

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 th January 2021
Report Subject	Adult Community Learning Partnership
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to provide members with an overview of how Adult Community Learning funding is changing in Flintshire. It provides an update on how the Council is looking to ensure best value for adult learners from the increase in allocation of the Community Learning Grant (CLG) for 2020 onwards.

The report is also to seek approval to proceed with the formation of a joint Flintshire and Wrexham Adult Community Learning Partnership that will provide oversight and management of Adult Community Learning (ACL) across both Council areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members receive the report on Adult Community Learning funding within Flintshire and acknowledge the increased funding allocation through the Community Learning Grant (CLG) by Welsh Government.
2	That members note the development work with Wrexham Adult Learning Partnership and give approval for Flintshire to proceed with forming a joint Flintshire and Wrexham Adult Community Learning Partnership.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING (ACL)
1.01	<p>Each year, the Welsh Government provides Councils with funding for Adult Community Learning (ACL) for people over 19. The Welsh Government provides guidance on the use of the funding and Councils are required to submit an ACL service delivery plan and a strategic plan to the Welsh Government annually. Councils must demonstrate that they are working in partnership with local providers to deliver adult learning in their area. The Welsh Government analyses and discusses these plans with the Council.</p>
1.02	<p>Flintshire County Council has responsibility for providing oversight of ACL in Flintshire for administering the Community Learning Grant (CLG) and for ensuring that partners effectively collaborate to deliver high quality provision for learners. ACL is regulated by Estyn. The partnership is required to carry out self-evaluation on an annual basis, alongside providing an annual service delivery plan to Welsh Government.</p> <p>The new guidance for the delivery of ACL provision for 20/21 onwards requires a Delivery Plan which outlines all planned CLG funded delivery from 1st September 2020. Welsh Government has worked with councils during the transition period, taking into account the introduction of the new funding model and also the considerable challenges presented by Covid-19. The funding priorities remain aligned to the Adult Learning Policy and are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essential Communication Skills – including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)• Essential Application of Number Skills• Essential Digital Literacy Skills• Essential Employability Skills <p>Welsh Government expect plans will change and ‘normal’ delivery modified given the unknown impact on delivery of Covid-19 during 2020-2021.</p>
1.03	<p>Welsh Government have brought ACL in line with Further Education monitoring. They expect planned provision to be in accordance with the ‘Post 16 Programmes Directory’ which includes part time vocation and generic programme areas.</p> <p>In planning for provision, it is expected that partnerships should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus their delivery on the priorities of the Adult Learning policy (Essential Skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Digital Literacy);• Support opportunities for learner progression into further or higher provision, or into employment (paid or voluntary), as appropriate – linked to the priorities identified by the regional Skills Partnerships;• Support opportunities for informal learning; and• Support and develop the use of technology in the delivery of blended learning programmes.

1.04	<p>In February 2020, the Welsh Government announced the findings of its review of funding allocations.</p> <p>During the past two years, Welsh Government has been working with the sector to reform Adult Community Learning and to develop a new funding formula that would ensure a fairer allocation of the grant across Wales. Following consultation, Welsh Government has now provided councils with their new funding allocations, introduced in September 2020. This includes a cap at 50% for the period September 2020 to end of March 2021 or £50k, whichever is the greatest, as part of the transitional arrangements.</p> <p>Flintshire's funding for 2019-2020 was £2,344. This has been the annual allocation since the last review of the CLG. Flintshire has been the joint lowest beneficiary of the grant. Historically this has been used to support and provide access where possible through the Library Service for ESOL Skills Development and Engagement Courses.</p> <p>Flintshire's total grant allocation for 2020 -2021 is £52,405. It is anticipated that full year funding for 21/22 will be in the region of £216,152.</p>
1.05	<p>Across North Wales, there are two other partnerships that have been established for a number of years, namely Conwy and Denbighshire and Ynys Mon and Gwynedd. Flintshire and Wrexham Councils have operated separate partnerships due to the significant difference to its funding allocations from the Welsh Government (WG) Community Learning Grant (CLG). For example, WCBC's annual allocation for 19-20 was £96,219 whereas FCC received circa £2,344. For 2021/2022 Flintshire expects to receive a significant increase to £216,152 and Wrexham expects to receive £199,205.</p> <p>This now provides the opportunity to combine both partnerships, which are in the main, made up of the same delivery partners, including Coleg Cambria and Addysg Oedolion Cymru/Adult Learning Wales. The proposal is to form a joint partnership from 1 April 2021 that will provide oversight of quality, curriculum, safeguarding, self-evaluation and outcomes for learners. Both councils will retain responsibility for their Welsh Government Community Learning Grant and will be required to issue separate annual Service Delivery Plans.</p> <p>Welsh Government are supportive of the proposal to combine both Partnerships, as are both ACL partnerships, as this will enable more effective strategic and operational decision-making whilst also maximising the funding for each area.</p> <p>WCBC currently commissions provision via a framework that will be renewed from 1 April 2021, whilst FCC will make its own provision for commissioning. Both councils will work closely to ensure as much alignment as possible.</p>
1.06	<p>In planning for the transition to a new model, a number of options were explored, with the following identified as the preferred option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merge the Wrexham and Flintshire Adult Community Learning Partnerships, with agreed Terms of Reference to provide governance

	<p>of Adult Community Learning across both counties. Both councils to make separate arrangements for the administration of the CLG in line with Welsh Government priority areas for ACL and its new funding formula.</p> <p>It will be necessary for each council to commission a provider/providers to deliver a comprehensive Adult Community Learning curriculum for both Flintshire and Wrexham learners. Each council will identify a percentage of its respective CLG to be utilised to retain the post of ACL Coordinator who will then support the Partnership, oversee the development of its service delivery plans and self-evaluation reports, monitor the deployment of both CLGs, maintain the ACL Network of Partners, liaise with Welsh Government, ensure the promotion of ACL and identify opportunities for learners.</p>
1.07	<p>The initial plans for bringing together the Flintshire and Wrexham partnership by September 2020 were delayed due to Covid-19. Welsh Government asked both partnerships to focus on continuity of learning and accepted an interim proposal to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Submit separate Service Delivery Plans as required by Welsh Government by the end of June 2020. 2) Ensure that all necessary approvals are received from each council for the development of the joint partnership from 1 April 2021. 3) Bring together each ACL Partnership in October 2020 to discuss forming a joint partnership from 1 April 2021, establishing its governance arrangements in advance, to be clearly outlined in its Terms of Reference. 4) Develop a service specification for each council in readiness for tendering for the delivery of ACL provision and implementation of new contracts from 1 April 2021, to include LLWR inputting of data.
1.08	<p>Flintshire County Council is working with the Deeside Community Trust on a collaborative project to design and construct a new Community Hub as part of the regeneration of the Queensferry campus. The new facility will provide much needed community, adult learning and sports facilities.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Trust will assist the ACL partnership in delivering some of its key educational objectives. An element of the CLG funding will be used to commission the Trust to develop and deliver learning opportunities within the local community and help meet the action plan agreed with Welsh Government.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Welsh Government provides councils with funding for ACL and provides guidance on the use of the funding in an annual letter (Adult Community Learning Service Delivery Plans Guidance). Councils are required to submit an ACL service delivery plan and a strategic plan to Welsh</p>

	Government annually. Councils must demonstrate that they are working in partnership with local providers to deliver adult learning in their area. The Welsh Government analyses and discusses these plans with the council.
2.02	<p>The strategic responsibility for ACL provision within Flintshire sits within the Education and Youth Portfolio. There is insufficient funding through the CLG to support a co-ordinator post.</p> <p>The proposal is to use a percentage of the total Flintshire and Wrexham funding in order to facilitate a shared post of ACL Coordinator who will support the development of the ACL Partnership, oversee the development of the Service Delivery Plans and Self-Evaluation Reports, maintain the ACL Network of Partners, liaise with Welsh Government, ensure the promotion of ACL and identify additional opportunities for learners.</p> <p>Shared partnership with Wrexham would enable the continuation of a co-ordinator post across both education authorities. It would also enable Flintshire provision to benefit from Wrexham's established provision. It is anticipated that the current coordinator role, employed via Wrexham County Borough Council, will be reviewed to reflect any changes to the role caused by the development of the Wrexham and Flintshire ACL Partnership.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>Anti-poverty Impact – Flintshire County Council seeks to mitigate the impact of poverty through its partnership work programme. Adult Community Learning is key to delivering priorities which aim to support the wellbeing and mental health of citizens and to alleviate poverty and inequality.</p> <p>Adult Community Learning supports the Welsh Government's agenda for tackling poverty and its wellbeing agenda set out in the Well Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) (2015), particularly in meeting the needs of older learners.</p> <p>The proposed Adult Community Learning Partnership will contribute to this by supporting Flintshire adult learners to have positive aspirations and to learn and achieve their potential. It will help ensure that specified groups of learners have access to a range of provision that will help them to develop the skills and knowledge to secure a better future for themselves.</p>
3.02	<p>Equalities Impact – The 2019 inspection of Flintshire's education services undertaken by Estyn recognised good practice in provision for pupils' wellbeing and additional learning needs. This continues to be reflected in Flintshire's values, strategy, provision and outcomes.</p>
3.03	<p>Use of the grant funding and quality of provision will be monitored by the Flintshire and Wrexham ACL Partnership and by Welsh Government. Regular update reports will be provided to Education and Youth Portfolio</p>

	and an annual report to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview Scrutiny Committee.
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	Engagement with WG has indicated that they are encouraging partnerships to work more strategically and collaboratively. Members of both partnerships will be fully involved in the development of the joint partnership. Many of the partners already work across both local authorities and this would enable them to make more effective use of their resources as well.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	Appendix 1 – ACL Partnerships, Role and Remit
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	The priorities for the delivery of Adult Community Learning are set out in the Welsh Government Adult Learning in Wales (2017) guidance. https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/adult-learning-in-wales.pdf
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
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7.01	Contact Officer: Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager - School Improvement Telephone: 01352 704019 E-mail: vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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8.01	<p>Adult Community Learning (ACL) – non statutory education of people over the age of 19 in adult basic education (literacy and numeracy), digital literacy) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).</p> <p>Community Learning Grant CLG) - Welsh Government provides funding each year for the provision of ACL through this grant to local authorities.</p> <p>Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) - Data for ACL is not collected for overall partnership provision. Data is collected in the Welsh Government’s LLWR database, grouped by provision type.</p>
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