

**Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy**

Report to:	<b>Economic Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>18 October 2016</b>
Subject:	<b>Adult Learning Programme and its Contribution to Economic Development</b>

**Summary:**

This report provides an outline of Adult Learning activity in the past twelve months and its contribution to Economic Development.

**Actions Required:**

It is recommended that the Economic Scrutiny Committee

1. Notes the current progress
2. Supports the Community Learning Service by helping to ensure that residents are aware of the programme
3. Provides guidance on businesses they would like including in the Apprenticeship programme

## **1. Background**

Adult Learning programmes are funded via the Skills Funding Agency's Adult Education Budget and managed by the Community Learning Service within the Commissioning Group for Economic Growth. Our vision is that learning is recognised by our residents as an essential part of creating a better future for themselves and for the Lincolnshire community.

The County Council raises achievements and aspirations by providing high quality learning opportunities in a safe environment that enable learners to progress according to their ability needs and interests.

A Learning Board, whose membership includes Councillor D Brailsford, governs the Community Learning Service and provides strategic direction and challenges, helping officers to shape provision and priorities, and monitors distribution, delivery and quality.

Through a range of commissioning and direct delivery arrangements, provision is planned to meet regional employment and learning needs, as well as the key strategic priorities of Lincolnshire County Council, as outlined below:

## Key Strategic priorities of the Community Learning Service:

- Employability and Skills
- Improving Outcomes for Families
- Children's Learning and Development
- Reducing Child Poverty
- IT Skills and supporting people to get online
- Health and Well Being
- Promoting Independence for Adults
- Sustainable development
- Community Benefit
- Provision to promote the unique essence of Lincolnshire

## Headline data, 2014 to 2016

The Community Learning programme is commissioned to 19 carefully selected sub-contracted Providers that are able to deliver the required range of community learning and adult skills programmes across Lincolnshire. The service also directly delivers a Family Learning programme in schools and children's centres providing opportunities for parents and carers to refresh their own skills so that they are better able to support their children, as well as improve their employability prospects.

A wide range of Adult Learning courses are offered to encourage engagement with adult learning as well as to develop skills and support improved employability. Through skilful partnership working with other Adult Education providers the provision is designed to add value, and provide inbuilt progression routes, to other provision. This unique provision fills the gaps and meets the needs of Lincolnshire communities that aren't able to be met by other funding provision. Courses include GCSE and Functional Skills maths and English, CV writing and Interview Skills, Customer Service Skills, nursing and social care, Pilates, modern foreign languages, creative story-telling, sign language, Makaton, dressmaking, relaxation and meditation, introduction to mental health, digital employability skills and computing and Family Learning provision. An important aspect of the non-accredited provision is engagement activity to support learners onto accredited programmes including Access to Higher Education and GCSE provision. A total of 1,094 qualifications were achieved in the 2015/16 academic year ranging from the essential GCSE English and maths qualifications, as well as other qualifications in English and maths to 26 Apprenticeships.

There is good engagement of learners from the Council's priority groups, as outlined in the table below, as a result of tailored curriculum planning to meet the needs and interests of the learners involved, as well as delivering provision in a variety of outreach locations, close to public transport links, ensuring accessibility. The level of engagement with unemployed and hard to reach learners who benefit from development of personal skills is high, due to robust working with Work Programme Providers and organisations such as Job Centre Plus (JCP), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Ingeus, and HMP North Sea Camp. Strong recruitment of learners from areas of deprivation continues to be recorded across the whole Adult Learning programme, in order to support improved employment skills in line with

county priorities. Local networking and bespoke provision has led to increased engagement with the migrant community. Demand for the programme remains high, as outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Learner Engagement 2014-2016**

<b>Learner Engagement</b>	<b>2014/15 Learners</b>	<b>2015/16 Learners</b>
Community Learning Programme (delivered in Community venues and Colleges across Lincolnshire)	8,355	8,281
Family Learning Programme (delivered in schools and children's centres across Lincolnshire)	975	1,613
Traineeships	11	25
Apprenticeships	32	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,373</b>	<b>9,965</b>
<b>Engagement with Targeted groups</b>	<b>2014/15 Learners</b>	<b>2015/16 Learners</b>
Males	36%	33%
Unemployed	30%	32%
Ethnic Minorities	8%	9%
Aged 65/+	13%	12%
LLDD learners	23%	24%
Areas of deprivation	19%	21%
<b>Strategic Priorities</b>		
<b>Employability and Skills</b>		33%
Improving Outcomes for Families		32%
Children's Learning and Development		9%
Reducing Child Poverty		12%
IT Skills and supporting people to get online		24%

### **Spread of provision**

Highly effective planning of the programme ensures a wide spread of provision across Lincolnshire in those areas where research has identified a need. Funding is concentrated in areas of market failure, as outlined in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 - Geographical spread of provision, 2015/16**

<b>Geographical area</b>	<b>Provision 2015/16</b>
Boston	14%
Bourne	1%
Caistor	1%
Deepings	3%
Gainsborough	13%
Grantham	5%
Horncastle	1%
Lincoln	20%
Mablethorpe	4%
Market Rasen	6%
North Hykeham	4%
Skegness	8%
Sleaford	4%
Spalding	7%
Stamford	10%

**Outcomes data**

The quality of the education and training provided is 'Good', as recognised by Ofsted in April 2016. High quality learning takes place in accessible community venues which is reflected in the robust outcomes data highlighted in Table 3.

**Table 3 – Outcomes data 2014-2016**

	<b>2014/15</b>			<b>2015/16</b>		
	Attendance	Retention	Success	Attendance	Retention	Success
Community Learning	92%	100%	98%	93%	99%	99%
Family Learning	70%	95%	91%	81%	98%	95%
Traineeships	No data available			98%	100%	100%

**Partnership working**

Good partnership working ensures the Adult Learning programme is relevant to local employment opportunities and reflects local priorities of improving skills. The wide range of provision offered is carefully considered and based on a thorough understanding and analysis of a range of information. Partnership working with organisations such as Job Centre Plus, District Councils, care providers, Action for Employment (A4E), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Acis Housing and Lincolnshire Community Voluntary Service (LCVS) ensures a good spread of, and recruitment to, provision that is relevant to local employment opportunities. Likewise, good

engagement with local employers including the Co-op, the Gelder Group, Wright Vigar accountants, Cummins Diesels (Stamford), Bakkavor, Oakwick Utility Arborists, Long Sutton Barns, J.O. Sims and Susilva, to name but a few, helps to ensure provision is planned and delivered in a way that supports local employment needs.

Examples of how this strong partnership working through the Adult Education programme is supporting local employment needs includes attendance by Cummins employees on a basic supervisory course at New College Stamford that lead to the development of an ILM qualification course at the company. Another example is through the work that one of our Providers, Community Learning in Partnership (CLIP) has been doing with JCP Gainsborough and Lincolnshire Co-op. JCP Gainsborough identified that Lincolnshire Co-op were opening a new store in Gainsborough in January 2016 and made contact with them to discuss the potential of a "Sector-based Work academy" in which long-term unemployed people would be trained to a state of "readiness" to apply for the vacant positions, working with CLIP as the preferred provider. 17 long-term unemployed learners started the two week intensive course and, in an open competition 3 of the learners gained jobs in the new Co-op.

### **Impact of the Community Learning programme**

Some examples of the impact of the Community Learning programme in 2015/16 are outlined below:

A learner at Boston College who, as a result of attending the '*Introduction to the Care Certificate and Health and Social Care*' course enrolled on an apprenticeship programme to work towards her Level 2 QCF Diploma in Health and Social Care, as well as undertaking the necessary maths qualifications. The Care Home Deputy Manager where the learner works commented that "*Angelina's knowledge and work ethic has increased since she started her Care certificate and QCF Apprenticeship with Boston College*".

There are many examples of how learners are using the skills gained on RHG Consult's 'Start Your Own Business' course delivered in partnership with RAF bases and the Prince's Trust. These include a female learner who had been in an abusive relationship and felt very exposed with tradesmen in her own home. As a consequence she has retrained as an electrician and, as a result of the skills gained on the '*Start Your Own Business*' course, has set up her own business employing other tradeswomen to offer services to vulnerable women.

Another success story from this provision is that of Alex Harisson who was formerly a Guardsman in the British Army Grenadier Guards. Whilst serving in Afghanistan he was shot in the head at point-blank range and lost the sight in one eye. Suffering from 'Post-traumatic stress disorder' and anxiety Alex left the Army and, having secured a job at a local landscaping company, decided he wanted to set up his own business. Alex joined the Start Your Own Business Course and, with the help of RHG and his Prince's Trust advisor, was able to put a business plan together which led to a loan and the support of a business mentor. Alex is keen to point out that the course not only allowed him to start his business but also to

develop his confidence. Alex has now successfully set up his own gardening business 'Guardman Landscaping and Property Services Ltd.' and, working at full capacity, recently took on his first member of staff.

A learner who attended the 'Start Your Own Business' provision provided the feedback below:

*"I found the course invaluable! After attending I set up my company 'Shepherd Seeds'. I'm a small grain seed specialist based in Lincolnshire supplying environmental seed and wild flowers to farmers across the country. It has taken off really well thanks to the information I received via RHG and the Princes Trust. I would highly recommend this course to anyone. Many thanks"*

Equally favourable learner outcomes are reported from the service's Family Learning programme. For example, learners on Family Learning provision in Bourne have gone on to gain employment in local schools as teaching assistants.

### **Apprenticeship Programme**

The County Council sub-contracted the delivery of a small Apprenticeship programme of 46 Apprentices to the City of Lincoln Council. The majority of these Apprentices were employed by Lincolnshire County Council, the City of Lincoln Council and Barnardo's. The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2017 for larger employers will release Skills Funding Agency Apprenticeship funding. Guidance from members regarding companies that would benefit from an Apprenticeship programme would be welcomed.

## **2. Conclusion**

The Community Learning programme is performing well and continues to deliver high numbers of learners and good quality learning opportunities. Satisfaction levels and feedback reported from learners and partners is also good. The impact of the provision that improves employment prospects for the learners concerned, and facilitates progression into work, as well as supporting local employers, is extremely encouraging. The learning programme continues to be responsive to changing skills' requirements of local employers. Upskilling learners to meet local employment needs, via this niche programme, remains a priority of the County Council.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

n/a

## **4. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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