

**Information report to:** Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel  
**Date:**  
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## **Community Learning and Skills Service – update**

### **1 Purpose**

1.1 This report provides an update on:

1. Progress since the implementation on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013 of shared services between Slough and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
2. The national purpose and objectives for community learning.
3. Changes in the conditions for funding learning delivery from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013.

1.2 A further report will follow for consideration at the Scrutiny Panel early in 2014 which will focus on the first year of delivery of the new service, the self assessment review and future plans.

### **2 Shared Service Update**

2.1 Slough and Windsor & Maidenhead cabinets agreed to form a shared service for the delivery of adult learning commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012, with Slough as the lead accountable body. A joint management committee with representation of officers from both boroughs is responsible for management of the service.

2.2 The shared service receives funding from the Skills Funding Agency to deliver Community Learning and skills programmes to the residents of both boroughs. Additional funding is received to deliver the council's apprenticeship scheme.

2.3 Staff from Windsor & Maidenhead were transferred to Slough on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012, and the service was restructured during the autumn of 2012 incorporating Slough's employability and enterprise sections. The new structure was implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013.

2.4 The new service has been developing common policies and procedures. It ensures that programmes are tailored to meet the needs of residents within local communities and geographical areas. The service is building on existing partnerships and where appropriate developing common approaches e.g. a common fee and concessionary rate policy and consistent delivery of teaching. This has not involved any significant change for Slough residents, though it has enabled an efficiency saving of £96,000 to Slough Borough Council.

2.5. Slough as the accountable body is subject to external inspection by Ofsted for the entire shared service. At the last inspections the overall effectiveness grades for Slough were grade 2 – good (November 2010) and Windsor and Maidenhead, grade 3 satisfactory (May 2012).

2.6 The first Self Assessment Review of the shared service for the academic year 2102/13 will be reported to the Scrutiny Panel in the spring of 2014. It will identify areas for improvement to raise further the standard of delivery.

### **3 Community Learning Purpose and Objectives**

- 3.1 The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills in August 2011 published a strategy document “New Challenges, New Chances” within which defined the purpose of Community Learning supported by a series of objectives. All providers are required as a condition of their funding from the Skills Funding Agency to implement the objectives.
- 3.2 As part of its conditions for funding, the Skills Funding Agency requires the council to implement these objectives. Some of the key areas are:
- Deliver a range of learning that brings together adults, often of different ages and backgrounds, to pursue an interest, address a need, acquire a new skill, become healthier or learn how to support their children.
  - Develop stronger, more self-sufficient and pro-active communities, increasing volunteering, self help groups and civic engagement, reducing welfare costs, and improving health. This will include a focus on helping turn around the lives of troubled families.
  - Identify and target disadvantaged groups or individuals
  - Generate fee income from those that can afford to pay, focusing public money on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including those on low incomes with low skills.
  - Develop a financial strategy that maximises income and identifies and captures additional income from partnerships and the use of volunteers.
  - Develop and agree a local model through which local communities, business, partners, and other providers including health, come together to agree local strategic priorities and ensure the coherence of a local offer.

### **4 Changes to funding**

- 4.1 Funding from the Skills Funding Agency is from two separate streams. The first is for the delivery of Community Learning (see section 3) and the second is for the Adult Skills Budget (ASB).
- 4.2. From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013 the ASB budget will be changed from a block grant and will be allocated according to formulas which depend on the of the service’s ability to:
- Plan and market accredited programmes that attract ASB funding.
  - Recruit sufficient learners on to programmes to ensure viability.
  - Retain learners throughout the length of the programmes.
  - Support learner s achieving the end qualification.
- 4.3 This approach is similar to how colleges are allocated funding for courses and it will require the service to operate in a more business like way. All courses will need to attract sufficient learners to attract funding from the SFA. The first stage in the autumn term in 2013 will test the model for implementation and this will be reported on in the Spring of 2014 for advice from the Scrutiny Panel.