



Adult & Community Learning in Woking

**Local Committee for Woking
22 January 2003**

Key Issue:

To present to the Local Committee for Woking an annual report on adult and community learning in the area for 2001/02 and to offer the Committee an opportunity to influence the Adult Learning Plan for the academic year 2003/4.

Summary:

This report sets out the current context to adult and community learning together with a summary of current provision in the Woking area. It seeks the input of the local committee on the future direction of the service.

Officer Recommendations:

That the Local Committee should

- (i) Consider and comment on the annual report for 2001/2.
- (ii) Comment on priorities for adult and community learning for Woking for 2003/4, and how they could be addressed.

BACKGROUND TO THE SERVICE IN WOKING

1. Adult and Community Learning (ACL) attracts over 31,000 learners and 53,000 enrolments annually to a programme of recreational learning which is delivered through a network of 16 centres and over 200 community locations across 9 of the 11 Boroughs/Districts in Surrey. A programme is provided in Tandridge and Reigate & Banstead by East Surrey College under a contract with Surrey County Council.
2. Although many people still refer to the service as Adult Education, the title “Adult and Community Learning” was adopted in 2001 to reflect active partnership with learners and the wider role of the service.
3. The essence of Surrey’s ACL is the offer of recreational learning, where choice is paramount. Individuals choose to undertake courses for a wide range of reasons, including a step towards more formal study, a desire to develop a new skill, to meet new friends or to maintain mental or physical fitness. ACL aims to enhance the quality of learners’ lives through a more positive use of their leisure time and a greater understanding of the world in which they live.
4. The majority of ACL students are aged 50 years and over (54.69%). 33.9% of our students are 60 years and over compared to 20.9% in the Surrey population generally. There are a higher proportion of women (76.26% of enrolments).
5. There is an extensive programme of learning for adults with learning disabilities and difficulties, and programmes of community learning targeted at people who would not otherwise engage in learning.
6. Learners express high levels of satisfaction with the provision. 97% of learners gave an excellent or good rating for the content of their course, a 96% rating for the overall effectiveness of their learning and 97% for quality of teaching. 99% of learners said they had gained at the two highest levels (of five) from their course. Learners express lower levels of satisfaction for the accommodation used at 66%, reflecting the age and condition of the ACL property portfolio.
7. ACL works closely in partnership with the Colleges of Further Education, which provide basic skills courses and accredited and vocational learning for adults in our Adult Learning Centres. Students regularly progress from ACL to college courses as they seek to improve their vocational opportunities. Similar partnership arrangements are maintained with the University of Surrey.

PLANNING AND FUNDING ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

8. In April 2001, the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) assumed responsibility for all post-16 further education. This includes all sixth form provision, Further Education Colleges and work-based learning as well as adult and community

learning. Local education authorities (LEAs) lost the duty to provide adult learning to the Learning Skills Council but retain the power to secure provision.

9. The transfer of the legal duty included transfer of the financial resources that were allocated by the County Council for Adult and Community Learning. From April 2001, the service has been funded by a grant based on the annual Adult Learning Plan submitted to the LSC.
10. For 2002/3, ACL expenditure will be £6.81 million. This is funded by £3.47 million from learner fees and other income, and £3.33 million in LSC grant. Surrey County Council provides no direct funding for ACL. As the grant is based on activity in 1998/9, providing improved quality and new programmes within the available budget is challenging.
11. The Secretary of State guaranteed the level of funding until August 2003. The LSC wishes to move to formula funding based on learner numbers and the attainment of individual learners. From recent research and consultation, it is apparent that this change is much more complex than expected and cannot be implemented universally from August 2003. Funding for 2003/4 at the current level is now expected. The long-term impact for Surrey of changes to the funding mechanism is unclear.
12. ACL has benefited since April 2001 from additional resources made available by the LSC to achieve specific objectives. In 2002/3, specific grants have been received:

New Management Information System	£153,660
Building access improvements for disabled people	£ 99,262
Minor works building improvements	£ 69,120
Family learning	<u>£123,000</u>
Total	£445,042
13. Other changes include a rigorous quality regime that has required the development of a Quality Assurance Framework and annual self-assessment. An inspection by the Adult Learning Inspection is expected within the next two years.

ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING IN WOKING

14. The majority of the programme is provided at the Woking Adult Learning Centre at Highlands, Bonsey Lane, Westfield. Smaller evening programmes are available at the Knaphill and St.Johns Centre in Winston Churchill School, Horsell Centre at Woking High School and, from September 2002, Sheerwater Centre at Bishop David Brown School. A limited number of courses are also delivered at other locations.
15. The opening of the Sheerwater Centre has been very successful. Nine courses ran with new courses being offered from January 2003. There has

also been a gradual increase in the demand for Saturday workshops attracting new adult learners to the Woking Centre.

16. From January 2003, courses will no longer be provided at the Knaphill & St Johns Centre on Monday evenings due to declining interest. The Wednesday evening programme remains very popular.
17. Student enrolments for the academic year 2002/3 compared to 2001/2 were as follows:

	Students	Students	%	Enrolments	Enrolments	%
	2000/1	2001/2	increase	200/1	2001/2	increase
Woking	1963	2178	11.0	3744	4143	10.7
County*	26616	28748	8.3	48103	53183	10.3

* – excludes East Surrey College courses

18. These figures show that there has been a significant increase in participation in Woking and countywide in the last year. Particular subjects that are attracting more interest are languages, especially Spanish and Italian, physical exercise and a wide range of art and craft courses offered. 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.
19. Students often travel some distance to join a course. The figures above do not represent the number of Woking residents undertaking ACL courses. An analysis of the 3 postcodes that cover most of Woking shows the number of residents, who undertook courses at an ACL centre in Surrey, excluding East Surrey.

Postcode	Students
	2001/2
GU21	2037
GU22	1571
KT14	509

20. 6.1% of Woking's adult residents undertook an ACL course in 2001/2.

ETHNIC MINORITY IMPLICATIONS

21. The adult learning programme attracts students from a range of ethnic communities in Woking. When enrolling on ACL courses, students are asked to state their ethnic background. As completion is not compulsory, only 724 (17%) students completed the form in 2001/2. Of these, 24 students said that they were from backgrounds other than "white". There may be reasons that students do not want to draw attention to their ethnic background that could lead to wrong conclusions being drawn. Further consideration will be given as to how more accurate data can be gathered.
22. The Committee should also note that basic skills courses and classes in English as a foreign or second language are provided by Guildford College at

Highlands, the Maybec Centre and the Maybury Centre. Woking College also makes provision at the College and as part of the Sheerwater/Maybury Partnership's projects.

23. In partnership with the Sheerwater/Maybury Partnership, ACL has provided 3 flower arranging courses attracting approximately 16 women from the local community since January 2002. The courses have taken place at the ALPHA Road Community Hall, Maybury. The women range from 47 to 81 years of age. Many remarked that these courses are enjoyable, have extended their skills knowledge, increased their confidence and improved their social skills. When visiting the classes there has been a real sense of 'community spirit'. ACL is hoping to extend this opportunity to the Chinese Community of Woking.

ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING ISSUES IN WOKING

Extended Schools

24. Through the Education Act 2001, the Government is encouraging schools to widen their community role. This will include the opportunity to expand the use of school resources for learning by students' parents and relatives as well as other adults living locally.
25. This is an opportunity to enhance the positive relationship that already exists with Bishop David Brown, Winston Churchill and Woking High Schools as well as investigating opportunities with other local schools within the framework of the Adult Learning Plan.
26. The development of community schools is being piloted by three secondary schools in Surrey – Ash Manor, Glebelands at Cranleigh and Bishop David Brown - to create a model for an extended school that can be applied across schools in Surrey. ACL is a key partner in this project. The significant aspect of this development is future working by ACL with Bishop David Brown School.

Family Learning

27. 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 Basic Skills. The programme of activity includes:
- Developing a strategy for family learning, linked to other key strategies including the Education Development Plan, Early Years strategy and Parenting strategy
 - Setting up a providers' and projects' network
 - Innovative family learning delivery programmes based in the community and using resources such as museums, Youth Development Outdoor Centres and Surrey Youth Music and Performing Arts.

- Pilot network of 39 schools provided with additional support to develop family learning, including Bishop David Brown and New Monument Schools.
- Developing a core curriculum, resources, evaluation and accreditation.

Special Educational Needs Act 2001

28. This Act extends the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to education establishments and services. A significant issue for ACL is to ensure, by September 2005, that buildings offer no barriers to participation in our programme. Many 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.
29. In Woking, the only dedicated building is the Centre at Highlands. There are 3 buildings on that site. All have access for disabled people on the ground floor, but two 1960s buildings do not have access to the first floor. To build two lifts will cost in excess of £100,000, which, even with the enhanced funding from the LSC, is unlikely to be achieved by September 2005. Stairlifts as alternatives will be investigated in 2003/4. "Reasonable" adjustments can be made and, already, courses are switched to ground floor rooms where it is known that a student will have difficulty with the stairs.
30. Improving access is a significant issue for ACL, and emphasises the importance of the discussions with secondary schools and other possible partners about alternative locations. However, schools rarely have space available during the day, when many learners prefer to attend our courses.

Adult Learning Plan 2003/4

31. The annual Adult Learning Plan is due for submission to the Surrey LSC by 31 March 2003, covering the academic year 2003/4. The Plan will set out how adult and community learning will be delivered and at what cost. The Plan should describe how ACL contributes to the County Council's and the LSC's key strategic objectives.
32. The Adult Learning Plan is required to address the Learning and Skills Council's priorities for 2003/4:
- the need to improve basic skills
 - the need to widen participation in learning to those who do not traditionally participate in education and training
 - the need to enhance family learning provision
 - the need to support strategies for neighbourhood renewal
 - the need to promote good citizenship
 - the need to improve IT skills at all levels
 - encouraging language provision in line with the National Languages Strategy.

- 33.** The LSC recognises and supports the County Council's key strategic role in identifying the learning needs of adults and in coordinating related plans and strategies, such as health and community care; this role has a critical local dimension. The Woking Local Committee is asked to consider these priorities in relation to need in Woking, to identify which are the most significant and how best could they be addressed.

Report by: Ian Milton, Area Manager, Adult & Community Learning, SW Surrey

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Ian Milton, Area Manager, Adult & Community Learning, SW Surrey

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01483 517407

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Adult & Community Learning Plan 2002
Local Education Authority Learning Plan
2003/4 (published by the Learning & Skills Council)