

Appendix A

West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership

Strategic Plan 2014/15



West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership (WBCLP) Strategic Plan 2014/15

Purpose of the West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership

To plan, develop and implement the strategy for community learning and ensure the delivery of universal and targeted learning opportunities in West Berkshire.

Membership

Learners are at the centre of the partnership which exists to meet their needs. Tutors and volunteers teach, support the learners and deliver courses across the district at colleges, schools, Children's' Centres, Community and Voluntary groups. These are frequently supported by other organisations with direct links with the learners signposting them to providers.

See:

- Appendix C: Diagram of West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership
- Appendix D: List of West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership members
- Appendix E: List of West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership Board members

Introduction

This Plan is one part of the family of plans which set the priorities for services in West Berkshire. It builds on a series of West Berkshire Council Adult Learning Plans and is the first one written to set the strategic direction of the newly formalised West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership. The partnership was revitalised in 2012 as part of an unsuccessful application for Community Learning Trust pilot status. It was agreed that the newly formed partnership should continue. It was formalised on 10th December 2013 when a new Board was formed and a chair and vice chair elected.

This plan sets the context in which the partnership works, identifies the key plans and priorities that this partnership can contribute to and sets out the aims, actions and outcomes for Community Learning and Skills in West Berkshire during the academic year 2014/15. The plan also lists the strategic challenges faced by the partnership.

A detailed action plan is being developed that will include the responsibility for each action, the timescale for completion and success criteria. This will be monitored by the Partnership Board.

Context

West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership services an area stretching from Hungerford in the west to Reading in the east. The area is largely rural covering 272 square miles. It has an adult population (over 19 years) of 116,500 (census 2011). The total population is expected to increase by 15,000 over the next 10 years with a steep increase in older people with the numbers aged over 85 expected to double. West Berkshire is generally an affluent area and a comfortable safe and pleasant place to live. It is ranked as the 38th least deprived district in England on the 2011 Index of Multiple Deprivation. It is one of the most rural areas within the South East of England with a third of the population living in small rural settlements. The other two thirds live in the Kennet Valley, the Newbury / Thatcham conurbation (42%) and the western suburbs of Reading (20%). Other significant small towns are Hungerford and Theale. The wards with the largest numbers of young people are Greenham, Chieveley and Cold Ash, whilst Speen, St Johns and Victoria, Hungerford, Pangbourne and Aldermaston have a higher proportion of residents over 65 years old.

Average income in West Berkshire is 14% higher than the national average. There are wards e.g. Calcot, Clayhill, Greenham, Northcroft and Victoria which score below average in total deprivation and Thatcham Central which scores high in the scale for income deprivation and Thatcham that is characterised by relatively high numbers of adults who are unemployed, low income families and relatively high rates of crime. Over one fifth of adults do not hold a level 2 qualification whilst one third of adults hold a level 4 qualification, marginally lower than regionally.

Key plans, requirements and priorities that set the context for Community Learning and Skills in the district 2014/15

At the 4th March 2014 meeting of the Community Learning Partnership, members agreed to work together and plan their programmes in order to contribute to the following priorities

1. National

A. Requirements of Providers directly funded by the Skills Funding Agency

Most of the Community Learning and Skills provision in West Berkshire is funded through a contract with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) for Community Learning and Adult Skills. The providers in receipt of the funding are required to:

- Commission, deliver and support a locally determined formal and non formal learning offer that conforms to the objectives set out in New Challenges, New Chances (see Appendix 2)
- Operate in a strong local partnership to ensure their plans and strategies are underpinned by engagement with communities, local authorities, LEPs and other key local stakeholders.
- Operate within the terms and conditions of the SFA funding agreement and the SFA funding rules which state:
 - Providers must have in place a strategy that sets out how they have identified and how they will deliver a balance of the objectives set out in New Challenges, New Chances
 - Providers must show evidence on how they will operate in strong local partnerships to ensure their objectives are underpinned by engagement and consultation with their communities, local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and other key local stakeholders
 - Providers must have clear outcomes and appropriate measures capable of evaluation by their community and local stakeholders
 - Providers must develop and implement a robust financial strategy that adds to their Community Learning allocation
 - Providers must abide by the funding eligibility (including learner eligibility) as set out in the SFA's funding rules

B Policy

Purpose of Community Learning (Extract from Department of Business Innovation and Skills “New Chances, New Challenges” Page 14)

- Maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances
- Promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement

- Maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Purpose of the Adult Skills Budget

To support flexible and responsive provision for learners aged 19+ without level 2 qualifications or without GCSE English or Maths at grades A* to C. Funding is focussed on qualifications that are part of a regulated framework approved by the Skills Funding Agency

2. Local

2.1 Thames Valley Berkshire Local Economic Partnership Strategic Economic Plan 2015/16 – 2020/21 – Programme C – Skills Education and Employment priorities

- Increasing the supply of people with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics experience)
- Introducing higher apprenticeships for older young people i.e. those aged over 19 years
- Building better links between business and education to inform and motivate
- Raising the skills of residents.

2.2. West Berkshire Partnership, Sustainable Community Strategy “A Breath of Fresh Air” priorities:

- A prosperous West Berkshire
- Healthy individuals and communities
- Safer
- Greener
- Accessible

2.3 West Berkshire Skills and Enterprise Partnership priorities:

- Increase knowledge and skills in local businesses (through training and support).

- Increase the number of residents employed locally.
- Increase the skills of local people.
- Ensure children and young people can maximise their individual potential Increase the economic prosperity of our Market Towns.
- Support and encourage the provision of appropriate, decent and sufficient housing

. 2.4. Health and Well Being Board priorities

- Addressing childhood obesity in the Primary School Phase
- Giving every child the best start in life
- Supporting those over 40 years old to address lifestyle choices detrimental to health
- Promoting a vibrant district.
- Promoting independence and supporting older people to manage their chronic conditions

2.5. West Berkshire Council Strategy

Priorities

- Caring for and protecting the vulnerable
- Promoting a vibrant district
- Improving education
- Protecting the environment

Vision and Purpose

- Helping you to help yourself
- Helping you when you cannot help yourself
- Helping you to help one another
- Promoting and acting in the interests of communication, people and businesses of the district

Principles

- Putting people first
- Empowering people and communities
- Living within our means
- Transforming our services to remain affordable and effective
- Doing what is important well.

2.6 West Berkshire Economic Delivery Strategy

Economic objectives:

- Provide effective infrastructure that supports economic growth.
- Encourage inward investment and business retention across all sectors
- Promote West Berkshire as a good location for business, leisure and life.
- Actively support sustainable rejuvenation and regeneration projects in key locations.
- Work with partners to ensure that local skills meet the needs of today's business and work environments.

2.7 Turnaround Families Programme

The ambitions for this programme are:

- To turnaround:
 - service delivery – to help services to better meet the needs of local high need families
 - the lives of 145 West Berkshire families who positively engage with the programme
 - how we pay for and deliver efficient services with less money

- To enhance current local provision of services and encourage new action, basing decisions on evidence of what works
- To offer both challenge and support to families and service providers.

West Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Strategic Plan

At its meeting on 4th March 2014 The WBCLP Board agreed that the Partnership's objectives remain the same as when it was formed

The strategic objectives are:

1. To focus funding on community groups, to increase participation and to meet the needs of disadvantaged learners from all backgrounds
2. To increase fee income through increased participation and progression to longer courses to ensure the universal provision becomes self sustaining
3. To increase participation in rural areas and areas of low participation in learning
4. To motivate and engage the unemployed and help them progress to volunteering and qualification courses
5. To ensure parents, especially those with low level qualifications, are better equipped to support and encourage their children's learning
6. To maintain health and social well being, especially for older learners
7. To develop stronger communities with more self- sufficient, connected and pro- active citizens through increased on-line learning and training of volunteers
8. To develop online information and learning resources to support learners and tutors working in the community
9. To work in partnership to minimise overheads, bureaucracy and administration and eliminate duplication.

Also at its meeting on 4th March 2014 the WBCLP agreed to work to the following outcomes

The Partnership will:

1. Define the scope of community learning across the West Berkshire District

2. Maintain an Ofsted Grade 2 for community learning and skills provision
3. Maintain the matrix standard accreditation
4. Share expertise and generate new ideas to develop and adapt the infrastructure that supports community learning in West Berkshire
5. Implement mechanisms to demonstrate the 'pound plus' element of community learning
6. Promote the value of community learning
7. Prepare and communicate case studies of the benefits of community learning
8. Work in collaboration to meet local targets for community learning
9. Support each other to identify and secure funding for community learning
10. Link in to regional and national groups to inform good practice
11. Support delivery partners to deliver community learning through workshops, tasters and short courses with defined progression routes to support those learners who wish to move on to qualification courses, employment or volunteering.

The following performance indicators were agreed at the WBCLP meeting on 10th December 2013 and the following targets are proposed.

| Key Performance Indicator | 2011/12 | | 2012/13 | | 2013/14 Target | | 2014/15 Target |
|---|---------|-----|---------|-----|----------------|-----|----------------|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % | % |
| Responsiveness | | | | | | | |
| Total Enrolments | 2782 | | 3016 | | 2700 | | 2700 |
| Total Learners | 2145 | | 2310 | | 2100 | | 2100 |
| Learners from areas of low participation in education**** | 704 | 33% | 743 | 32% | 693 | 33% | 30% |
| Learners from areas of deprivation ** | 571 | 27% | 498 | 22% | 567 | 27% | 26% |
| Unemployed Learners | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 20% |
| Learners from rural areas | 436 | 20% | 439 | 19% | 264 | 22% | 22% |
| Courses that run in rural areas | 42 | 13% | 36 | 11% | 240 | 20% | 26% |
| Total number of courses | 317 | | 342 | | 340 | | 340 |

| Key Performance Indicator | 2011/12 | | 2012/13 | | 2013/14 Target | | 2014/15 Target |
|---|---------|--------|---------|--------|----------------|--------|----------------|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % | % |
| Effectiveness | | | | | | | |
| Learners progress to Education, Employment, Training or Volunteering (Sample Based) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 10% |
| Learners Retention | | 94.86% | | 96.82% | | 90-94% | 90-94% |
| Learner Attendance | | 87.96% | | 86.96% | | 87-88% | 87-88% |
| Finance | | | | | | | |
| Cost per learner (based on provider grant allocation) | £220.78 | N/A | £205.59 | N/A | £205 | N/A | £200 |
| Average class size | 9 | N/A | 9 | N/A | 9 | N/A | 9 |
| Pound Plus (as % of allocated grants) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 20% |
| Equality and Diversity - Learner profile | | | | | | | |
| Learners aged over 60 | 442 | 21% | 462 | 20% | 525 | 25% | 26% |
| Learners from ethnic minority groups * | 264 | 12% | 273 | 12% | 168 | 8% | 12% |
| Learners on concessionary fees in receipt of benefits*** | 22 | 1% | 149 | 6% | 42 | 2% | 2-5% |
| Learners on concessionary fees aged 60+ | 155 | 7% | 226 | 10% | 210 | 10% | 10% |
| Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities | 455 | 21% | 376 | 16% | 420 | 20% | 16% |
| *Ethnic Minority = Total less 'White British' & 'Not known/not provided' | | | | | | | |
| **Wards = Calcot, Clay Hill, Greenham, Lambourn Valley, Speen, St Johns, Thatcham North & Victoria | | | | | | | |
| ***Those learners in receipt of benefits who receive discounted course fees | | | | | | | |
| ****Wards with more than 43% of individuals who have less than a level 2 qualification - from Stats on Maps | | | | | | | |

Financial Strategy
2014/15 Commissioning Allocations

| | Community Learning | ASB | Total |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Income | | | |
| SFA Allocation WBC | -401,320.00 | -81,297.00 | -482,617.00 |
| Council Contribution (Turnaround Families and ASC) | -13,000.00 | | -13,000.00 |
| | -414,320.00 | -81,297.00 | -495,617.00 |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Salaries | 171,000.00 | | 171,000.00 |
| Other Costs (inc ASB Uplift) | 23,130.00 | 6,485.00 | 29,615.00 |
| TOTAL | 194,130.00 | 6,485.00 | 200,615.00 |
| Balance | -220,190.00 | -74,812.00 | -295,002.00 |
| Allocations for Commissioning | | | |
| Internally Delivered Provision | 20,000.00 | | 20,000.00 |
| Community Education Fund Awards | 55,000.00 | | 55,000.00 |
| Medium and Large Contracts | 127,000.00 | 71,500.00 | 198,000.00 |
| Learner Support and Concessions | 18,190.00 | 3,312.00 | 21,502.00 |
| Neighbourhood Learning Centre Support | 1,200.00 | | 1,200.00 |
| TOTAL | 220,190.00 | 74,812.00 | 295,002.00 |
| Balance | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Priority Groups

To ensure that public funding is focussed on people that are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, the Community Learning Partnership endorsed the decision that the Council will welcome bids to deliver community learning and skills from organisations that prioritise delivery to:

- People with low levels of literacy, numeracy and /or IT skills
- People with low levels of skills
- People who are unemployed or under employed
- People who wish to retrain
- People who live in rural areas
- People who live in areas with low participation in learning
- Older people
- Parents who need help to support their children in school
- People from ethnic minorities who need support to access learning
- People with disabilities
- People with learning difficulties
- Ex- offenders and probation clients
- People with or recovering from mental illness
- People with or recovering from drug or alcohol dependency

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

The strategic challenges that the West Berkshire Community Learning Partnership face are:

- Reduced central support from the Skills Funding Agency and a new approach to minimum standards which judge the provider not specific provision.
- Changes in the Skills Funding Agency's funding methodology, in particular that of Adult Skills
- Simplification in the funding of qualifications which has reduced the number that qualify for funding
- The cuts in public services and their effects.
- Applying the lessons of the Community Learning Trust pilots
- The probability that the geographical allocation of Community Learning and Skills funds will change over time.
- The changing focus of inspection to include Maths and English in all provision
- Commissioning and supporting providers to deliver programmes funded by the Adult Skills Budget. This budget is paid on outcomes instead of a block grant.
- Changing relationships with partners as restructures take place.
- Addressing the role of the Thames Valley Local Economic Partnership in the context of community learning.