

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE: 17TH DECEMBER 2015

**Future Provision of Adult Community Learning by the Department
for Education and Children**

This report updates Executive Board members on the current financial position facing the Department of Education and Children's Adult Community Learning Service. This service is not core funded by the County Council and is dependent on Welsh Government (WG) grants to function. Over the past year, the service has experienced a £289k reduction in the Welsh Government grants that fund course provision, staff and related buildings.

In addition to this reduction in grant funding, in September 2015 the management of Coleg Sir Gâr decided that it will not be possible to transfer service staff and course provision from the County Council into the college structure. A detailed budget monitoring exercise has highlighted that the service is currently approximately £147k over the allocated budget for community learning in the 2015-2016 year. These factors mean that unless alternative funding from County Council budgets to support community learning delivery is identified, the service will not be able to continue to deliver the current range of courses, manage the range of service buildings and employ the related service staff.

In the absence of any identified additional funding to support the service, officers have planned how the ACL service can function using the budget available (approx £435k tbc) in the 2016-2017 financial year.

It is recommended that the following actions be undertaken:

1. The ACL service budget be prioritised for the delivery of adult basic education, literacy, numeracy, digital literacy courses, English for Speakers of Other Languages (including language provision for refugees) and activities to target the hardest to reach learners and people experiencing the effects of poverty;
2. The Adult Basic Education section of the service is restructured in 2016 to be able to deliver this provision in the most cost effective manner possible;
3. A review of the course fee policy takes place, with fees to be charged for ESOL courses, though Basic Skills (literacy and numeracy) courses will remain free;
4. The provision of other adult community learning classes (e.g. in subjects such as art, crafts, languages, computing and humanities) cease to be provided by the service after 31st March 2016 with the resulting reduction in the number of related staff employed;
5. The service formally relinquishes management and all related running costs of the Cennen Centre, Ammanford, Glanamman Community Education Centre and Felinfoel Community Education Centre as of 31st March 2016;
6. The service retains a presence in Carmarthen town, exploring options for the location of provision by assessing the viability of utilising space in Carmarthen library, or continuing to use the Carmarthen Community Education Centre or other premises, and retains the use of rooms in Llanelli library;
7. The ACL service retains a role in collating information about courses offered by other organisations and individuals in Carmarthenshire and promotes this information via website listings and a named contact officer.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: *JARees* Aeron Rees

Head of Learner Programmes

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities YES	Legal YES	Finance YES	ICT YES	Risk Management Issues YES	Staffing Implications YES	Physical Assets YES
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1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Adult and community learning does not impact directly on the Crime and Disorder theme. However, community learning courses are one way to engage with people who are at risk of offending or ex-offenders. The service has a long history of work with the probation service. Welsh for Adults, Basic Skills (literacy and numeracy). English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses help people play their full part in society, gain work and integrate into their local communities.

The most recent profile of learners enrolled in courses provided by the service indicates that 72% of learners are female, 43% are in the 60+ age category and 85% are not currently employed. Any changes to this provision will affect these population groups to a greater extent than others. The service currently delivers English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses. Changes to this provision will affect the opportunities for people who have moved from other counties, including refugees, who are seeking to integrate into local communities. Women make up 95% of the staff employed by the service. Any reduction in service staffing will affect women disproportionately.

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared related to the proposed changes to the work of the ACL Service as outlined in this report.

2. Legal

The Learning & Skills Act 2000 specifies *“LEAs are [also] responsible for certain categories of further education... LEAs may, in respect of part-time provision for those over compulsory school age and full time education for those over 18, secure provision for their area of appropriate facilities.” (Section 22.)*

Thus the direct provision of adult and community learning is not one of the statutory obligations placed on Local Authorities through the Learning & Skills Act 2000. This means that Carmarthenshire County Council has no statutory duty to provide adult community learning courses directly, since this provision could be offered via third party providers who already offer some of these courses in the local area.

1. Finance

The full financial details for the adult community learning service are contained in the main body of this report.

4. ICT

Provision of IT and digital literacy classes together with providing local access to computer facilities are key components of current community learning provision. Changes to course delivery and the management of community education centres this will impact upon these courses and the ability of people to access IT locally. Currently, 19.60% of households in Carmarthenshire do not receive broadband speeds of at least 2 megabits per second (Mbps) and 22.8% of adults in Carmarthenshire have never been online. Further details about levels of digital exclusion in Carmarthenshire and Wales can be found via the following links <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-34571416> & <http://www.go-on.co.uk/resources/heatmap/#details-container>

5. Risk Management Issues

Over the past five years, the Welsh Government has changed the emphasis of funding for ACL courses. They also published a strategy for the development of ACL provision in Wales in 2011 which highlighted the need for ACL to focus upon courses for literacy, numeracy, Welsh for Adults and English for Speakers of other languages (ESOL) together with targeting “hard to reach” learners, not currently taking part in education and training.

Should a decision be taken by the County Council to cease or reduce the currently levels of adult community learning course delivery, the local authority would retain a role (via the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee) in ensuring that suitable adult learning provision is available in Carmarthenshire.

6. Physical Assets

The ACL service has reduced the number of buildings that it manages by three since 2012. The service is currently transferring responsibility for the Glanamman Community Education Centre to Cwmamman Town Council via asset transfer arrangements. This will leave the service responsible for community education centres in Carmarthen and Felinfoel and the Cennen Centre, Ammanford which is the base for basic skills and ESOL provision in the Dinefwr area. The Llandeilo community education centre is now being managed by the Welsh for Adults Service. The majority of the courses run by the service take place at these centres. While these facilities are funded from the budget of the Department for Education and Children, they are used by a wide range of community and voluntary sector groups and play an important role in promoting social inclusion.

At most of these centres, community use outweighs the delivery of ACL classes. Thus education department funding intended for course provision is subsidising the wider community benefit. Rental income at these centres only covers a small percentage (typically around 15%) of the building administration and running costs. Given the scale of budget reductions detailed elsewhere in this report, it is proposed that the ACL Service will cease to run some or all of these buildings in the 2016-2017 financial year.

7. Staffing Implications

The ACL service has been restructured twice since 2008 most recently in 2012. This has, resulted in a reduction in the number of staff employed on each occasion. The service currently employs the following staff:

Service Management

- Lifelong Learning Networks Manager x1
- Community Learning Manager x1
- Data Officer x1

ACL Service delivery (including Basic Skills and ESOL)

- Community Learning Officers x1
- Basic Skills/ESOL officers x3
- Tutor co-ordinators x1
- Exams Officer x1
- Admin staff x 4
- Caretakers/Cleaners x 4
- Tutors (ACL/ABE/ESOL) x 29

Total number of individuals = 46

The proposed changes could result in the retention of these staff as employees of CCC, early voluntary retirement, redeployment or compulsory redundancy.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: *JAREes* Aeron Rees

Head of Learner Programmes

1. Scrutiny Committee

The Education and Children's Scrutiny Committee has been updated regularly in recent years regarding the funding challenges faced by the Adult Community Learning Service. This committee was consulted on related service matters on the 6th July 2015, where committee members asked that "The Executive Board be asked to consider the possibility of finding funding to maintain the Community Education Centres going forward." Minutes of the related discussion are included at the following link <http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/documents/s2183/EXTRACT.pdf>

The matters described in this report were subsequently discussed at the Education and Children's Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17th December 2015.

2. Local Member(s)

All County Council members were formally invited to a series of meetings that took place during June 2015 to update all relevant parties including learners, centre users and service staff, about the challenges faced by the ACL service during the coming year. These meetings took place as follows:

- Tuesday 2nd June 2015 – Llandeilo Community Education Centre (30 attendees, 2 County Councillors present)
- Wednesday 3rd June 2015 – Felinfoel Community Education Centre (34 attendees, 2 County Councillors present)
- Thursday 4th June 2015 – Carmarthen Community Education Centre (24 attendees, no County Councillors present)

3. Community / Town Council

Officers have regular contact with councillors and officers from Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council and Cwmaman Town Council regarding the asset transfer of Pembrey Community Education Centre and Glanamman Community Education Centre respectively.

4. Relevant Partners

Officers work with the following partners through the forum of the Carmarthenshire Adult and Community Learning Group, a sub-group of the Carmarthenshire Children and Young People's Partnership. This group is chaired by the Lifelong Learning Networks Manager and comprises of:

- Coleg Sir Gâr
- Workers Educational Association (WEA)
- University of Wales Trinity St David
- Swansea University
- Communities First
- Careers Wales West
- Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services
- Llanelli Rural Council
- YMCA Wales

Service officers represent Carmarthenshire in the relevant group meetings for the South West and Mid Wales Regional Learning Partnership.

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

The consultation meetings described in the local members section above included service staff, learners and other users of community education centres.

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Delivering Community Learning for Wales (2010)	n/a	http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/communitylearning/deliveringlearning/?lang=en
Transforming Education and Training Provision in Wales – Delivering Skills that Work for Wales	n/a	http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/transformationysiwrnai/?lang=en
Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for Bilingual Wales.	n/a	http://new.wales.gov.uk/956559/910682/iaith_pawb?lang=en
Welsh Medium Education Strategy	n/a	http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshmededstrat/?lang=en
Data on further education, work-based learning and community learning in Wales, 2013/14	n/a	http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/150325-further-education-work-based-learning-community-learning-2013-14-en.pdf
NIACE Dysgu Cymru – A Manifesto for Adult Learning	n/a	http://www.niacecymru.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Final%20Manifesto%20English.pdf
NIACE Dysgu Cymru – The Challenge for Post-16 Learning	n/a	http://www.niacecymru.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/NIACE%20Cymru%20Post%2016%20Challenge.pdf
Learning Through Life: Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning, Schuler, T. and Watson, D. (2009)	n/a	http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-summary-english.pdf