

## **Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 09 November 2023**

### **Community Learning Self-Assessment Report 2022 - 2023**

#### **Recommendations**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. scrutinise the performance and quality assurance of commissioned and directly delivered Community Learning provision, as set out in the draft self-assessment report,
- b. and provide ideas and suggestions for future focus or areas for improvement to support the Council's Community Learning Service in continuing to meet the needs of Staffordshire residents.

#### **Local Member Interest:**

N/A

#### **Report of Cllr Philip White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills**

#### **Summary**

##### **What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?**

1. The Skills and Employability department delivers on a range of education and training opportunities to meet the needs of Staffordshire residents and their families, the economy and the wider community. This report is about the Community Learning and Multiply provision delivered across the eight (8) districts of Staffordshire during the 2022-2023 academic year.
2. The Committee is asked to scrutinise the annual performance of Community Learning, to further improve the quality of the service's provided, the outcomes for learners and in supporting the Council in remaining a good learning provider. The Committee is asked to contribute to and agree improvement priorities.

#### **Report**

#### **Background**

3. Performance and the annual self-assessment of Community Learning is reported annually to Committee members, who provide challenge and recommendations to support the development of the service. In 2022 the service secured an additional £4.2m (over a 3-year period) from the Department for Education to deliver the Multiply programme, in addition to the existing annual £1.6m from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to deliver Community Learning. Previous committee meetings, covering the four-year Community Learning procurement framework, are outlined below.
- a. [Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023, Community Learning annual Self-Assessment 2021-2-22](#), Members received the report and gave detailed scrutiny to the self-assessment and recent Ofsted inspection, asking questions, seeking clarification, in regard to increasing participation in digital learning, tracking of destinations, effectiveness information and advice given to residents completing their course and moving into employment or further learning.
  - b. [Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, Community Learning annual Self-Assessment 2020-2021](#), Members received the report and gave detailed scrutiny of the results of the self-assessment and were satisfied with the performance of the Service and welcomed the additional investment to expand the curriculum. Members acknowledged the fall in participation but looked forward to seeing an increase in the number of residents engaging in adult learning in the 2021-2022 academic year. This included a request of further measures to be adopted to encourage participation in further education by those who had undertaken Community Learning courses.
  - c. [Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Community Learning annual Self-Assessment 2019-2020](#). Members agreed the case for future online, blended and face-to-face delivery had been demonstrated and recommended making more use of community buildings to re-introduce face-to-face learning and that future reports are to include appraisal of outcomes. The report also outlined the effectiveness of a Digital Equipment Fund to combat digital exclusion.
  - d. [Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020](#) a briefing paper was presented to the Committee to consider in-year performance in response to the pandemic. The paper detailed the introduction of online learning and less engagement in the districts of Staffordshire Moorlands, Newcastle and South Staffordshire. Members shared concerns about households without access to IT equipment being at a disadvantage and asked for consideration of loaning of equipment and accessing library facilities

to help combat digital exclusion and identified wellbeing issues for some families.

- e. [Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019](#), the Committee considered the annual self-assessment of the Service and the Community Learning strategy and priorities for the Service for 2019-2023. Members were pleased the strategy aligned to the Council's strategic priorities but did seek clarification if targets were challenging enough.

### Self-Assessment 2022-23

4. The self-assessment report contains our judgements against the Ofsted Education Inspection framework (2019) and, once approved, is submitted to Ofsted.
5. In February 2023, Ofsted inspected the provision and judged the service to be good. [Staffordshire County Council - Inspection Report Feb 2023](#)
6. To support the judgements within Community Learning, we also measure the achievement of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as outlined below:

KPIs	Attendance Rate (90%)	Retention Rate (96%)	Pass Rate (98%)	Achievement Rate (94%)
<b>Community Learning (non-accredited)</b>				
All white learners (2480 enrolments)	91%	97%	98%	95%
All other ethnicities (151 enrolments)	91%	97%	99%	96%
<b>Accredited</b>				
All white learners (101 enrolments)	70%	81%	95%	77%
All other known ethnicities (60 enrolments)	59%	75%	89%	67%
<b>Headline data</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>94%</b>

7. On evaluating the service, the following key strengths have been identified:
- clear strategy and priorities, well-aligned to local needs, the intent is matched by the impact,
  - good leadership and robust management of sub-contracted providers, including for the sustainability of the service,
  - effective safeguarding practice and policy,

- d. learners' improved wellbeing, confidence and development of personal skills is excellent,
  - e. teaching, learning and assessment in Community Learning non-accredited courses is good with areas of excellent practice, and support for learners' needs,
  - f. learners make good progress towards their subject-specific learning outcomes.
8. This evaluation has identified the following key areas for improvement in 2023-24:
- a. significant rapid improvement in outcomes for learners on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and digital courses, especially for Black and minority ethnic learners; managers must implement relevant strategies to support and improve attendance,
  - b. effective information and advice and clearer progression pathways,
  - c. personalised learning goals and outcomes to provide sufficient challenge, especially for more able learners, to demonstrate the progress learners make on-course and towards longer-term aspirations,
  - d. use of effective initial and diagnostic assessments to develop appropriate English and Maths learning outcomes.
9. We expect to see improvement in all of the above by December 2023, and will continue to monitor, share and consolidate good practice throughout the remainder of the academic year.
10. The Quality of Education judgement considers our intention, implementation and the impact of this.
- a. Our intent is clear and well-aligned to council priorities and local needs. We effectively reach our target learners by working with a wide range of local partners, including areas of the county council: 74% of enrolments come from learners who have a learning disability/difficulty and/or low qualifications and/or are unemployed and looking for work.
  - b. In Community Learning, learners achieve well: they attend regularly, make good progress and achieve their aims. This leads to significant outcomes for individuals in terms of their wellbeing, confidence, skills to support their families and to move towards employment and volunteering opportunities.
  - c. In accredited provision not all learners attend regularly. Significant staff absence has also contributed to low completion rates on courses, so although the pass rate for qualifications remains relatively high at 94%, improvements need to be made to ensure more learners complete and pass their course.

- d. The vast majority of learners have a good quality experience. Our sub-contracted providers offer excellent facilities, equipment and resources, often in inspiring surroundings in the Staffordshire countryside.
  - e. Tutors are well qualified and experienced, and plan courses that meet learners' individual needs, enable them to progress in the subject, and develop their wider skills.
  - f. A minority of learners would benefit from clearer support for their longer-term aspirations and for their English and maths skill development.
11. The Behaviours and Attitudes, and Personal Development judgements focus on how effectively we support learners to get the most from their learning experience.
- a. All staff have high expectations of learners' behaviour and attitudes. Tutors involve learners in setting expectations and developing effective strategies for learning.
  - b. The provision offers very good support for learners' wider personal development. Learners report that their wellbeing is better, and they feel more confident to connect to others in their community and keep their families safe and healthy. This clearly demonstrates the wider value of Community Learning.
  - c. The service offers effective information and advice for learners' next steps, and providers put in place a range of comprehensive support to enable learners to progress into volunteering, or further learning.
12. The Leadership and Management judgement considers how well the service is governed and managed.
- a. Governance and sub-contracting arrangements are effective.
  - b. Leadership and contract management is robust, ensuring there is a drive for continual improvement, and that performance and quality key performance indicators are met for the vast majority of contracts.
  - c. A few actions for improvement must be more timely.
  - d. Support for delivery partners and tutors is effective in ensuring tutors are reflective and develop their practice.
  - e. Safeguarding arrangements are effective.

## **Multiply**

13. December 2022 saw the introduction of the Multiply programme for Staffordshire, following on from the Department for Education's approval of the council's investment plan.

14. Outreach provision has resulted in 43% of learners returning to engage in substantive provision of more than 2 hours. Substantive provision is delivered via a variety of models including 1-1, classroom and online, and in collaboration with employers and community organisations. We are successfully engaging key target groups such as care leavers, and those furthest away from the labour market.
15. Quality of Education is good, with evidence of learners reporting positive impacts on their ability and confidence with family budgeting, progressing into accredited learning and community learning, and making steps towards employment.
16. Overall learner recruitment has been slower than anticipated. This challenge is being reported nationally by other local authorities. Actions to mitigate this are planned for Q3 of year 2 onwards including:
  - a. targeting schools who need to improve their KS2 maths results,
  - b. reprofiling suppliers to allow for more outreach work,
  - c. the direct delivery team will be delivering some innovative courses to support the cost-of-living challenges,
  - d. re-development of the curriculum to present a more accessible and creative approach.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

17. Community Learning provision contributes to the achievement of the Council's outcomes and priorities:
  - a. have access more good jobs and feel the benefit of economic growth,
  - b. live in thriving and sustainable communities,
  - c. be healthier and more independent,
  - d. encourage good health and wellbeing, resilience and independence,
  - e. offer every Staffordshire child and young person the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential.

### **Community Impact**

18. A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) has been completed and reviewed. The CIA accompanied the report presented to [Cabinet 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022](#) seeking approval of the Community Learning procurement arrangements 2023 – 2027.

### **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

- Appendix 1 – Community Learning SAR 2022-23
- Appendix 2 – Quality Improvement Plan 2023-24

## Community Impact Assessment

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