

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	<b>Cllr Vic Pritchard, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Housing</b>		
DECISION DATE:	<b>On or after 29<sup>th</sup> January 2011</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
		<b>E</b>	<b>2226</b>
TITLE:	<b>Community Learning Service – Future Option</b>		
WARD:	All		
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>			
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Overview of Skills Funding Agency Allocations</b></li><li>• <b>Analysis of Strengths and Weakness of Option</b></li><li>• <b>Letter from the City of Bath College Principal</b></li></ul>			

### 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Since 2005 the Bath and North East Somerset Community Learning Service has received external funding from the Skills Funding Agency to deliver informal learning opportunities to people aged 19 and over who have few skills/qualifications with the aim of supporting progression to further learning and/or work.
- 1.2 From 1 August 2011 the Skills Funding Agency will introduce Minimum Contract Levels of funding based on 2010/11 allocations. The Community Learning Service will fall below the £500,000 threshold required to receive funding.
- 1.3 Bath and North East Somerset Council will no longer receive a direct contract from the Skills Funding Agency to deliver informal adult learning – new arrangements with another provider will need to be made.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet member is asked to agree that:

- 2.1 The Skills Funding Agency allocation for informal adult learning is transferred from Bath and North East Somerset Community Learning Service to the City of Bath College, with effect from 1 August 2011.

2.2 Designated Community Learning Service staff are transferred to the City of Bath College under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings – Protection of Employment) arrangements with effect from 1 August 2011.

### 3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Whilst every effort will be made for as many staff as possible to be transferred to the new provider, there will be some redundancies as the allocation from the Skills Funding Agency for 2011/12 will be insufficient to support all posts

3.2 Costs for managing the Service will transfer to the new provider, thereby saving the authority some support and infrastructure costs (eg use of the Hollies office accommodation)

### 4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- Building communities where people feel safe and secure
- Promoting the independence of older people
- Sustainable growth

### 5 THE REPORT

5.1 Since 2005 Bath and North East Somerset Council Community Learning Service has received external funding from the Skills Funding Agency (previously the Learning and Skills Council) to provide informal adult learning opportunities to people aged 19 and over with few skills or qualifications, in the Bath and North East Somerset area

5.2 The Community Learning Service is a recognised learning provider by the Skills Funding Agency

5.3 The Skills Investment Strategy 2011/12, published on 16 November 2010, confirmed that the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and the Skills Funding Agency will introduce a Minimum Contract Level from August 2011, with the threshold set at £500,000

5.4 The minimum contract level for 2011/12 is being applied on the basis of the total funding allocation made by the Skills Funding Agency for 2010/11

5.5 The purpose for introducing a Minimum Contract Level is to enable efficiency savings and economies of scale for the Skills Funding Agency

5.6 The Community Learning Service received **£377,436** for the 2010/11 academic year from the Skills Funding Agency; this is below the Minimum Contract Level permissible for 2011/12, therefore Bath and North East Somerset will not receive funding from the Skills Funding Agency after 31 July 2011

5.7 The **£377,436** is part of a national £210 million Adult Learning Safeguarded fund (*Appendix 1*) and is made up of 4 key funding streams – the allocation for Bath and North East Somerset is:

- Personal and Community Development Learning (£169,629)

- Wider Family Learning (£23,213)
- Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (£39,319)
- Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (£75,654)
- **Total = £307,815**

5.8 Current funding outside of the Safeguard includes:

- Formal First Steps (£52,121)
- Family Learning Impact Funding (£17,500)
- **Total: £69,621** It is not yet clear whether these amounts will be included in the allocation for 2011/12

5.9 If these amounts are not included, the allocation would be reduced to £307,815 which would effectively make the option to hold a sub-contract unviable as the infrastructure costs and overheads for office accommodation etc and staffing would leave inadequate funds for any teaching and learning to take place and thus targets would not be met

5.10 The working assumption is that £307,815 will be guaranteed for 2011/12

## 6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The report authors and Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

## 7 EQUALITIES

7.1 Funding and some staff for informal adult learning work will transfer to another provider therefore an equalities impact assessment is not required.

## 8 RATIONALE

8.1 Options have been explored regarding the most feasible in terms of securing value for money, best provision of adult learning opportunities for the people of Bath and North East Somerset, limiting the number of staff at risk and affordability

8.2 Two options emerged:

- to become a sub-contractor of Bristol Community Learning Service (with all Skills Funding Agency funding going directly to Bristol Council and Bristol sub-contracting back to Bath and North East Somerset Council/Social Enterprise)
- to transfer funding, provision and some staff to the City of Bath College

8.3 A third option would be not to seek alternative provision for adult learning for the people of Bath and North East Somerset with the resulting loss of provision and staff

8.4 An analysis of strengths and weakness of both options has been undertaken; the evidence suggests the option to transfer funding to the City of Bath College would ensure maximum cost effectiveness, continuation of provision and protection for staff (*Appendix 2*)

- 8.5 It is unlikely there would be sufficient funds to support a West of England consortium model as infrastructure costs would remain (and possibly increase with the introduction of a Social Enterprise model for Adult Services), whereas these costs would be mainly absorbed through a transfer to the City of Bath College
- 8.6 Meetings have taken place with the Principal of the City of Bath College who has discussed the matter with the governing body of the College – they agree ‘that it would be worthwhile for us to explore in more detail how we could integrate the current contract and offer into College operations’ (*formal letter Appendix 3*)
- 8.7 From informal discussions with the Principal we believe that the College understands the ethos of adult and community learning and will endeavour to ensure that provision will be maintained and enhanced through an integrated approach which will support progression routes and opportunities for learners – it will also continue to provide enhanced adult learning opportunities for local residents
- 8.8 Meetings have been held with Stella Doble (Divisional Director – Adult Services), Tina Clarke (Management Accountant), Jane Shayler (Programme Director, Non-Acute Health, Social Care and Housing), Jo Southwell (Human Resources) and Cllr Vic Pritchard
- 8.9 Information regarding future options for informal adult learning has been shared with Community Learning Service staff through regular team meetings and updates

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 Bath and North East Somerset Community Learning Service to become a sub-contractor of Bristol City Council Community Learning Service. The Skills Funding Agency allocation for informal adult learning would be allocated directly to Bristol. This option has been rejected as there would be insufficient funds to support a sub-contracted delivery model.
- 9.2 Bath and North East Somerset Council relinquish funding. This option has been rejected as there would be a resulting loss of informal adult learning provision for the area. All staff posts would become redundant.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 The recommendation has formally received support from the Community Health and Social Care Services Committee; a 1:1 meeting has been held with the Cabinet member; meetings have been held with the Divisional Director - Adult Services, the Programme Director, Non-Acute Health, Social Care and Housing, Management Accountant and Community Learning Service staff.

## **11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION**

- 11.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations

## 12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 Divisional Director – Adult Services; Programme Director – Non-Acute Health, Social Care and Housing; Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services; Divisional Director - Finance have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

<b>Contact person</b>	Jan Walker (01225 396450); Stella Doble (01225 831843)
<b>Background papers</b>	
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	