

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

DATE: 8 February 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: Adult Learning Service – Update on Test & Learn Projects

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Head of Adult Learning Curriculum will present a report to PPB on the Test & Learn projects delivered by Halton Adult Learning Service, which is funded through Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB).

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

The PPB welcomes the progress made to date in managing the Test & learn Projects

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Adult Learning Service is funded through the devolved AEB which is managed by the Combined Authority. The Service receives funding in the form of a grant. As part of the devolution implementation, the Combined Authority allocated an additional £150k to the service to deliver on a couple of pilot (Test and Learn) projects. Halton used the additional funding opportunity to deliver a number of projects including Web Design, Coding, Digital Marketing & Media and Engage with Reading (a programme to train Reading Volunteers to support people in the community to improve their lower level reading ability). The delivery of the projects was via the existing tutor team together with a digital creative company called Mako, who co-delivered the digital Test & Learn elements.
- 3.2 Co-delivery with Mako enabled existing IT to upskill, build capacity and provided them with the ability to take elements of these courses forward into the new academic year, using the grant AEB funding.
- 3.4 The 'Reading Volunteer programme was reported in in the Times education Supplement as a good practice Test and Learn project in Liverpool City Region.
- 3.5 Appendix 1 provides further details of the Test and Learn delivery together with associated data.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 These projects have supported in allowing the service to innovate and develop the provision to meet the employment needs in the Digital sector as well as supporting people with lower level reading skills to gain vital skills to improve their employability opportunities and begin their education journey into recognised qualifications in English and IT.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Budgets were managed carefully to ensure spend within these programmes were utilised to best effect. The funding also allowed Halton Adult Learning Service to procure further IT and English resources that can then be used for wider service needs.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Employment, Learning and Skills

The Test and Learn projects supported this priority. Employment, education and raising the profile and achievement in reading was enabled through the Reading Volunteer project. The Digital Test and Learn project offered learners the opportunity to explore digital learning and employment and further education routes. Additionally, the Web Design course supported some learners who were interested in marketing a small business enterprise.

- 6.1.2 In Halton it has been identified that reading levels of all ages are below the expected national average and the 'Reading Volunteer' programme supports learners on a 1:1 basis in developing both their reading ability and confidence, which in turn raises the profile of reading and allows those learners to better support their own children. Additionally, it works to encourage them to develop their reading skills and seek out qualifications to support their employment opportunities.

6.2 A Safer Halton

Part of all the programmes is a focus on safety and safeguarding, whether this is online or when working with volunteers. Learners are taught and understand the important of keeping themselves safe on line and gaining a better understanding of safeguarding when working in the community on a 1:1 basis.

- 6.3 Halton's Urban Renewal
N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Funding for these projects has been agreed by LCR and they are managed effectively to ensure no financial risk.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 Those learners with lower reading levels are supported to improve their skills in reading, thus their life chances and opportunities into gaining employment or qualifications are improved.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
N/A		

Please see the additional report for further details.