

Report of the Head of Employment and Skills

Report to Chief Officer Employment and Skills

Date: 28 July 2020

Subject: Adult Learning call-off contract awards for provision in the academic year 2020/21.

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:	
Appendix number: 1 CONFIDENTIAL AEB Provider Awards 2020/21	
rule 10.4 (3)	

Summary

Main issues

- 1 On 23 July 2020, the Council received confirmation of the annual funding allocation of £2.2 million from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) under the Adult Education Budget (AEB), for the delivery of Adult Learning in the academic year 2020/21 from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.
- 2 On 30 July 2020, the Council accepted the new ESFA Conditions of Grant Funding for the academic year 2020/21.
- 3 In May 2020, a procurement round was held on the Employment and Skills Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for Adult Learning 2020/21 provider contracts. Confidential Appendix 1 contains 15 providers it is recommended to award contracts to deliver provision in the academic year starting on 1st August 2020.
- 4 Due to the annual recurring nature of this adult education funding the required programme managers, quality officers, tutors and administrative resources are already in post for delivery in academic year 2020/21.
- 5 This report seeks authorisation to award contracts to 15 successful bidders to ensure the Adult Learning programme delivers according to Council priorities, specifically targeting residents in in some of our most disadvantaged communities.

- 6 This report also seeks authorisation to allocate £10k funding and a two year contract award for continued hosting, maintenance and updates to the Leeds Adult Learning Course Finder and the Employment and Skills websites, key to the effective promotion of the adult learning programme.

7. **Best Council Plan Implications**

The Council's Adult Learning Programme makes a significant contribution to the delivery of the Best Council Plan 2020-25 ambitions for Leeds to have a strong economy and to be a compassionate, caring city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. This includes supporting Inclusive Growth by helping adults learn new skills to benefit from the economy to their full potential and tackling poverty in priority neighbourhoods; building a Child Friendly City by supporting families to give their children the best start in life; helping parents and carers improve their young children's educational attainment and closing achievements gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes

8. **Resource Implications**

The activities proposed will be funded through the 2020/21 Adult Education Budget, allocated to the Council by the ESFA. A total amount of £1.6 million will be awarded to external providers on the Council's Employment and Skills Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to support the delivery of activities detailed in the Confidential Appendix 1 for the academic year 2020/21.

Recommendations

9. The Chief Officer Employment and Skills is asked to approve:-
- a) The proposed funding allocations for external delivery of the Council's Adult Learning Programme to the total value of £1.6M for the 2020/21 academic year, and award one year contracts starting on 1 August 2020 to 15 providers as set out in Confidential Appendix 1.
 - b) The recommended maximum funding allocation variations set out in the Confidential Appendix 1 allowing individual provider allocations to be varied in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, enabling effective programme management to maximise delivery outcomes.
 - c) The proposed funding allocation up to the total value of £10k and a two year contract award for continued hosting, maintenance and updates to the Adult Learning Course Finder and Employment and Skills websites, to incorporate the new branding, Accessibility Audit findings and an on-line enrolment function.
 - d) That this decision is exempted from call-in to avoid delays to the award of contracts at the start of the new academic year to avoid adversely impacting the viability of providers at this time and the Council's ability to provide a broad and balanced programme offer to learners
10. The Head of Employment and Skills will be responsible for the implementation of the recommendations set out in this report.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks authorisation to award contracts for the academic year 2020/21 to 15 providers on the Council's Employment and Skills Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to deliver Adult Learning in the academic year 2020/21.
- 1.2 The recommended awards to individual providers and learner targets are set out in the Confidential Appendix 1.
- 1.3 This report also seeks to authorise funding and a two year contract award for continued hosting, maintenance and updates to the Leeds Adult Learning Course Finder and the Employment and Skills websites.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Leeds City Council receives a funding allocation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) each academic year to deliver a broad and balanced programme of Adult Learning in Leeds. Managed by the Employment and Skills Service on behalf of the Council, this funding enables delivery of a wide range of activity, the majority of which is commissioned out to external providers including third sector organisations.
- 2.2 One element of the skills provision, Family English, Maths and Language Learning is also delivered internally by the Employment and Skills Service.
- 2.3 To facilitate learner engagement and recruitment the Council has a Course Finder web site and also the Employment and Skills website that are externally hosted. The importance of this is now more significant due to the current social distancing requirements as a result of the pandemic that impact recruitment and delivery to learners.
- 2.4 The purpose of the Council's Adult Learning Programme is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds to:-
 - Improve health and well-being, and/or reduce social isolation
 - Progress towards formal learning and/or work readiness, jobs and volunteering
 - Develop stronger communities.
- 2.5 For the academic year 2020/21, the total funding available for external delivery is £1.6 million. The programme is expected to support around 7,000 learners and will continue to target disadvantaged individuals and communities across the city.
- 2.6 A greater focus this academic year will be given to working with residents experiencing mild to moderate mental ill-health and digital inclusion activities in line with Council priorities. The need for a focus on both of these having increased as a result of social isolation and anxiety experienced during the pandemic with an impact on mental health and the evident inequalities in capacity to access digital services by residents in Leeds.
- 2.7 The Council's Adult Learning Programme is funded entirely under the ESFA AEB, enabling a continued focus on supporting local residents aged 19 years plus with skills development through a broad and balanced range of activities. Adult Learning also provides a progression gateway to more formal learning, social mobility and longer term employability opportunities.

2.8 The Programme will comprise a range of activities delivered under the following themes:

- **Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)** is learning for personal and community development and cultural enrichment to acquire a new skill or to pursue an interest, demonstrating social impact on the learners. These courses will additionally focus on health and wellbeing, improving confidence, reducing social isolation, creating active citizens and enhancing community cohesion and capacity. In most cases, there would be no formal qualification outcome attached to learning.
- **Family English, Maths and Language (FEML)** is provision designed for parents (or other carers of children) with English and Maths needs or is for families where English is not the primary language. Often these courses are linked to schools or Children's Centres. Programmes will aim to:
 - Improve parent /carers confidence and ability to support their child's learning
 - Increase confidence and involvement in school activities for parents/carers
 - Raise aspirations of parents/carers and children
 - Breakdown the intergenerational cycle of under achievement and poverty
 - Improve literacy / numeracy / wellbeing for parents, carers and children
- **Wider Family Learning (WFL) provision** is designed to support different generations of family members to learn together. It has the aims of:
 - Developing the skills and knowledge of the parent/carer and child participants alongside each other.
 - Enabling parents/carers to be more active in the support of their children's learning and development and to understand the impact of that support.
- **Skills for Life and Work (SfLW)** is aimed at adults aged 19 and over, with low skills levels, who are not currently working or in regular employment but want to progress to further learning, employment or volunteering. Activities must deliver tailored, individual support, integrated with other services / opportunities where possible. Programmes should help realise the potential of learners and develop their confidence to take advantage of work and learning opportunities. These courses will aim to close the digital divide and or improve English, maths and communication skills. A key element of Skills for Life and Work is ensuring progression to employment, volunteering or further learning.
- **Targeted Learning Projects (TLP)** is provision for learners with multiple and or complex needs who require more intensive support.
- **Accredited Learning (ASB)** – these activities help learners to achieve eligible qualifications as defined by the Education Skills Funding Agency e.g. Level 1 and Level 2 Childcare, accredited ESOL courses and create opportunities for individuals to progress into employment, including Apprenticeships.

2.9 For the academic year 2020/21, the activities and learner groups prioritised have been informed by the objectives of the ESFA and the Council's Adult Learning Plan 2016-20. The programme has also been aligned with the priorities set out in the 2020/21 Best Council Plan to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth by supporting residents to improve skills, helping people into work and into better jobs; building a Child Friendly City by supporting families to give their children the best start in life; helping parents and carers improve their young

children's educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes.

3. Main issues

3.1 On 23 July 2020, the Council received confirmation of the annual funding allocation of £2.2 million from the ESFA under the AEB, for the delivery of Adult Learning in the academic year 2020/21 from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021. This decision is to award up to £1.6m of the ESFA AEB funding for academic year 2020/21 to 15 successful bidders to ensure the Adult Learning programme delivers according to Council priorities, specifically targeting residents in our most disadvantaged communities.

3.2 A summary of the provision types and programme allocations is shown in the table below.

Provision in 2020/21	Number of Providers	Total Value of Orders (£)	Learner Targets
Personal and Community Development (PCDL)	10	£527,700.00	2,625
Family English and Maths (FEML) <i>Incl. crèche & tutor support</i>	1	£100,000.00	400
Wider Family Learning (WFL)	3	£16,065.00	110
Skills for Life and Work (SfLW)	12	£684,240.00	3,510
Targeted Learning Projects (TLP)	3	£146,610.00	640
Accredited Learning (ASB)	2	£44,600.00	85
Curriculum development	0	£0	0
Totals		£1,519,215	7,370

3.3 15 organisations on the DPS applied to deliver learning activities in 2020/21 are recommended to receive a contract award following the evaluation panel meeting in July 2020. Two of those successful organisations are new to Adult Learning delivery in Leeds.

3.4 One organisation failed to meet the bid pass threshold and was not be considered for contract award. No bid submissions were received from 27 other pre-approved supplier organisations invited to bid in the DPS Adult Learning category.

3.5 To enable the Council to maximise grant expenditure and programme impact, recommended allocations are over-programmed by up to a maximum of 10% for each provider. This is compliant with Contract Procedure Rules and supports effective programme management to enable individual allocations to be varied throughout the year within the total funding allocation of £1.6m.

Compliance with the ESFA's Conditions of Funding

- 3.6 A positive addition to ESFA (AEB) 2020/21 funding rules concerns CyberEssentials security accreditation which is now mandatory for all providers engaged in AEB funded learning provision.
- 3.7 The CyberEssentials amendment to AEB funding rules will be cascaded to providers' call-off contracts to ensure compliance.
- 3.8 Any subsequent in-year ESFA AEB funding rules amendments will be cascaded to providers' call-off contracts to ensure compliance.

Alignment with Council Priorities

- 3.9 To ensure alignment with Council priorities, the 2020/21 Project Brief specified providers must recruit learners from neighbourhoods that fall within the lower super output areas in the 20% most deprived on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and in particular 6 Priority Neighbourhoods at:
 - Stratford Street and Beverleys, Hunslet and Riverside ward
 - Crosby St, Recreations and Bartons, Beeston and Holbeck ward
 - Lincoln Green, Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward
 - Cliftons and Nowells, Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward
 - Boggart Hill, Killingbeck and Seacroft ward
 - Holdforths and Clyde Approach, Armley ward
- 3.10 Local priorities, identified in the Council's Adult Learning Plan 2016/20, continue to determine this year's provision. There will be increased focus on digital inclusion, improving impact measures and further development of progression pathways, including into employment. Adults who are marginalised and least likely to participate will continue to be prioritised including workless adults, people on low incomes with low skills, those who did not achieve at school.
- 3.11 Recruitment from deprived areas will be facilitated through an increased programme focus to target priority localities and groups under the Skills for Life and Work, Family English and Maths and Targeted Learning Projects. These targeted priorities will widen participation for marginalised and under-represented groups, including people with mental ill-health.
- 3.12 The mix of providers, types of activity and target groups will enable the Council to continue to provide a broad and balanced programme for a range of adult learners. The ESFA does not provide a set target for learner numbers but there is an expectation that learner numbers will, as a minimum, be maintained year on year. It is anticipated that the proposed awards to providers including the in-house provision will support approximately 7,000 learners in 2020/21.
- 3.13 Two key websites which support the engagement in and recruitment to Adult Learning provision, Leeds Adult Learning Course Finder www.LeedsAdultLearning.co.uk and the Employment and Skills Leeds www.employmentskillsleeds.co.uk websites are hosted by Waters Geospatial. The support and maintenance of these sites is essential to successful programme delivery and it is proposed to re-contract for a further two years in line with the current terms from September 2020 to September 2022. The Leeds Adult Learning Course Finder needs to incorporate the new service branding, improve the sites accessibility and to embed the new on-line enrolment function. The total cost of the hosting, support and maintenance work is set out in Confidential Appendix 1.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The allocation of resources between activities under the programme has been informed by feedback from elected members, providers and learner forums. This includes information obtained through the annual Adult Learning self-assessment reporting (SAR) process, from classroom visits and through learner surveys.
- 4.1.2 The Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment was consulted in May 2020 and again in July 2020 on the proposals set out in this report.
- 4.1.3 A member of the Adult Learning Trust Board (which includes providers and representatives from other Council services, FE and HE learning institutions and the third sector) was included on the Evaluation Panel to assess bids received and recommend the allocation of awards to providers on the Council's extended Adult Learning Framework for 2020/21.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 All providers are required to submit Equality Diversity and Community Cohesion (EDCC) information as part of their contractual reporting to demonstrate that equality issues have been considered and have been embedded in the planning, delivery and review of provision. The process for reporting and monitoring equality and diversity information is clearly defined in the Adult Learning Programme provider handbook that is updated annually.
- 4.2.2 The provision is also subject to Ofsted requirements through the Education Inspection Framework which are built into the contract monitoring and quality assurance processes. This includes a key focus on equality and diversity including providing quality inclusive services, identifying and removing barriers and narrowing any gaps in learner participation and achievement.
- 4.2.3 An EDCI screening was carried out on 20 July 2020 and is detailed in Appendix 2. The findings from this assessment are that equality, diversity, cohesion and integration issues have been appropriately considered in relation to the proposed allocation of awards to providers on the Councils Adult Learning Framework.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The proposals set out in this report contribute to the Best Council Plan 2020-25 priorities to support Inclusive Growth by helping adults learn new skills to benefit from the economy to their full potential and tackling poverty in priority neighbourhoods; building a Child Friendly City by supporting families to give their children the best start in life; helping parents and carers improve their young children's educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes.
- 4.3.2 The objectives of the Council's Adult Learning Programme will also help deliver outcomes under other Council initiatives by increasing digital inclusion; supporting the integration of refugees; engaging vulnerable and isolated adults and delivering skills support to those with mild to moderate mental ill-health.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.3 This decision has no direct adverse impact on the climate emergency in the city. Further work will be undertaken to ensure that the delivery model seeks to maximise opportunities for local delivery to reduce the need for travel and reduce staff and programme participant travel to attend the Adult Learning Programme

through effective programme planning and the use of on-line technology where possible.

- 4.3.4 The adult learning programme seeks to build the capacity of both individuals and communities. To this end, the curriculum will build on the momentum developing as a result of the pandemic, around greener living, environmental appreciation and effective management of our resources, addressing the issues identified within external emissions, under climate emergency mitigation.
- 4.3.5 The programme is delivered in areas of the city experiencing significant social and economic disadvantage and this curriculum focus will also specifically promote and support positive responses to many of the impacts within climate adaptation, particularly energy, waste, water, food and homes.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 The activities proposed will be funded through the 2020/21 AEB allocated to the Council by the ESFA. A total amount of £1.6 million will be awarded to external providers on the Council's Employment and Skills Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to support the delivery of activities detailed in the Confidential Appendix 1 for the academic year 2020/21.
- 4.4.2 The awarding of contracts to providers was influenced by a robust contract management process led by the Employment and Skills Service which assessed factors such as quality of provision, learner outcomes and cost per learner to ensure the programme delivers value for money.
- 4.4.3 The set tariff rates for standard provision under the Adult Learning Programme are comparable with those set by other local authorities where provision is externally commissioned. Payments made to providers will be subject to the submission of invoices and satisfactory evidence of delivery and learner achievement. Courses being proposed or delivered where learner numbers fall below the minimum target threshold will not normally be funded without good reasons.
- 4.4.4 The cost of the website maintenance and development represent good value for money and reflect a continuation of arrangements with a known, competitive provider.
- 4.4.5 The Employment and Skills' Finance Manager has been consulted on the proposed awards to ensure financial integrity of the 2020/21 budget.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 Providers were selected from the Council's Employment and Skills DPS and will be awarded one year call-off contracts for the next academic year 2020/21 in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules.
- 4.5.2 This is an officer delegated Key Decision which was notified on 12 June 2020 on the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions for July 2020. This decision is exempt from call-in to minimise delays to the award of contracts at the start of the new academic year. Delays in awarding contracts have the potential to affect the longer term viability of providers at this time and the Council's ability to provide a broad and balanced learning offer.
- 4.5.3 Officers in Legal Services were consulted on the changes proposed to contract terms and conditions.

- 4.5.4 Subject to approval, processing of call-off contracts for the academic year 2020/21 will be undertaken by officers in the Employment and Skills Service in conjunction with Legal Services and Central Procurement.
- 4.5.5 The information contained in Confidential Appendix 1 relates to the financial or business affairs of provider organisations and is therefore considered to be commercially sensitive. This information has been obtained through the contract management process which is still subject to negotiation in some areas. It is therefore considered that this element of the report should be treated as exempt under rule 10.4 (3) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 For the 2020/21 academic year, ESFA AEB funding rules allow a continuation of the existing delivery arrangements. This academic year also provides an opportunity for the Council to understand the implications of potential new delivery models that could arise through the proposed future devolution of AEB.
- 4.6.2 Advice on the terms and conditions, award methodology and criteria to award contracts for the 2020/21 academic year has been sought from the Procurement Governance and Regulation Manager.
- 4.6.3 Advice on maximum award amounts for the 2020/21 academic year has been sought from the Finance Manager in conjunction with the overall budget.
- 4.6.4 All contracts awarded will be subject to robust financial and quality monitoring procedures led by officers in the Employment and Skills Service and in accordance with the Council's and the ESFA's regulations.
- 4.6.5 To enable the Council to maximise grant expenditure and programme impact, recommended allocations could be varied by up to a maximum of 10% for each provider where required to absorb any underperformance that may arise elsewhere. Contracts are closely monitored throughout the year and where necessary, adjustments will be made to ensure the programme is delivered within budget and that learner targets are achieved by the end of the academic year.
- 4.6.6 A data privacy impact assessment screening was carried out on 20th June 2020. The screening found that a full DPIA was not needed for the decision to award contracts.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 In May 2002, Adult Learning organisations bid in a competitive procurement for one year call-off contracts to deliver the Council's Adult Learning Programme in academic year 2020/21, funded by the ESFA.
- 5.2 This report deals with the award of call-off contracts for the academic year with delivery starting on 1 August 2020 through to 31 July 2021 with post academic year processing ongoing until 31 December 2021.
- 5.3 The funding available for external delivery is £1.6 million and along with a small internal provision, is expected to support approximately 7,000 learners across the city.
- 5.4 This report also seeks authorisation to allocate £10k funding and a two year contract award for continued hosting, maintenance and updates to the Adult Learning Course Finder and the Employment and Skills websites, key to the effective promotion of the adult learning programme.

- 5.5 The recommendations contained in this report will ensure the Council can continue to deliver a broad and balanced programme of Adult Learning across Leeds, targeting priority learner groups and those living in priority neighbourhoods.
- 5.6 The Council's Adult Learning Programme makes significant contributions to the delivery of the Best Council Plan 2020-25 ambitions. The includes supporting Inclusive Growth by helping adults learn new skills to benefit from the economy to their full potential and tackling poverty in priority neighbourhoods; building a Child Friendly City by supporting families to give their children the best start in life; helping parents and carers improve their young children's educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Chief Officer Employment and Skills is asked to approve:
- a) The proposed funding allocations for external delivery of the Council's Adult Learning Programme to the total value of £1.6m for the 2020/21 academic year, and award one year contracts starting on 1 August 2020 to 15 providers as set out in Confidential Appendix 1.
 - b) The recommended maximum funding allocation variations set out in the Confidential Appendix 1 allowing individual provider allocations to be varied in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, enabling effective programme management to maximise delivery outcomes.
 - c) The proposed funding allocation up to the total value of £10k and two year contract award for continued hosting, maintenance and updates to the Adult Learning Course Finder and Employment and Skills websites, to incorporate the new branding, Accessibility Audit findings and on-line enrolment and future maintenance.
 - d) That this decision is exempted from call-in to avoid delays to the award of contracts at the start of the new academic year to avoid adversely impacting the viability of providers at this time and the Council's ability to provide a broad and balanced programme offer to learners.
- 6.2 The Head of Employment and Skills will be responsible for the implementation of the recommendations set out in this report.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 There are no background documents.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.