

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1	<b>Meeting:</b>	Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning and Culture
2	<b>Date:</b>	September 27 <sup>th</sup> 2011
3	<b>Title:</b>	<b>New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the Further Education Reform Programme</b> <b>Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning</b>
4	<b>Directorate:</b>	Children and Young People's Services

### 5 **Summary**

In November 2010 the government published two strategy documents, Skills for Sustainable Growth and Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth setting out the future direction of the reform of further education for those aged 19 and over. The department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) is now consulting on proposals to deliver the governments' aims for Informal Adult Community Learning to:

- Promote consistently high quality teaching and learning
- Freeing college and other providers from as many bureaucratic restrictions as possible in order to allow a more effective response to the needs of communities

The consultation on Informal Adult Community Learning is part of a wider consultation on the post-19 further education provision. This includes consultation questions on:

- The structure of the sector
- The impact of greater freedoms and flexibilities on the sector
- The impact of simplifying the funding system
- The provision of adult literacy and numeracy
- The introduction of FE loans.

### 6 **Recommendations**

That the review of Further Education Reform Programme and Informal Adult Community Learning be noted.

That the Senior Director for Schools and Lifelong Learning respond to the consultation by 21st October 2011.

That a further report regarding the outcome of the consultation and the impact upon the council's delivery of Adult and Family Learning be submitted when the proposals for the future are published.

## 7 Proposals and Details

As set out in *New Challenges, New Chances* the consultation focuses on six key challenges:

1. The need to clarify Government objectives for the funding of Informal Adult Community Learning and its role in supporting wider Government policy objectives, including the Big Society, localism, health and wellbeing, social inclusion and digital inclusion.
2. The need to ensure that Government funding is sufficiently focused on the most disadvantaged. Middle income, educated learners are currently over-represented. However they do pay fees which could cross-subsidise those who cannot afford to pay.
3. The need to provide robust evidence for Informal Adult Community Learning. Social and economic impact measures for BIS-funded Informal Adult Community Learning are under-developed and Government does not collect data on non-government funded Informal Adult Community Learning.
4. The need to address funding anomalies and make funding fairer. Funding is currently based on an historical, and in many cases inequitable, distribution.
5. The need to create the conditions that will enable a much wider range of informal learning to thrive, whether this is supported by Government, self-organised in local communities, delivered in the private sector or enabled through harnessing the power of the internet.
6. The need to ensure that workforce training and quality assurance arrangements support the new vision for BIS-funded IACL.

## 8 Finance

For the academic year 2011/12 four components of the Adult Safeguarded Learning budget have been combined into a single budget line. The four previously separate components are:

- Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC)
- Personal and Community development Learning (PCDL)
- Wider Family Learning (WFL)
- Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN).

Funding at national level will be maintained at the 2010/11 rate of £210 million for 2011/12 and 2012/13. The financial implications for delivery at local level will not be known until after the consultation.

## 9 **Risks and Uncertainties**

The government has recognised the value of Adult Learning and has made a commitment to continue funding. The future shape of provision in Rotherham will not be known until after the consultation and the implementation of the Further Education Reform programme.

## 10 **Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Adult Safeguarded Learning targets are set by the Skills Funding Agency.

## 11 **Background Papers and Consultation**

New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the Further Education Reform Programme - Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning

This document is part of the wider consultation on the reform of Further Education to be found at:

[www.bis.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.bis.gov.uk/consultations)

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