

Cabinet

13 June 2024

WCC's Adult and Community Learning Accountability Agreement (2024-25)

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Considers and approves the Accountability Agreement (2024/25) for Warwickshire County Council's Adult and Community Learning Service (ACL), attached at Appendix 1;
2. Authorises the Executive Director for Children and Young People to submit the Accountability Agreement to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 30 June 2024; and
3. Authorises the Executive Director for Children and Young People in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education to approve and submit future annual Accountability Agreements to the ESFA.

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 within the Directorate for Children and Young People.
- 1.2 The Service provides formal and informal learning programmes to adults aged 19+ across the County in over 20 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 report¹ shows that the Service maintained its 'Good' judgement.

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

- 1.4 Annual Accountability Agreements are two-part documents setting the overall expectations of providers in return for the Department for Education (DfE) funding.
- 1.5 Local authorities delivering adult education provision in excess of £1m are required to create and submit an Accountability Agreement for academic year 2024 to 2025 and publish it on their website. The council's Adult and Community Learning Service receives approx. £1.6m Adult Education Budget (from 2024/25 will be known as the Adult Skills Fund grant) per academic year and therefore is required to produce and submit an Agreement to the DfE by 30 June 2024.
- 1.6 This report seeks Cabinet's approval for Warwickshire County Council's Adult and Community Learning Service's Accountability Agreement (2024/25) attached at Appendix 1.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The submission of the annual statement is an essential stage to releasing the Adult Skills Fund grant 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 Skills Fund provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Over the last ten years this has been fixed at around £1.6m per year. In 2024/25 the funding will be split between funding for 'Qualifications and Skills' (£0.3m) and for 'Tailored learning' (former Community Learning) (£1.3m), 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 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 for the first time in 2023/24.

- 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 ESFA to secure assurance about the use of public funds and protection of the learner.
- 4.5 The Service's first Accountability Agreement was submitted to ESFA in May 2023 ([2023/2024 WACL Accountability Agreement](#)). 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.
- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 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 the Council's Cabinet. By this Report, Cabinet delegates the decision to enter into future Accountability Agreements to the Executive Director for Children and Young People in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education.

Warwickshire's County Council ACL's Accountability Agreement

- 4.8 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 WCC's Strategic Economic Plan and the Local Skills Improvement Partnership (LSIP) for the West Midlands and Warwickshire.
- 4.9 The LSIP is being led by the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and the LSIP skills priorities for the region were shared with the Service.
- 4.10 The monitoring and support for the strategic direction of the Service is provided by the Service's Advisory Board, which was formed in April 2022 and meets three times a year. Members of the board are drawn from a variety of backgrounds and skills sets. The Board is Chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Education.
- 4.11 The Advisory Board met on 12 March 2024 to review the draft version of the agreement.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, the agreement will be submitted to the ESFA by the 30 June 2024 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 2024 to 2025 academic year.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Warwickshire County Council's Adult & Community Learning Service Accountability Agreement 2024-25.

Background Papers

None.

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

Local Member(s): None- this is a County wide report

Other members: Chair & Spokes of Children & Young People OSC