which identifies key priorities, demographic information, local labour market trends and data sets within the context of the Council Plan but also in response to sub-regional, regional and national policy objectives. It also sets out the service's response to the new Local Skills Improvement Partnership (LSIP) for the West Midlands and Warwickshire.
- 4.10 The development of the LSIP is being led by the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and the emerging LSIP skills priorities for the region were shared with the service at the end of March 2023.
- 4.11 The Service's Advisory Board met on 22 March 2023 to review and approve the draft version of the agreement.

## **5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps**

- 5.1 Following Cabinet approval, the agreement will be submitted to the ESFA by the 31 May 2023 deadline.
- 5.2 There is a requirement to publish the submitted agreement on the Council's website within 3 months of the start of the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

## Appendices

Appendix 1- Warwickshire County Council's Adult & Community Learning Service Accountability Agreement 2023-24.

### Background Papers

None.

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: Cllrs Kaur, Clarke, Chilvers, Fradgley and D'Arcy