

**CABINET – 9 MARCH 2018****DRAFT LEICESTERSHIRE ADULT LEARNING SERVICES
STRATEGY 2018-22****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's permission to undertake consultation on the draft Leicestershire Adult Learning Services (LALS) Strategy 2018-22 which sets out the strategic goals for the service. The draft Strategy is appended to this report.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - a) The draft Leicestershire Adult Learning Services (LALS) Strategy 2018-22, as attached to this report, be approved for consultation;
 - b) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet in July 2018 regarding the outcome of the consultation, and submitting the final LALS Strategy 2018-22 for approval.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The development of a LALS Strategy will provide a basis for planning, commissioning and delivering adult learning services for the next four years and will be the first published Strategy for this service.
4. The views of learners and stakeholders are useful to inform the Strategy so that it is positioned to contribute to a range of strategic objectives, in particular, the County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22 - "Working together for the benefit of everyone".

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the draft Strategy on the 6 March and its comments will be reported to the Cabinet.
6. It is intended that consultation with learners and other stakeholders will take place from 2 April to 31 May 2018.

7. The outcome of the consultation and final LALS Strategy will be presented to the Cabinet in July 2018.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. The relevant policy framework includes:
 - Working together for the benefit of everyone: Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22;
 - Working together to build great communities: Leicestershire County Council's Communities Strategy 2017-21;
 - Promoting Independence, Supporting Communities: Our vision and strategy for Adult Social Care 2016-2020: Leicestershire County Council;
 - Providing Less Supporting More: Our vision and strategy for Communities and Wellbeing 2016-2020: Leicestershire County Council.
9. The County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22 outlines the long-term vision for the organisation and for Leicestershire. It sets out an approach which will put outcomes for people first, support integration across the Council's services and make better use of the total resources available. The proposed LALS Strategy would support four of the Plan's five strategic outcomes (more detail on which is given in paragraphs 33-37 below).
10. The priorities in the Council's Communities Strategy 2017-21 include helping communities to work with public services to design and deliver better outcomes for the people of Leicestershire, and to support the voluntary and community sector to provide services and activities. The LALS proposals seek to support this by providing locally based learning activity aimed at improving learner confidence and skill base so that people are better equipped to become more engaged in their local community
11. Leicestershire's strategy for adult social care places a focus on enhancing people's independence so that they are healthier, stronger, more resilient and less reliant on formal social care services. The proposed LALS Strategy would support this focus by providing learning activity that enhances peoples' sense of health and wellbeing, combat social isolation and so contribute to preventing/ delaying an early requirement for formal social care services.
12. It is proposed that the LALS Strategy will sit alongside Leicestershire's Communities and Wellbeing Strategy, being a constituent part of that service. LALS would continue to deliver part of its learning programme through the Council's network of public libraries and develop the natural alliance between libraries and learning.

Resource Implications

13. LALS is funded on a payment-by-results basis through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The current budget is approximately £5m for both

expenditure and income resulting in a nil net budget requirement. There are no specific resource implications relating to the overarching Strategy.

14. The LALS budget draws down on a payment by results basis from the ESFA. The source of its funding is through ESFA's Adult Education Budget (£4.3 million).
15. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

16. This report has been circulated to all Members of the County Council via the Members' News in Brief.

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PART B

Background

National Policy and Financial Issues

17. The Education Act 1996 confers a power on the local authority to provide adult education. Section 15 B of the Act states that the local authority “may secure the provision for their area of full time or part time education suitable to the requirements of persons who have attained the age of 19, including provisions for persons for other areas”. This includes a range of training and leisure provision.
18. The Education and Skills Act 2018 gives local authorities the power to promote participation in education or training of persons belonging to its area.
19. Adult and community education provision is funded through the ESFA and is regulated through Ofsted.
20. A number of key national strategies inform the development and delivery of adult learning services:
 - English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision; Department of Business Innovation and Skills, Department of Education; Department of Business Innovation and Skills;
 - New Challenges New Chances: Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan 2011; Department of Business Innovation and Skills;
 - Skills for Sustainable Growth 2010; Department of Business Innovation and Skills;
 - HM Government Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2017);
 - Careers strategy: making the most of everyone’s skills and talents (2017) Department for Education.

The Local Picture

21. The total population of the County is 682,957, with 77% of the population aged 20 or over (it is 76% for England). The population is ageing and becoming more ethnically diverse, including a significant Asian/Asian British population of 6% with much larger settlements in Oadby, Wigston, and Loughborough.
22. Leicestershire is predominantly rural by area but urban by population with 70% living in the urban centres, 18% in town and fringe settlements, and 12% in rural areas.
23. There were a total of 1,724 Job Seeker Allowance claimants in Leicestershire in July 2017. This equates to 0.4% of the working age population of the County compared to 1% in the East Midlands, 1.1% in England and 1.2% in the UK as a whole.
24. Around 15%, or 5.1 million adults in England, can be described as 'functionally illiterate.' They would not pass an English GCSE and have literacy levels at or

below those expected of an 11-year-old. They can understand short straightforward texts on familiar topics accurately and independently, and obtain information from everyday sources, but reading information from unfamiliar sources, or on unfamiliar topics, could cause problems.

25. LALS, an adult and community learning provider operating across Leicestershire, aims to support people, communities and businesses to develop and engage in learning programmes to suit their needs with a particular focus on the following themes:
 - Families;
 - Skills and employment;
 - Health and wellbeing;
 - Independent living;
 - Community engagement and volunteering.

26. LALS' audience is predominantly aged 19 and over and the service curriculum is mainly part-time study programmes. The service employs 143 full time equivalent staff and delivered 1,037 courses during the 2016/17 academic year.

27. LALS provides a range of accredited and non-accredited learning programmes across 104 venues and delivers 33,000 guided learning hours (learning supported by a tutor) to approximately 6,000 learners. These range from traditional informal leisure and wellbeing type activity to more targeted skills-based work that focuses on those furthest from the jobs market, with an aim of preparing people for more formal learning and work. In 2016/17 the learning profile consisted of:
 - English and Maths tuition (24%);
 - ICT/Employability courses (16%);
 - Work-based learning (8%);
 - High needs, for example learning disability and mental health (10%);
 - Family Learning (6%);
 - Personal development activities such as photography, yoga and art (36%).

28. The service is regulated through Ofsted through the Common Inspection Framework. LALS underwent a full Ofsted inspection in 2015 and was rated as "Good". A short Ofsted inspection in February 2018 also resulted in a "Good" rating.

Local strategic context

29. The draft LALS Strategy is the first document that indicates how the service proposes to align itself strategically across a range of other key county strategies. These include those mentioned in Part A of this report and partnership plans, such as:
 - Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) Strategic Economic Plan;
 - Leicestershire Rural Development Framework 2014-2020; Leicestershire Rural Partnership;

- Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2022.

30. LALS contributes to a range of outcomes by:

- Developing learner skills and confidence so that they can progress in employment;
- Supporting low-skilled workers with English, Maths and ICT;
- Providing information, advice and guidance on learning pathways;
- Helping learners make healthy lifestyle choices and gaining a sense of health and wellbeing;
- Providing local learning opportunities that bring people together to share learning experiences.
- Promoting a sense of community safety through the promotion of the British values (as required by the Department for Education since 2014 and assessed by Ofsted) of democracy, individual liberty, and tolerance of people with different faiths and beliefs.

Engagement

31. The Strategy has been developed through informal engagement activity (which took place October to December 2017) with a number of internal Council stakeholders (including the Economic Growth Team in the Chief Executive's Department, Leicestershire Traded Services, and Public Health) and through adult learning staff groups.

32. The key themes from feedback received can be summarised as:

- Support for the vision and key design principles;
- Concern that there may be duplication with other areas of the County Council, for example that undertaken by the Learning and Development section;
- The need to engage with external stakeholders such as the LLEP and learners;
- Closer liaison with community colleges and adult learning services in Leicester;
- Exploring how learners' confidence can be channelled into making a wider contribution in their communities.
- Complement existing work with volunteers such as Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL).

Proposed Strategy for LALS

33. The draft LALS Strategy sets out how the service proposes to focus its activity to contribute towards four of the five key outcomes identified in the Council's Strategic Plan - a Strong Economy, Wellbeing and Opportunity, Keeping People Safe, and Great Communities - and become more targeted in opening up lifelong learning pathways for those for whom learning in the past may have been a barrier.

Strong Economy

34. Through a range of activity such as its apprenticeship programme, LALS can help learners develop the skills and confidence to progress along a career pathway, and make informed choices. The service will:
- provide access to good Information, Advice and Guidance to help people find the right learning opportunities;
 - prioritise the delivery of core skills that employers value including English, Maths and ICT;
 - collaborate with partners to tailor employability programmes to meet the needs of unemployed people;
 - develop partnerships with public and private sector employers to support the delivery of high quality apprenticeships and upskill the workforce;
 - further develop links with employers to provide work experience opportunities;
 - develop new programmes that provide more flexible ways for people to learn which include a mix of online and classroom based learning;
 - tailor existing programmes to support people with learning difficulties and disabilities in work and volunteering.

Wellbeing and Opportunity

35. LALS provides leisure activity for which a fee is payable such as yoga, art and photography. These programmes can have an indirect impact on public health and social care agendas through tackling social isolation and improving an individual's sense of health and wellbeing. However, these activities may not be making a significant contribution to the strategic direction now being proposed and will be reviewed in light of this. The service will:
- refocus its less targeted programmes to support independence, confidence building, first steps learning and health and wellbeing;
 - review and determine alternative funding avenues for any of the current range of courses that are more focussed towards leisure learning;
 - embed volunteering and work experience in programmes to provide pathways to work;
 - support vulnerable and disadvantaged people in developing independent living skills;
 - develop 'first steps' provision to engage and support learners low in confidence and/or poor mental health.

Keeping People Safe

36. Safeguarding learners and promoting British values (as defined by the Department for Education) are prioritised through the Ofsted common inspections framework. Adult learning provision must incorporate crosscutting activity that ensures that learners feel safe and that the British values are maintained. The service will:
- create a safe environment for learning;

- develop learners' confidence to enable them to speak up and share concerns about their safety or wellbeing;
- bring people together from different backgrounds to learn from each other and develop tolerance and understanding;
- embed the development of e-safety skills within learning activities.

Great Communities

37. One of LALS' strengths, recognised by Ofsted, is that it delivers a programme of activity across over 100 local venues, making it well placed to contribute to building capacity in local areas and so contribute to the outcomes of the Council's Communities Strategy "Working together to build great communities".

The service will:

- take account of and develop activity that complements existing work with volunteers provided by key stakeholders such as VAL;
- deliver programmes that develop the skills and confidence of people wishing to volunteer, for example skills to run local services;
- support volunteers and Community Learning Champions to act as advocates for adult learning in their local areas;
- create more effective links with community groups to help them access the expertise they require;
- utilise resources effectively by working in partnership with other services to plan and deliver courses including children and families, libraries, and social care.

Activity to Support the Delivery of the Strategy

38. The sustainability of the service is maintained on a payment by results basis which draws funding from the ESFA. There may be opportunities to explore additional funding streams from other sources to add value to LALS core funding. The service priority will remain equality of access, but will also seek raise income through programmes which can be delivered on a more commercial basis. To achieve these different objectives an effective fees policy will be essential to ensure those less able to pay have every opportunity to participate and gain from the benefits of learning.

39. LALS will continue to engage with its learners, partners and stakeholders to inform its continued development and the delivery of high quality programmes of learning through inspirational teaching and learning activity. It will provide appropriate information, advice and guidance to enable learners to make informed decisions about their future through a combination of online materials and face to face sessions for current or prospective learners in collaboration with other council initiatives. The following therefore needs to be put in place:

- an action plan identifying key areas of work to underpin the strategy;
- an effective fees policy to ensure that those less able to pay have opportunity to participate and gain from the benefits of learning;
- an outcomes-based approach that measures the impact that programmes have on learners as they progress beyond contact with the service;
- continuous reviews of programme areas to ensure that they meet needs;

- continuous working with learners, partners and stakeholders to shape provision.

Consultation

40. It is intended that consultation and engagement with learners and stakeholders such as the LLEP on the draft LALS Strategy will be undertaken from 2 April to 31 May 2018.
41. The consultation will be carried out by means of an online questionnaire and targeted activity involving stakeholders and learners who may wish to have a voice in shaping the Strategy.
42. Staff will be actively encouraged to participate through the online survey to build on the work that has already been undertaken to shape the draft Strategy.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 24 November 2017 - "Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022"

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=4865#AI53604>

Appendix

Realising Potential – The draft strategy for Leicestershire Adult Learning Service 2018-22

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

43. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening exercise was conducted. It is expected that as the impact on protected groups will be minimal that a full EHRIA is not required at this stage. It is intended that the proposed strategic direction should improve access to the LALS service for protected groups.
44. Subsequent EHRIAs will be conducted as reviews of programme areas' progress.

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