

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: Wednesday 12 March 2104

CONTACT OFFICER: Philip Wright, Head of Community Learning and Skills
(For all enquiries) (01753) 87 5741

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Pavitar Mann – Commissioner for Education and Children

PART I **CONSIDERATION & COMMENT**

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS - REVIEW OF 2012/13 - PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

1 Purpose of Report

This report gives an update on the progress made in the development of a shared community learning and skills service with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in the context of changing funding models. The report enables members to review performance, and comment on the areas which the service has identified requiring improvement and development.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Panel is requested to:

- Note how the council has responded to the changing Skills funding Agency models of funding.
- Comment on the service's engagement and performance figures for 2012/13 and strategies in place to rectify the areas of improvement identified within the annual Self-Assessment Review
- Comment on the areas of development highlighted in section 6.8 of the report

3 Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The activities delivered through the Community Learning and Skills Service contributes to the following council priorities:

- **Economy and Skills** - the prime focus of activity is to support low skilled residents into employment through targeted engagement progressing through to accreditation.

- **Health and Wellbeing** – community learning delivery includes a range of provision that promotes health and wellbeing including work with people recovering from mental health conditions and those with a disability.
- **Regeneration and Environment** – programmes are delivered at neighbourhood venues including the new Britwell Centre
- **Housing** – work with housing associations supporting residents into employment

Through attending adult learning programmes communities mix to gain knowledge and new skills, make new friends and in many programmes learn about different cultures. Residents who do not have English as their first language attend ESOL programmes that incorporate topics relating to citizenship.

4 **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)**

The delivery of adult learning and skills directly relates to the employment and income, healthy lifestyle as well as contributing through family learning to the children's and young people's outcomes.

The services focus on working with the unemployed, with delivery in the most deprived areas of Slough, through children centres and in targeted schools.

5 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no direct financial implications relating to this report.

(b) Risk Management

There are no specific risks associated with this report

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights or legal implications appertaining to this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment is not required for his report.

6 **Supporting Information**

6.1 **Shared Service**

Slough Borough Council, since 1 August 2012 has been accountable to the Skills funding Agency and subject to an Ofsted inspection for the delivery of adult learning and skills across both Slough and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The new service has also incorporated Slough's employment and enterprise sections thus creating an integrated delivery model for Slough residents that has enabled closer links with Slough ASPIRE. The service leads on the "ASPIRE for You" strand.

- 6.2 The new service has enabled efficiencies of £96,000 to be found with little impact on the ability to engage with Slough residents, with a greater emphasis on work with the unemployed. The service delivers a wide range of accredited programmes,

supporting residents into employment. In the autumn term 51 % learners who were on an accredited programme were looking for work with a further 9% classified themselves unemployed.

6.3 Changes in Funding

The council receives three funding streams from the Skills funding Agency (SfA):

1) Community Learning through which there is now a set of national objectives that providers are required to work towards achieving. These can be found in Appendix A of this report. The service continues to work with a wide of partners including schools, children centres and the library service.

2) Adult Skills Budget. Prior to August 2012, for community learning providers this was known as “Formal First Steps” and was allocated in a “block” grant. This has now changed to a formula led “payment by results” funding stream, putting greater pressure on providers in delivering “approved” accredited programmes. This funding is subject to a much more robust performance management process, through which both the SfA and Ofsted make judgements related to quality and future funding allocations.

The shared service has benefited Slough residents through the pooling of the ASB budget, thus enabling the service to respond and enhance its provision of accredited programmes, mainly accessed by the unemployed.

3) 16 to 18 apprenticeships

Through working with AVARTO the number of the council’s business apprentices has increased by 5 during 2012/13 with an additional 5 from 1st August 2014 making a total of 28.

6.4 Learner profile

The table below shows the community learning engagement for the service and also as a proportion between the two boroughs.

	RBWM		Slough		CLASS	
	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12	2012/13
Learners	2,494	1,247	2,411	2,135	4,905	3,369
Enrolments	4,356	1,954	3,507	3,621	7,863	5,575
Disability (%)	12.3%	16.8%	13.6%	18.1%	12.3%	16.8%
Male (%)	27%	21.6%	18.1%	25.7%	27%	24.3%
White British/Irish (%)	72.7%	66%	21%	24.7%	47%	39.7%
Ethnic Minority (%)	27.3%	34%	79.0%	75.3%	53%	60.3%

6.5 Some key features are:

- Overall a decrease in numbers across both boroughs but only a slight decrease in learners in Slough. Steps to address this reduction can be found in section 6.8
- Significant increase in engagement of learners with a disability across both boroughs with an overall increase from 12.3% to 16.8%.

- A slight increase in the percentage of learners from white British / Irish communities from 24.1% to 25.7% - Slough's last Ofsted report commented on the lack of narrowing the achievement gap within this particular group.

6.6 Performance

In Community Learning the service increased its retention rate from (95.7 % to 96.6%), with a slight decrease in achievement (96.5 % to 94.0%) and in success levels (92.4% to 90.8%).

6.7 The overall adult skills performance based on 478 "starts" is shown below:

- Retention is very good at 99.2% against a national average of 89.7%, with no variation between genders.
- Achievement levels are low at 80% against a national average of 91.6% with only a slightly higher percentage for females when compared with males.

6.8 The following table gives details of success levels

Level	Starts	Success rate	National average
Level 1	310	71.0%	82.7%
Level 2	168	94.6%	79.9%
TOTAL	478	79.3%	82.0%

6.9 Through further detailed analysis the area that requires attention is primarily the ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) at entry 2 and 3 levels where the success rate is 58%. Strategies for addressing this concern are contained in section 6.8. On a more positive ICT had a success rate of 98% against a national average of 82% and all retail and arts delivery have good success rates.

6.10 The apprenticeship programme continues to make a significant impact on preparing young people to enter employment or further education with 76% of those who started the programme entering employment or going on into further education

6.11 Annual Self-Assessment Review

The service receives the majority of its funding from the Skills funding Agency. A condition of the funding is the requirement to produce an annual Self-Assessment Review, within which the service grades itself within a quality framework used by Ofsted during their inspection.

6.12 Slough was last inspected in November 2010, when the overall effectiveness was judged to be good (grade2), whereas Windsor and Maidenhead's last inspection in May 2012 were judged to be satisfactory (grade3), which is now entitled "in need of improvement."

6.13 Ofsted now place a much higher emphasis on the quality of teaching learning and assessment, and a major focus within the implementation plan has been to up skill staff in order that the quality of delivery is of a consistent high standard across both boroughs.

6.14 The first annual self-assessment review for the period 1st August 2012 to 31st July 2013 the service graded itself in the major categories as follows:

6.15 The self-assessment grades for overall effectiveness, outcome for learners and quality of teaching, learning and assessment have been graded 3 (requiring improvement), with the effectiveness of leadership and management as a grade 2 (good) reflecting the overall change management that the service has been through.

6.16 The judgements were based on the first twelve months of delivery, a transition period through which the service restructured and focused on introducing common standards in curriculum delivery, the impact of which should be seen through the current year.

6.17 The key strengths identified through the review were:

- Strong partnerships through which marginalised and priority groups are engaged.
- Work-based learning continues to deliver outstanding outcomes
- Very good progress in expanding the range of accredited programmes to meet the needs of local employability needs
- Resilience in maintaining delivery and implementing major changes in the service.

6.18 **Areas for improvement**

The table below shows the key areas where improvement is required and the strategies being implemented.

Area	Area of improvement – outcome	Strategies to redress
Leadership & management	To increase the participation of residents benefiting from adult learning activity in order to increase skill levels and quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a commissioning strategy through which 6 new organisations are now contacted to deliver adult learning activity. • Developing a neighbourhood approach in three areas, Britwell (Slough) Broom Farm and Woodlands Park (Windsor and Maidenhead). • Launching a small grants programme to support small community groups to deliver project work.
	To raise the standard of all teaching, learning and assessment with 80 % of observations graded 2 or above Raise the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear focus on supporting staff whose lessons are currently graded 3 (requiring improvement) in order to raise the standard of delivery. • Undertaking planned developmental observations for all new tutors and contractors to highlight areas for development and where additional support is required
	To ensure that managers have robust data to review performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To put in place a robust data inputting, error checking and reporting systems to enable monthly data uploads to the data agency. • To produce timely curriculum reports to monitor,

		<p>retention, achievement and success levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For managers to identify and put in place remedial actions to mitigate against low performance
Skills for life (ESOL)	To improve success rates in ESOL exams at Entry 2 and 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardise all schemes of work to ensure a common approach across the curriculum area. To support tutors with low success rates in improving their delivery. Ensuring, through good initial assessment learners are placed on the most appropriate programme. Effectively capturing differentiation through session plan. To use the more experienced and good tutors to support the less able tutors.
ICT & vocational	To improve the Initial assessment process in order to capture prior learning enabling learners to set realistic targets and or placed on the most appropriate course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the initial assessment process to ensure it is appropriate for current learners. Develop bespoke curriculum based assessments that are appropriate to the activity.
Vocational & family learning	To further increase the standard of teaching across the curriculum areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To focus support on those tutors who require additional support in setting SMART targets, ensure feedback is given on progress and learner achievement is captured.

6.19 Future Development

Work with 16 to 24 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEETS) is an emerging priority for the service. The focus of this work will be through City Deal, a Berkshire wide national government funded programme with core funding from the Cabinet Office with additional matched outcome funding from the EU Structural Investment Fund which is managed through the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Reading Borough Council is the overall accountable authority.

- 6.20 City Deal in Slough will be delivered through Slough Aspire with the council being the accountable body and will provide additional capacity to build on and develop a more integrated approach to delivering employability pathways to the 16 to 24 year olds.
- 6.21 The programme will enable a new delivery model to be developed that builds on the strengths of Slough ASPIRE and its delivery partners including the council, East Berkshire College and Learning to Work. The involvement of and support from local business will be critical to the success of this programme.
- 6.22 City Deal funding will enable improvement education and employability outcomes to Slough residents in the form of an increase in young adults undertaking work placements, gaining apprenticeships and in securing employment.

6.23 **Community learning funding**

One of the outcomes of providers who receive Community Learning funding is for “Providers to evidence how they will operate in strong local partnerships to ensure their identified objectives are underpinned by engagement and consultation with communities, Local Authorities, LEPs and other key local stakeholders.”

6.24 Mental health has been identified as one focus for training providers within East Berkshire. Representatives from the community mental health teams from Slough and Windsor and Maidenhead have met with the core providers and begun to explore how to improve the access to training for mental health clients recovering from mental health conditions, in particular how this particular client group can be supported back into employment.

6.25 The Skills funding Agency are particularly keen for different sections of government to come together and pool resources or as a minimum for community learning providers to work with health authorities, other council services, housing associations, the community and voluntary sector to make the most effective use of resources.

6.26 The challenge is to now to maximise this opportunity, through working with a range of agencies to begin exploring how agencies can work more closely together to support this particular group.

7 **Conclusion**

7.1. The shared service has been operational for eighteen months through which the benefits are beginning to be evident, especially with maximisation of the adult skills budget supporting a strong focus on employability, although some of the self-assessment grades are lower than previous years, there is a confidence that the work currently being undertaken will see these increase when the 2013/14 review is undertaken.

7.2 The development of the shared service has enabled the service to meet its 2012/13 efficiency savings of £96,000 whilst maintaining delivery levels, Slough has benefited from being able to maximise the use of the adult s skills budget, and to offer a wider and greater range of opportunities for the residents.

8 **Appendices Attached**

A - Department of Business and Innovation on the National Purpose of Community Learning

9 **Background Papers**

1 - Self Assessment for East Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Service 2012/13

2 - Annual Performance report for East Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Service 2012/13

Community Learning Purpose and Objectives

Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: Building a World Class Skills System (BIS)

OBJECTIVES

- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.
- Widen participation and transform people's destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances, e.g.
 - improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning
 - acquisition of skills preparing people for training, employment or self-employment
 - improved digital, financial literacy and/or communication skills
 - parents/carers better equipped to support and encourage their children's learning
 - Improved/maintained health and/or social well-being.
- Develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient, connected and pro-active citizens, leading to:
 - increased volunteering, civic engagement and social integration
 - reduced costs on welfare, health and anti-social behaviour
 - increased online learning and self organised learning
 - the lives of our most troubled families being turned around.
- Commission, deliver and support learning in ways that contribute directly to these objectives, including:
 - bringing together people from all backgrounds, cultures and income groups, including people who can/cannot afford to pay
 - using effective local partnerships to bring together key providers and relevant local agencies and services
 - devolving planning and accountability to neighbourhood/parish level, with local people involved in decisions about the learning offer
 - involving volunteers and Voluntary and Community Sector groups, shifting long term, 'blocked' classes into learning clubs, growing self-organised learning groups, and encouraging employers to support informal learning in the workplace
 - supporting the wide use of online information and learning resources
 - minimising overheads, bureaucracy and administration.