



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Cabinet Report

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Report of: Sonia Sharp

Date: 23rd May 2012

Subject: Learning provision for young people and adults in Sheffield

Author of Report: Dee Desgranges

Summary:

This report proposes the creation of a new commissioning framework that will allow the local authority to draw on a network of local providers to deliver tailored programmes to young people and adult learners across the city. It seeks permission to use a proportion of the funding awarded annually to the City Council by the Young People's Learning Agency and the Skills Funding Agency to secure learning opportunities for 16-19 and adult learners from a quality assured network of local providers selected through tender.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to approve:

- the creation of a commissioning framework that allows for a more responsive, flexible and innovative approach to matching teenage and adult learners to the provision that best meets their needs
- the tendering, through this framework, of a proportion of the Adult Safeguarded Learning funding awarded to the City Council to better meet the needs of adult learners
- the tendering, through this framework, of a proportion of the Employer Responsive and Learner Responsive funds to better meet the needs of both teenage and adult learners in their local communities.

Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

If Closed add – ‘Not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph... of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).’

* Delete as appropriate

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES/NO Cleared by: Patricia Phillipson
Legal Implications
YES/NO Cleared by: Gillian Anderson
Equality of Opportunity Implications
YES/NO Cleared by: Bashir Khan
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
YES/NO
Human rights Implications
YES/NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
YES/NO
Economic impact
YES/NO
Community safety implications
YES/NO
Human resources implications
YES/NO
Property implications
YES/NO
Area(s) affected
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Cllr Jackie Drayton
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Children, Young People and Family Support
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
YES/NO
Press release
YES/NO

Learning provision for young people and adults in Sheffield

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report proposes the creation of a new commissioning framework that will allow the local authority to draw on a network of local providers to deliver tailored programmes to young people and adult learners across the city. It seeks permission to use a proportion of the funding awarded annually to the City Council by the Young People's Learning Agency and the Skills Funding Agency to secure learning opportunities for 16-19 and adult learners from a quality assured network of local providers selected through tender.

1.2 The Lifelong Learning Skills and Community Service (LLSC) is charged with organising adult and community learning provision in the city on behalf of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). In addition, LLSC holds a contract from the Education Funding Agency(EFA) to organise learning for 16-18 year olds, particularly the most vulnerable and disengaged. LLSC draws down funding from the SFA and the EFA deliver these objectives.

1.3 The service has developed strong and effective networks of local providers, mainly drawn from the third sector, that are able to tailor their provision to meet the specific needs of the targeted young people and adult learners. The new commissioning framework is designed to allow LLSC to use these funding streams to ensure that learners are connected to the learning provision that best meets their needs.

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE

2.1 The framework will allow the young people and the adult learners targeted by these EFA SFA programmes to benefit from learning opportunities shaped to meet their specific needs. LLSC will do this by using the framework to draw on a wide variety of organisations that have been quality assured, which are regularly monitored and which can demonstrate that they bring different strengths and specialisms that benefit learners with a wide variety of needs and aspirations from, for example, language support to specific vocational training. The framework is also designed to build local capacity by providing small and niche providers, usually drawn from the third sector, with the opportunity to develop their offer and to strengthen their sustainability.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 It is proposed that the commissioning framework will operate for three years. However, EFA SFA funding is determined on an

annual basis and for each academic year. The amount of funding available is, therefore, likely to vary over the lifetime of the framework.

- 3.2** Organisations that are selected for the framework, following a standard corporate procurement exercise, will be supported by LLSC to develop and manage the data returns required by the national funding agencies and to deliver the quality of teaching and learning required by Ofsted. All of the provision in the framework will be monitored regularly by LLSC and it is likely that it will be subject to Ofsted inspection during the lifetime of the framework. It is anticipated that through the support offered by LLSC as part of the framework agreement that the organisations with which we contract will develop the capacity sufficiently to be able to bid for mainstream funding and other grant awards in their own right in future years.

4.0 MAIN BODY OF THE REPORT

- 4.1 LLSC is in receipt of:
- EFA *Learner Responsive* funding for 16-18 year olds
 - SFA *Learner Responsive* funding for 19+ learners
 - SFA *Adult Safeguarded Learning* funding for 19+ Community Based Learning
- 4.2 ***Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) funding***
Currently, Adult Safeguarded Learning programmes are delivered through a mixture of direct delivery from tutors employed on a sessional basis by LLSC and by local organisations commissioned to deliver learning in community settings.
- 4.3 The Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS) recently published its *Further Education & Skills Reform Plan: building a world class skills system*. This suggests that, in the spirit of improved localism, those organisations at the local level that have a good knowledge of local needs and training requirements should undertake to establish arrangements by which learners are better engaged to the courses most suited to their needs. The commissioning framework, as proposed in this paper, is designed to meet this requirement.
- 4.4 The Further Education & Skills Reform Plan also proposes the establishment of 'Community Learning Trusts' to organise community learning in local areas. Bids for Community Learning Trust are due in on the 25th May and LLSC will apply to be a pilot trust. The trust is not required to be a legal entity, rather a loose partnership of funded providers and community organisations. Tendering out to these organisations will be part of the trust plan whose focus is to increase local recruitment to and delivery of adult learning.

- 4.5 The local organisations that will be recruited to the commissioning framework will be selected by the standard City Council tendering process. The tender will specify that applicants would preferably have local knowledge and a history of working with community assemblies and local learning partnerships.
- 4.6 The amount to be tendered for the ASL funding stream, based on the indicative SFA allocation for Sheffield will be approximately £700,000.
- 4.7 **Employer Responsive (ER) /Learner Responsive (LR) Funding**
These funding strands are almost exclusively allocated to the City Council's own learning centres, including Sheaf Training, Red Tape Central and the Construction Design Centre as managed by LLSC.
- 4.8 The commissioning framework will provide access to a wider range of partner providers delivering in other local settings and therefore a more diverse and flexible learning offer. This will be designed to meet the needs of young people and adults in their own communities and address the very specific needs of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, for example teen parents, those with learning difficulties and disabilities and some black and minority ethnic communities.
- 4.9 Indicative amounts to be tendered for ER and LR funding coming from the SFA and EFA will not exceed £250,000.
- 4.10 **HR Implications**
A small number of the staff currently employed by LLSC and delivering ASL in community settings may be subject to TUPE if the commissioning of this funding stream goes ahead. The detail of this is currently being worked through by HR on an individual basis.
- 4.11 **Financial Implications**
Moving towards a flexible commissioning framework model will ensure a maximisation of the SFA and EFA contract value awarded to LLSC. The model will also financially support those community based organisations that are accepted on to the framework.
- 4.12 The SFA and EFA allocations have not been confirmed for the period of the proposed framework, however this does not preclude the service from proceeding with establishing appropriate mechanisms for commissioning in advance of the funding being confirmed
- 4.13 **Legal implications**
The Council has the power to secure learning provision under Education Act 1996, provided it:

- considers the needs of persons with learning difficulties
- encourages diversity, opportunity and choice
- facilitates the education and training of certain 16-18 year olds
- takes account of education and training whose provision might be secured by other persons.

Contracts need to be awarded in accordance with procurement law and the Council's Contract Standing Orders. Organisations delivering in these funding streams will be required to adhere to SFA/Education Funding Agency contractual requirements.

4.14 ***Equality Implications***

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and approved.

Consultation will take place with the funding agencies, community assemblies and strategic partners as appropriate to any commissioned activity. This will occur as and when any proposals to move to commissioning are confirmed.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Retain direct delivery of all adult and community learning by the City Council. This is in direct conflict with the national direction of travel to localise responsibility for the planning and delivery through Community Learning Trusts.
- 5.2 Retain direct delivery of the ER and LR funding streams exclusively through the City Council's own learning centres. This would militate against the development of a more flexible and diverse provider base across the city that is, in some cases, better placed to meet the needs of the most vulnerable learners.

6.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The national picture for adult learning is changing and there is a projected move towards developing the activities of local community involvement in adult learning. Offering contracts to local organisations and supporting them to build capacity and expertise will enable them to be better prepared for this. It will also help to strengthen their ability to secure other sources of external funding for education and training.
- 6.2 The city also needs a more flexible, varied, and easily accessible programme of learning for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people that makes us better able to further reduce the NEETS cohort and to meet the challenges associated with the Raising of the Age of Participation to 18 by 2015. A commissioning framework through which quality assured partners are able to respond rapidly, reach into communities and engage potential

learners in innovative ways will contribute to this agenda.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Cabinet is asked to approve :

- the delegation to the Assistant Director of Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities – Family and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet member with the Children, Young People and Families Portfolio and the Directors of Finance and Legal, to award the contracts and to determine the terms and conditions upon which the contracts will be awarded.
- the creation of a commissioning framework that allows for a more responsive, flexible and innovative approach to matching teenage and adult learners to the provision that best meets their needs
- the tendering, through this framework, of a proportion of the ASL funding awarded to the City Council to better meet the needs of adult learners
- the tendering, through this framework, of a proportion of the ER and LR funds to better meet the needs of both teenage and adult learners in their local communities
- the delegation to the the Assistant Director of Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities – Family and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet member with the Children, Young People and Families Portfolio the ability to do anything which they feel is necessary to achieve the outcomes outlines in this report.