



ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING IN RUNNYMEDE

**LOCAL COMMITTEE IN RUNNYMEDE
28 JANUARY 2005**

1. KEY ISSUE

To present to the Local Committee in Runnymede an annual report on Adult and Community Learning in the area for 2003/04 and to highlight to the Committee the significant factors affecting the future funding and delivery of the Adult and Community Learning service.

2. SUMMARY

This report highlights developments in adult and community learning in 2003/4 in the Runnymede area. The service will be facing significant challenges over the next two years, which are likely to impact on the current structure and range of activity. The report gives the context in which these changes are developing. The input of the Local Committee is sought on the current service and on the potential future direction of the service.

3. OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:

That the Local Committee in Runnymede should consider and comment on the annual report for 2003/4.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE SERVICE IN RUNNYMEDE

- 1.1 Adult and Community Learning (ACL) delivers a programme of recreational learning at 15 Centres and over 200 locations across 9 of the 11 Boroughs/Districts in Surrey. The service is funded by a grant from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and income from course fees and partner Colleges of Further Education, which deliver basic skills and accredited and vocational learning for adults in our Centres. A programme is provided in Tandridge and Reigate & Banstead by East Surrey College under a contract with Surrey County Council.
- 1.2 In 2003/04, 28,797 adults enrolled on ACL courses. In the termly ACL Learner Satisfaction Survey, there is a consistent 96% satisfaction rating for ACL course content, teaching quality and overall effectiveness of individuals' learning.
- 1.3 Adults choose to undertake ACL courses for a wide range of reasons, including a step towards more formal study, a desire to develop a new skill or build on their existing experience. Learners progress from ACL to college courses as they seek to improve their vocational opportunities. For many, the social aspects are paramount. The regular opportunity to meet others helps to prevent social isolation and contributes to individual mental or physical wellbeing.
- 1.4 There is an extensive programme of learning for adults with learning disabilities and difficulties, offered at a significantly discounted rate. Adult and Community Care often recommend ACL courses as part of clients' Care Plans. ACL contributes therefore to effective provision of other Surrey County Council services. Free short courses of community learning are offered within communities of need aimed at people who would not otherwise engage in learning.

2. ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING IN RUNNYMEDE

- 2.1 Runnymede has 1 main ACL centre (The Runnymede Centre) from which the course programme is planned for the surrounding area. Courses are also provided at New Haw Library and Jubilee High School.
- 2.2 Learner enrolments for the academic year 2002/3 compared to 2003/4 were:

Centre	Learners	Learners	%	Enrolments	Enrolments	%
	2002/3	2003/4	change	2002/3	2003/4	change
Runnymede	1163	1034	-11.1%	2371	1910	-19.4%
Surrey	32877	29433	-10.4%	67611	58712	-13.1%

2002/3 was generally the most successful year that ACL has recently experienced and the figures for 2003/04 show a decline against the previous year. Comparing 2003/4 with the average for the previous three years, enrolments declined by 4%. There may have been some impact from fee increases from £2.65 to £2.80 per hour, which were agreed in

order to address budget pressures caused by an increase in NI contributions and other costs which are not reflected in the LSC grant. Changing LSC administrative requirements, a new management information system and associated training and a new curriculum management structure and reporting, all of which reduced resources available for local publicity initiatives, also may have affected enrolments.

In Runnymede particular subjects that are attracting interest are Drawing and Painting, Tai Chi, Pilates and Yoga. The high level French Literature group in Runnymede study such authors as J P Sartre and Kafka, totally in the French language. Japanese was offered and ran for the first time in Jubilee High School, with eleven learners.

Despite much attention being drawn to the need for improving IT skills, there has been a decline in interest both locally and nationally, reflecting perhaps the increased skills in the community and over-provision. The computing courses in Runnymede are also affected because there is no Internet access and no e-mail with the teaching machines.

3. ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING ISSUES IN RUNNYMEDE

3.1 Self reliance

ACL offers some learning within self-reliance areas and other areas of need throughout Surrey specifically to engage adults who would not otherwise be able, or willing, to attend a course. Widening Participation and Family Learning activities respond directly to the needs of communities and individuals and offers limited free learning outside main ACL centres in community venues and schools. A key feature of activities is that they are intended as a 'first step' into learning and participants are offered information about progression to other learning and encouraged to move into main ACL courses or to college provision.

As a free community learning course Family Arts and Crafts was very successful at Englefield Green Youth Centre. Originally one class was offered but, with 44 participants, this became two sessions. ACL also ran free courses (funded by Global Grants money) in Chertsey St. Ann's.

Using the additional funding provided by the Learning and Skills Council, significant development is taking place to enhance the delivery of family learning opportunities which contribute to the raising of achievement by children and widening participation by adults in learning, particularly literacy and numeracy. The programme of activity has been undertaken in schools involving children with their parents and carers. Meadowcroft Infants, Pycroft Grange Primary and St Anne's Catholic Primary schools in Runnymede offered these programmes in 2003/4. The Head at St Anne's Primary was so enthusiastic about the way family learning has involved parents in their children's education that she was a speaker at the Surrey Family Learning Conference that took place in October 2004.

3.2 Access to learning

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 now applies to education establishments and services; by September 2005, we need to ensure that buildings offer no barriers to participation in our programme. Many of ACL's dedicated buildings have significant access deficiencies, which, despite additional funding from the Learning and Skills Council and the County Council, may not be overcome by September 2005.

At the Runnymede Centre, New Haw Library and Jubilee High School all teaching rooms are on the ground floor, which ensures full accessibility.

3.3 Joint Curriculum Planning with Colleges in Runnymede and Spelthorne

Since the creation of the Learning & Skills Council in 2001, the 1990s national trend for colleges to compete for learners has been replaced with a desire for joint planning that can make effective use of tutors, space and equipment and offers more effective use of tutors, space and equipment and offers structured progression routes. ACL has contributed to this development. Although curriculum planners for each college and ACL have worked together since 2001, there has not previously been overall agreement on curriculum planning that will ensure that the most attractive programme for adult learners is available regardless of supplier.

The LSC has led a group of senior managers from Brooklands, Spelthorne and Strodes Colleges and ACL during 2004 that has now provided the overall context for the curriculum planners to work. A wide range of subjects have been considered and agreement reached as to which is the most appropriate agency to provide particular types of course and the appropriate progression options. This removes the tension that existed where colleges and ACL felt that others were competing in areas in which there was an insufficient market.

4. FUTURE FUNDING OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

4.1 The LSC has recently issued a consultation paper on reforming the funding and planning arrangements for first step learning and personal and community development learning for adults – this is part of taking forward the National Skills Strategy "Investing in Skills" (July 2003), which is the key driver for decisions about levels of public subsidy in further and adult education. The Strategy made two key commitments:

- A new guarantee of free learning to enable adults to gain a first level 2 qualification
- To 'safeguard' adult learning for culture, leisure, community and personal fulfilment, in particular for 'pensioners'.

- 4.2 The principles of the strategy include more help for people who are most disadvantaged, and the expectation that those who already have qualifications should pay more for their learning.
- 4.3 The proposals for the future funding of Adult and Community Learning distinguish between non-accredited provision designed to be '**first steps' learning**, and that intended as learning for '**personal and community development**'. This framework for categorising learning is based on the *provider's* motivation for offering courses, rather than on the *learner's* motivation for taking part.
- 4.4 Different funding methodologies will apply to the two types of learning. Not enough is yet known about the current volumes of the different kinds of provision, so it is hard to predict what its impact will be in Surrey, either on funding or on current programmes. While there is a national "safeguard" for the funding provided for non-accredited learning for adults, there is no commitment to fund all the personal or community development provision currently provided, or to allocate the available funding to current providers. Local planning decisions will therefore be critical. The LSC has made a commitment to avoid turbulence by phasing the introduction of the new funding arrangements over 3 years from August 2006.
- 4.5 There is insufficient information at present to make an assessment of the likely impact for Surrey, but our assumption is that the LSC's priorities and the methodology for the distribution of funding will, more likely than not, reduce funding for ACL in Surrey.
- 4.6 The key dates for implementing the new funding model should mean that in late Spring 2005 'shadow' allocations for 2006/7 are announced to enable Local Education Authorities to make an assessment of impact.
- 4.7 We expect that, by autumn 2005, the impact for Surrey will be understood and proposals for the future planning of the service will be developed for discussion with stakeholders, including Local Committees, partners, learners and the wider community.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Judith Dey, Area Manager (Adult & Community Learning), North West Surrey

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01932 794181

EMAIL ADDRESS: judith.dey@surreycc.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS: LSC Consultation Paper on Reforming the Funding and Planning Arrangements for First Step, Personal and Community Development Learning for Adults. (September 2004)