

# Cabinet

8 October 2020

## Adult and Community Learning Proposed Advisory Board

### Recommendation

That Cabinet approves the formation of an Advisory Board to have oversight of, and support the development of, the Council's Adult and Community Learning service.

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Adult and Community Learning (ACL) service<sup>1</sup> provides a wide range of community-based courses<sup>2</sup> for adults across the County and is funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and learner fees.
- 1.2 Oversight of the ACL service is currently via the Education Service's SLT. This proposal to establish an Advisory Board would strengthen the strategic direction of the service by supporting and challenging service managers to more closely align the aims of the service to Council priorities, particularly in relation to the employment and skills agenda.
- 1.3 The Service was last inspected by Ofsted in 2016 and received a 'Good' outcome. The Service is due another Ofsted inspection within the next six months.
- 1.4 At inspection, Ofsted expect to see evidence that the strategic direction of the ACL service is being developed and supported by a board that knows its strengths and understands its weaknesses. In addition, the board would be expected to challenge managers to improve the quality of teaching and learning and performance monitoring systems.
- 1.5 The Advisory Board will take the lead in establishing a county-wide vision for adult and community learning, with strong underpinning values and firmly driven by the needs of the County.
- 1.6 The proposed remit of the Advisory Board is to:
  - Maintain an overview of priorities for adult education and post-19

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/directory-record/1211/adult-learning>

<sup>2</sup>  [NEW ACL-WARWICKSHIRE Programme FINAL.pdf](#)

provision, delivery and service transformation within the national and regional context.

- Make recommendations regarding the service's strategic aims and objectives based on national priorities and those of key stakeholders such as the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Ofsted, and the Warwickshire County Council corporate strategic priorities.
- Provide independence of judgement and scrutiny of service provision to ensure the best possible quality of provision and outcomes for learners.
- Assess current levels of performance and agree actions and targets to develop further improvements.
- Ensure effective pace and progress of the actions in the Service's Quality Improvement Plan through performance management arrangements.
- Provide support and robust challenge on all activity and plans.
- Provide support and guidance to the service to secure additional income generation to ensure sustainability and growth.
- Raise the profile of the Service with internal departments and external organisations with a view to generating new business opportunities.
- Support the Service to meet its statutory duty to provide equality of opportunity for learners, to safeguard learners and to meet the Prevent agenda.
- Be accountable to the WCC Corporate Board, reporting progress and providing updates at agreed frequency.

1.7 Proposed membership of the Advisory Board to include:

- Portfolio holder for Education Services
- Assistant Director for Education Services
- Service Manager Education Delivery Services
- Service Manager for Economy and Skills
- Delivery Lead for ACL
- Representative from People Services Commissioning
- National Careers Service (Prospects)
- Representative from the voluntary and community sector
- Representative from Job Centre Plus
- Representative from the education sector, eg Higher Education.

1.8 It is proposed the Advisory Board meets three times a year, in November, March and July.

1.9 A proposed schedule of reports will be discussed and agreed at the first meeting of the Board.

## **2. Financial Implications**

2.1 There are no direct financial implications apart from the time commitment for those involved in attending Advisory Board meetings and reading papers.

Also, the time required within the ACL service to ensure reports are prepared to the schedule agreed by the Board.

- 2.2 However, if the service does not have an effective board maintaining oversight of its activities and supporting its strategic direction, there is a risk that, at the next inspection, Ofsted does not judge leadership and management of the service to be at least 'good'. This outcome could have an adverse impact on the service's ESFA funding and the service's financial sustainability in the medium term.

### 3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None.

### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 In the 2019-20 academic year, the ACL service received around £1.75m of ESFA funding and approximately 2500 learners accessed at least one course during the academic year. Prior to Covid-19 lockdown, courses were delivered at community venues across the county. Since March 2020, all courses have been delivered online.

- 4.2 Two types of courses are provided by the ACL service:

- **Community Learning** courses that are generally recreational and support wellbeing
- **Skills** courses that give the opportunity to undertake qualifications such as English, maths, ICT and ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language).

Learners are encouraged to progress between courses and build their skills for life and, where appropriate, for work.

- 4.3 The ACL service is managed by the Delivery Lead, who also leads the Adult Education Service in Coventry (joint post). In total, the Service has around 80 staff: tutors, managers, learning support assistants and administrators.

- 4.4 The ACL service supports both of the WCC corporate outcomes:

- Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent
- Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure.

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

- 5.1 If Cabinet approves the formation of an Advisory Board for the Adult and Community Learning Service in October 2020, the first meeting of the Advisory Board will take place in November 2020 or early December 2020.

**APPENDIX** Proposed Terms of Reference for the ACL Advisory Board.

### Background Papers

None.

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The report was shared with Councillor Colin Hayfield prior to publication.

## **APPENDIX** Proposed Terms of Reference for the ACL Advisory Board.

### **Warwickshire County Council Adult and Community Learning Service Advisory Board - Terms of Reference**

#### Purpose of the Advisory Board

The main function of the Board is to secure a sound basis for continuous improvement for the Adult and Community Learning (ACL) service for all ESFA Adult Education Budget (AEB) funded activity.

The Board will be responsible for taking the lead in establishing a county wide vision for the ACL service, with strong underpinning values and firmly driven by the needs of the county, in which all have a commitment to a broad scope of governance arrangements.

The Board will provide a forum in which members can develop a co-ordinated and collaborative approach to strengthening the quality of provision and outcomes for learners delivered by the ACL service. It will scrutinise adult learning provision to assess its success in meeting the needs of individuals, communities, businesses and the future prosperity and wellbeing of the County.

The Board will provide a formal structure within the existing Council leadership structure to oversee the work of the ACL service and provide collaborative leadership in shaping its direction in order to secure and improve outcomes for learners.

#### Objectives

The Board will:

- Maintain an overview of priorities for adult education and post-19 provision, delivery and service within the national and regional context.
- Make recommendations regarding the service's strategic aims and objectives based on national priorities and those of key stakeholders such as the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Ofsted, and the Warwickshire County Council corporate strategic priorities.
- Provide independence of judgment and scrutiny of service provision to ensure the best possible quality of provision and outcomes for learners.
- Assess current levels of performance and agree actions and targets to develop further improvements.
- Ensure effective pace and progress of the actions in the Service's Quality Improvement Plan through performance management arrangements.
- Provide support and robust challenge on all activity and plans.

- Provide support and guidance to the service to secure additional income generation to ensure sustainability and growth.
- Raise the profile of the Service with internal departments and external organisations with a view to generating new business opportunities.
- Support the Service to meet its statutory duty to provide equality of opportunity for learners, to safeguard learners and to meet the Prevent agenda.
- Be accountable to the WCC Corporate Board, reporting progress and providing updates at agreed frequency.

### Membership

- Portfolio holder for Education Services (Chair)
- Assistant Director for Education Services
- Service Manager Education Delivery Services
- Service Manager for Economy and Skills
- Delivery Lead for ACL
- Representative from People Services Commissioning
- National Careers Service (Prospects)
- Representative from the voluntary and community sector
- Representative from Job Centre Plus
- Representative from the education sector e.g. Higher Education.

### Advisory Board arrangements

The Board will meet three times a year in November, March and July with dates of meetings identified in advance. Additional meetings will be called where members identify the need.

The ACL service will provide appropriate administrative resource to ensure all Board Meetings have an accurate record of discussions and agreed actions. Agendas and papers for meetings will be circulated one week in advance of meetings, or earlier where documents are particularly large or require full sign off at Board meetings.

Board members will be responsible for providing support and challenge on all aspects of provision. Some Board members will have specified lead roles linked to the Ofsted Judgement Indicators.