

**Item 7**

**ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING  
IN SURREY HEATH**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S  
LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH AREA)  
19 JANUARY 2005**

**KEY ISSUE:**

To present to the Local Committee in Surrey Heath 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.

**SUMMARY:**

This report highlights developments in adult and community learning in 2003/4 in the Surrey Heath area. This report summarises what was achieved in the 2003/4 academic year, and plans for 2004/5. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), which provides funding to support the learning programme, is proposing significant changes to the way adult learning will be planned and funded from August 2006. The implications for Surrey are not yet certain, but it is clear that the priorities for public funding of learning will be changing.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

## **BACKGROUND TO THE SERVICE IN SURREY HEATH**

- 2 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 from partnerships with 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. The LSC agrees priorities and targets each with the service.
- 3 In 2003/04, 29000 adults enrolled on ACL courses. In the ACL Learner Satisfaction Survey, conducted each term, there is a consistent 96% satisfaction rating for ACL course content, teaching quality and overall effectiveness of individuals' learning.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.

## **ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING IN SURREY HEATH**

6. Surrey Heath has one main Adult Learning Centre on France Hill Drive in Camberley from which the course programme is planned for the surrounding area. Enrolments are also taken at Kings International and Tomlinscote schools.
7. Courses are also provided at other locations to allow local community access. There is a cost to hiring outside venues, and ACL as a whole is currently looking at where it may be appropriate to use satellite venues in future and how the additional cost might be recovered. In Surrey Heath courses are offered at: Camberley Library; Camberley Infants; Connaught School (Bagshot); in Chobham at Chobham Village Hall, St Lawrence school; in Frimley, at Tomlinscote School, St Augustine's school, and Tomlinscote Sports Centre; Heatherside Community Centre; in the Old Dean area at Collingwood College and St Martins Church Hall; and at Kings International School and Watchetts Junior school.

8. Learner enrolments for the academic year 2002/3 compared to 2003/4 were:

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Centre	Learners 2002/3	Learners 2003/4	% change	Enrolments 2002/3	Enrolments 2003/4	% change
Surrey Heath	3868	3154	-18.46%	8141	6449	-20.78%
Surrey	32877	29433	-10.4%	67611	58712	-13.1%

NB – excludes East Surrey College courses

9. 2002/3 was generally the most successful year that ACL had achieved for some years; 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, 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, may have also affected enrolments.
10. Particular courses in Surrey Heath that were successful in 2003/4 included Computing for the Retired where learners were so enthusiastic that they progressed through three terms until they reached the Computing for Retired - Continue 2. Drawing and Painting, Tai Chi, Pilates and Yoga were still very popular and the Trips to the Family Records Office (by the Family History groups) filled the coach each time.
11. There was a real demand locally for DIY courses, and Practical Bricklaying and Plumbing were very successful and could be run more often if appropriate tutors could be found.
12. 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. Whilst interest in IT courses is still there in Surrey Heath, and despite the high success of some courses, enrolments have fallen.

## **ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING ISSUES IN SURREY HEATH**

### **Self reliance**

13. 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.

14. A DIY Taster in St Michaels attracted 5 learners in an area where it is difficult to interest adults in learning. Six courses on subjects identified by the local residents were planned to run in the Old Dean Estate 2003/4 funded through Global Grants. These will now be run in 2005.
15. Using the additional funding provided by the LSC, significant development is taking place to enhance the delivery of family learning opportunities. Schools have found that offering some Wider Family Learning such as Family ICT or arts and crafts has been a good lead into the more literacy and numeracy based programmes. Keeping up with the Children programmes where adults are taught about how to support their children with their homework have also proved to be popular.
16. In Surrey Heath, ACL funded various learning activities under the heading of 'family learning' for the Surrey Heath Young Parents group, which is supported with staff and resources by the Youth Development Service.

### **Access to learning**

17. 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 LSC and the County Council, may not be overcome by September 2005.
18. The Camberley Centre has ground floor accessibility to teaching rooms and all learners can be catered for within either the main Centre or satellite venues.
19. At the non-SCC sites that are used for courses in Surrey Heath, a new assessment process is being introduced that will ensure that each site is compliant with Disability Access and Health and Safety requirements.

### **Joint Curriculum Planning with Colleges in Surrey Heath**

20. Since the creation of the Learning & Skills Council in 2001, the previous competitive model has been replaced with a commitment to more joint planning by learning providers which ensures 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 been overall agreement on curriculum planning that will ensure that the most attractive programme for adult learners is available, regardless of supplier.
21. ACL has had a long-standing relationship with Brooklands college to provide some accredited college courses at the Camberley Centre and satellite venues as there is no Sixth Form college or general FE college in Surrey Heath. This partnership arrangement is encouraged by the LSC and is expected to continue if FE and ACL funding allows.

## FUTURE FUNDING OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

22. 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’
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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 avoiding turbulence by phasing the introduction of the new funding arrangements over 3 years from August 2006.
26. 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.
27. 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 LEAs to make an assessment of impact.
28. We expect that, by autumn 2005, the impact for Surrey will be understood and proposals for the future planning of the service developed for discussion with stakeholders, including Local Committees, partners, learners and the wider community.

**CONSULTATION**

29. None.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

30. None.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

31. None.

**CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

32. None.

**EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

33. Adult and Community Learning courses and activities are open to all adults.

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