

**REPORT TO:** Employment, Learning, Skills and Community  
Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 9 June 2010

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Environment & Economy

**SUBJECT:** Lead Accountable Bodies

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide information on the new Lead Accountable Body (LAB) role for local authorities from August 2011 for the management of all public funded Informal Adult Learning provision in the local area.
- 1.2 To put forward the new LAB role as a key council decision for 2010/11.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- a) **That the report is noted.**
- b) **That the ELS PPB recommends to the Executive Board that this a key Council decision for 2010/11**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The 2008 *Learning Revolution* White Paper set out an exciting and new vision for informal adult learning. The Government consulted local authorities and other key delivery organisations on its proposals and the outcome was that the majority of local authority responses expressed the aspiration to take on strategic and operational leadership of informal learning. In particular, local authorities wanted to:
  - improve coherence across services to support family learning, citizenship, mental and physical wellbeing, health, culture, environment
  - engage disadvantaged groups and integrate informal learning with their wider, local agendas for community and economic well-being.
- 3.2 In October 2008, the Government wrote to local authorities proposing they take up, in the future, the pivotal role of providing the leadership to create and support vibrant local networks of informal adult learning in their area.
- 3.3 The Government then worked with the Local Government Association, the Local Education Authorities Forum for the Education of Adults, the Association of Colleges, Ofsted and other delivery partners to develop a

Lead Accountable Body 'model' that would enable local authorities effectively to discharge this pivotal leadership role.

3.4 On 1 April 2010, the Learning & Skills Council was replaced by 3 separate agencies:

- The Skills Funding Agency (SFA)
- The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)
- The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

3.5 The funding for informal adult learning will now come through the SFA.

#### **4.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

4.1 From August 2011, the SFA plans to channel all available budgets to support informal adult learning in a local area through identified Lead Accountable Bodies (LABs). The LGA is working closely with the SFA and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to ensure a smooth transition for local authorities to the new LAB.

4.2 A formal invitation for local authorities to accept 'in principle' the role of LAB was issued in March 2011, with a deadline of the end of April. Halton has now accepted the role in principle. Accepting the role in principle allows the SFA to work with Halton in planning the changes during the academic year 2010/11 with all the available public funding for informal adult learning transferring to the LAB for the 2011/12 academic year.

4.3 The funding that is currently allocated to Informal Adult Learning in Halton is shared between the council's Adult Learning & Skills Development Division and Riverside College Halton. The funding to the council is broken down as follows:

• Family Literacy, Language & Numeracy	£96,273
• Wider Family Learning	£25,197
• Personal Community Development Learning	£111,242
• Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	£146,603.

The funding to Riverside College Halton is approximately: £140,000

The total funding allocated to the LAB will be (approx.): £519,315.  
The Skills Funding Agency will inform LAs of the final allocation in summer 2010.

4.4 LAs are free to build on or adapt existing partnerships when formalising the LAB role, however, it is expected that the partnership be local, representative and light touch.

4.5 The LAB will need to draw up and agree a plan for informal adult learning in Halton and ensure the activities within it are delivered. In addition to the traditional areas of work detailed in 4.3, the plan must also address some of the new ideas as detailed in the Learning

Revolution White Paper, for example the approach to support self organised groups and opening up new spaces for learning. The plan must involve all partners, old and new, and achieve the maximum value from (and add to) the funds it receives from the public purse.

- 4.6 The Skills Funding Agency will require targets to be set to increase the number of learners ('extend the reach') and to show that extra resources are being introduced through flexible approaches ('extending the stretch'). However, LABs will set their own local targets that link closely with local priorities and the LAA.
- 4.7 Informal adult learning which is funded through the LAB will be subject to Ofsted inspection requirements although the exact details about the kind of criteria that will be used to inspect is still under discussion.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Informal adult learning funded through the Skills Funding Agency is currently delivered by the Adult Learning & Skills Development Division. The Division has been Ofsted inspected in 2009 and received a good (Grade 2) award. The Division manages all its provision in line with local and national policies relating to the delivery of adult learning and skills.

## **6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Given the emphasis on 'extending the stretch', it is expected that those individuals that can afford to pay for learning, should do so. A fees policy will need to be set by the LAB to take this principle into account. Currently, all Family Learning and Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities programmes are free to the learner.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **7.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Supports key objectives D and E.

Existing Family Learning funding is used to support parents in learning, often alongside their children. Provision takes place in primary schools and some secondary schools, as well as in all of Halton's Children's Centres. The introduction of LABs must ensure that existing good practice is maintained and families benefit accordingly.

### **7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Supports key objectives B, C and D.

Existing informal adult learning in Halton is delivered by Halton Borough Council's Adult Learning & Skills Development Division and Riverside College Halton. The college currently sub-contracts some of its informal adult learning to the Division (approximately £33k per annum). Both providers are key members on the Employment, Learning & Skills SSP, together with a range of other appropriate learning and skills partners, which would potentially make up the new LAB. Any implications arising

from the establishment of the LAB will sit well with the Employment, Learning & Skills SSP and sub group arrangements already in place. Work on establishing the LAB by August 2011 will need to take place over the 2010/11 academic year and this work will be led by the Adult Learning & Skills Development Division and guided by the Employment, Learning & Skills SSP.

**7.3 A Healthy Halton**

Supports key objectives B, C and E.

**7.4 A Safer Halton**

None applicable

**7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Supports key objectives A, D and E.

**8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 The Skills Funding Agency has deemed the risk of local authorities acting as both commissioner and provider as being low, providing that a transparent commissioning model is in place and there is an effective scrutiny process.

8.2 Existing provision as identified in 4.3 could be adversely affected under LAB if the LAB chooses to diversify delivery or change priorities. The lead time upto the LABs going live should be used to explore all other potential risks to existing provision.

**9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 Overall responsibility for the LAB will sit with the Adult Learning & Skills Development Division, but the LAB partnership will reside under the umbrella 'Employment, Learning & Skills SSP and sub groups'. All operate under the Council's Equality and Diversity policy.

**10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

10.1 The Learning Revolution White Paper 2009.

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