

Communities Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Progress made in Norfolk Community Learning Services
Date of meeting:	8 March 2017
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe, Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact This report provides Communities Committee with the latest information on service progress and in particular the two strategic objectives previously determined for 2016/17 for the Service: a) To build on the recent Grade 2 ('Good') Ofsted judgement and achieve a Grade 1 (Outstanding) service by July 2018 b) To implement a new vision and operating model for the service from September 2016 onwards which will: i. Increase the range of NCLS services on offer to all Norfolk residents ii. Increase the accessibility of NCLS services for all Norfolk residents iii. Continue to improve the quality of NCLS services	

Executive summary

The 2015/16 Self-Assessment Report was approved by the Steering Group in November 2016 along with the 2016-17 Quality Improvement Plan. Progress towards further improvement and meeting the strategic priorities of Norfolk County Council, the Skills Funding Agency and Ofsted is detailed in this report.

Recommendations:

Communities Committee is recommended to approve the further improvement and development of NCLS as Norfolk's provider of 'second chance', employment/skills and leisure learning through:

1. Raising the quality of provision to responding to increased demands and challenges set by Ofsted for the adult skills sector.
2. Further development of its curriculum offer to meet the needs of stakeholders including: NCC service teams, the voluntary/community sector, employers and residents.
3. As the provider of choice in supporting the implementation of the Apprenticeship Levy for Norfolk County Council.
4. Positioning the service to grow as a provider of Skills Funding Agency (core) delivery in a changing funding climate which presents challenges and opportunities.

1. Background

1.1 Update on learner recruitment

Revenue from enrolments for 'Education and Training' (accredited vocational qualifications and functional skills such as English and mathematics) is an improvement compared to the same period of the previous academic year. Meaningful comparisons between academic years are gauged by the total amount of funding rather than enrolments i.e. certain types of enrolments generate different amounts of funding. For example, the Service has generated £80,000 more funding than this time last year after one term.

Enrolments for 'Community Learning' (non-accredited courses) are down on the same period last year by 45%; however a yearly evaluation is not comparing like with like. The learner recruitment target for publicly funded Community Learning programmes needs to reflect two significant changes in curriculum planning designed to use public funding to prioritise the most socially and economically disadvantaged. Firstly, the growth of the privately funded LeisureStream (531 enrolments in Term 1, 2016/17 compared to zero in Term 1, 2015/16) has 'consumed' a large section of learners previously on Community Learning courses. Secondly, recruiting 'harder to reach learners' is more resource heavy and challenging in terms of engagement. This a sector-wide development and senior provider leaders have made a formal representation to the Skills Funding Agency and Department for Education to recognise the challenges facing adult learning providers in engaging and transforming the lives of those furthest from work or independence.

Increased locality working and more strategic partnership work with the public, private and voluntary sectors through the Community Learning forums and established locality platforms is key to improving learner recruitment for the priority target group.

Enrolments in the autumn term 2016/17 were as follows:

Locality	Apprenticeships	Community Learning	Education & Training	Total
Breckland	27	121	232	392
Broadland & North Norfolk	61	376	398	867
Great Yarmouth	13	279	155	452
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	4	110	142	263
Norwich	34	346	333	733
South Norfolk	39	172	173	405
Total	178	1404	1433	3112

NB Above table does not include LeisureStream enrolments

The service is developing and delivering programmes of learning that relate directly to Norfolk County Council's four objectives:

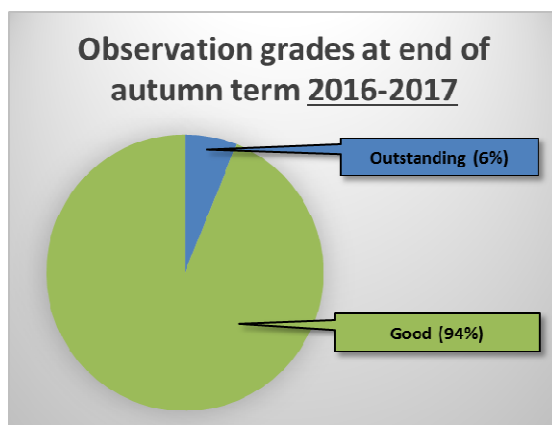
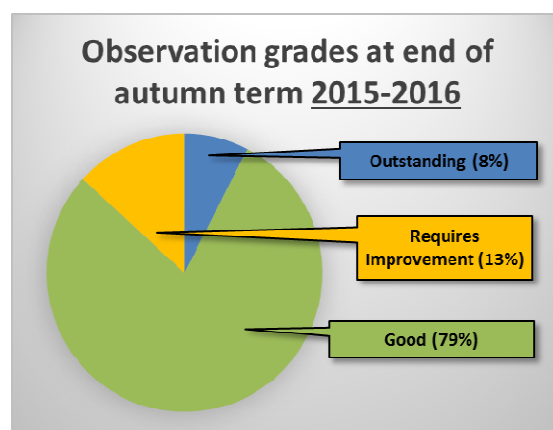
- **Excellence in Education:** For example, in King's Lynn and West Norfolk, NCLS is improving learners' functional skills through the development of English and mathematics skills with 66 learners and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) with 24 learners. In Norwich, 398 learners have joined GCSE programmes in English, Maths, Science and Psychology and 118 learners enrolled on Accountancy courses
- **Real Jobs:** For example, 61 apprentices started their apprenticeships in the

autumn term 2016/17 in Broadland and North Norfolk

- **Good Infrastructure:** For example, in this academic year NCLS is giving 300 people across Norfolk the digital skills they need to access services through the Get Digital programme, which we deliver in partnership with the Library Service.
- **Supporting Vulnerable People:** For example, 108 vulnerable learners attended courses in South Norfolk on family learning, lip-reading and bespoke courses for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

1.2 Update on Quality

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment observed through formal observations in the autumn term 2016/17 has improved in comparison with the same period in 2015-16. As the table shows, there is no longer any graded observations that fall under the category of 'requires improvement' to date in 2016/17. The figure for 'Good or Better' is high by sector standards as documented in Ofsted inspection findings; although there are no prescribed benchmarks or nationally published figures for the quality of teaching, learning and assessments. An enhanced CPD programme, such as Learning Walks, mentoring and sharing of good practice with other providers, aim to increase the amount of outstanding grades.



However further improvement is needed to increase the level of 'Outstanding' learning experience for our learners.

In the autumn term 2016/17, retention of learners, based on completed courses only (a small sample at this point of the year) was 95.8% overall (2015/16 end of year retention was 96.4%).

1.3 Contribution to consultation on the Building Our Industrial Strategy: Green Paper (January 2017)

The draft strategy is based on 10 pillars and the government is consulting on the proposals until April 2017. Of particular relevance to NCLS in supporting council and Local Enterprise Partnership priorities are the goals for skills development including:

- Apprenticeships
- Digital Skills development
- Basic skills for English and mathematics
- Providing a pipeline to address shortages in sectors that depend on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills

- Lifelong Learning
- Education and careers advice
- Supporting businesses to start and grow

1.4 Update on NCLS supporting NCC Apprenticeships levy

Delivering in partnership with the Organisational Development Team of HR Services, NCLS will be rolling out 'Apprenticeship Fact Funding' sessions from March 2017 across the county aimed at preparing Council managers and non-managers for the 2017/18 appraisal round.

NCLS is working closely with HR to ensure that the benefits of its high quality apprenticeship programmes and 'wrap-a-around' services are clearly understood by referring managers.

1.5 Update on Post 16 Area Based Review (Norfolk & Suffolk Adult Learning Providers)

The DfE-led Wave 5 Area Review (AR) will be sharing its recommendations with stakeholders by the end of March 2017 (although not nationally published until June 2017). The AR, part of a national process, directly affects providers in the Norfolk and Suffolk areas, delivering to learners in the 16-18 age band such as colleges of further education (not NCLS). NCC involvement in the AR includes an evaluation of the progression routes for learners from 16-18 to adult provision, and support adults with learning difficulties and/or difficulties and those who require English and/or maths qualifications.

NCC's contribution is part of a parallel process to the AR with a consideration of post-18 delivery of all adult learning, where funded by the Skills Funded Agency, in the Suffolk and Norfolk region and it is led by the respective county councils. In particular work on adult provision will focus on:

- Aligning provision that offers support for adults both in and out of work aligned to economic priorities
- providing coherent employment pathways for 19+ with SEND
- Devising a collective plan and coherent offer for English, maths and ESOL provision at entry level to level 2
- Developing a plan for ensuring more adult learners move into the workplace.

The recommendations for adult providers are non-binding with provider participation voluntary (unlike the AR) but the aim is to produce a more collaborative, efficient and geographically balanced skills offer that meets the needs of job seekers and employers.

1.6 Update on Safeguarding

(i) Update on Ofsted inspections of Safeguarding and Prevent Agenda

Following successful Ofsted inspection of NCLS in April 2016, the report stated:

- *The arrangements for safeguarding are effective*
- *Arrangements for safeguarding are thorough and include comprehensive safe recruitment processes.*

However there is growing concern in the sector that Ofsted is 'moving the goal-posts' (from the guidance set out in the Common Inspection Framework). As a result there is growing concern from sector leaders about the lack of consistency in how providers are 'tested' for suitable safeguarding arrangements. In some cases, nationally speaking, Ofsted have deemed as inadequate safeguarding procedures implemented by a provider as part of the wider council's policy. NCLS has already extended its policy for DBS by having in place checks so that every teacher, or staff member who may come into contact with a learner, having to be issued with 'clearance' before starting or continuing their employment with the service.

Further, the Prevent Agenda, classified as a Safeguarding matter, is a higher priority for Ofsted when conducting inspections. At a recent national event Paul Joyce HMI, Deputy Director, Further Education and Skills officially gave notice to providers of the "Increased emphasis on the impact of Prevent duty implementation".

Consequently NCLS management will be working with Council colleagues to review current safeguarding arrangements to ensure it is fully Ofsted compliant.

(ii) Update on Safeguarding and Prevent Records of concern - Norfolk Community Learning Services

Quarters 3 and 4 2016

Month	Vulnerable adults	16-18	Children under 16	Total
July 2016	1	0	0	1
August 2016	0	0	0	0
September	0	0	0	0
October 2016	0	0	0	0
November 2016	0	0	0	0
December 2016	1	0	0	1
	0	0	2	2

All four issues stated in the table above have been dealt with and concluded in accordance with Cultural Services Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

1.7 NCLS Steering Group Update

The Steering Group has agreed to open membership to learners of the service. The aim is to have two Learner Representatives recruited in the current 2016/17 academic year and a standard process for recruitment for thereafter. The changes are part of a wider internal review of the service's Learner Involvement Strategy.

A training and refresher session will be held in June 2017 (date tbc) for current and any new Elected Members to the Steering Group.

The Steering Group will be holding a 'Review and Strategy Day' on 4th July 2017 that will be open to key stakeholders of NCLS.

1.8 Awards Update:

The NCLS team recently won the OSCA for the category of Real Jobs. In a separate development the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services submitted NCLS on behalf of Norfolk County Council for the MJ Achievement Awards 2017. The category is *Most Improved Council* – drawing on NCLS as a service case study as part of a wider council 'turn-around success story'.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 None

3. Issues, risks and innovation

3.1. The Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board potentially may be affected by the safeguarding risk noted under item 2.6

4. Background

4.1. Norfolk Community Learning Services (NCLS) is part of Norfolk County Council and provides apprenticeships and adult learning programmes. Most of the provision is adult learning programmes, which include family learning, community learning and work-based learning, including a growing apprenticeship programme at all levels for 16-18 and 19+ learners. The programmes are delivered at NCLS' main base in Norwich and in a wide range of large and small venues across the county.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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