



Havering Adult College

Maximising new opportunities, meeting new challenges: a case study on improving the governance of community learning in Havering Council

The London Borough of Havering Council receives Skills Funding Agency and Adult Safeguarding Learning funding to deliver community learning in the Borough. This is delivered through Havering Adult College, who are the largest provider of community learning in the area and provide an equivalent volume of accredited courses.

The council also delivers community learning provision through four other service outlets:

- the Libraries;
- health and sports development;
- Fairkytes Arts Centre; and
- the Europa Centre.

In addition, there are voluntary, community and private providers active in the area.

The amount and range of provision and the number of locations where provision is made

vary significantly across the five Council providers. They all also offer other important, non-learning services to residents. Providers are located within two different directorates in the local authority and each provider presently has its own separate governance arrangements, which form part of the overall governance provided by the local authority:

- both the Adult College and Europa Centre fall within the overall responsibility of the lead member for Children's and Young People's Services; and
- the Libraries, Sport and Health and the Fairkytes Arts Centre all fall within the overall responsibility of the lead member for Culture, Towns and Communities.

Both lead members delegate responsibility for the day-to-day running of the services to respective service managers, via the relevant director.

The catalyst/drivers for reviewing the governance structure

Despite the present economic climate and associated ongoing changes to funding, having realigned priorities and reduced funding, Havering Council is keen to find ways to sustain and improve provision for residents, particularly the vulnerable, in a cost-effective way. It has thus undertaken a wide-ranging review of community learning as part of the local authority's transformation agenda. Evaluation by an external agency has demonstrated that residents highly value community learning as a local service. They clearly appreciate the provision not only in terms of its obvious educational value, but also in terms of developing social capital, such as greater community cohesion and improved health and social benefits. Large numbers of residents participate in provision, many paying significant fees, so the need to demonstrate public accountability is strong. The Adult College has worked on making its provision more cost effective and responsive to resident needs over the last few years, and there have been other significant recent changes in the provision offered in Havering.

The Council's transformation agenda involves considering whether the present governance arrangements across service units are the most appropriate way of meeting the wants and needs of residents, or whether they could be adapted to provide a more focused and coherent structure of governance. Consideration is also being given to including some or all of the community learning providers in the development of some form of external trust, such as a community interest company. The review of governance arrangements therefore needs to be seen as

a continuation of on-going work, but with a wider range of options being considered, and with added urgency in pursuing change, not least because of impending BIS guidance on community learning trusts. Local work

on future options is still underway, but key decisions taken to date have been:

- to move from considering provision made by the Adult College alone to that being made across the Borough by all providers;
- to work on concrete aspects of provision such as the range and type, accommodation, tutors, fees and other sources of revenue and costs; and
- to use this information to decide on the most appropriate governance and management arrangements.

Review process and stakeholder involvement

An external agency was commissioned to undertake a review of community learning to identify ways to improve provision for Havering residents. The review has:

- mapped out governance, provision, fee structures, tutors, accommodation and funding sources;
- considered existing management and governance arrangements;
- identified different models of delivery;
- determined user and resident requirements;
- determined aspirations and pressures for change; and
- made recommendations on ways forward.

Whilst it is intended to review all provision, work has initially been undertaken with the five Council providers; this work was completed over a two month period and an initial report has been produced with a number of

recommendations.

As a council, it is with elected members that the true governance responsibility for community learning rests; elected members are being kept informed of the review process, and will be fully involved in agreeing any significant change through existing decision-making mechanisms. The influence and role of council members in guiding the service needs to be recognised and appreciated in considering the further development of resident engagement.

The views of users and residents on the existing provision and aspects such as quality and fees have been integral to the review. Evidence has included analysis of provider activity, and a formal report produced by a specialist agency on survey responses from a representative sample of 1050 local people. Residents and users essentially want continuing or improved services; enabling their effective involvement in determining future provision is now one of the key aspects of work being taken forward.

Strategic and operational managers in each of the five providers have also been central to the review process, providing information and proposals on the way forward, and officers are now beginning to implement some of the review recommendations, including building on present arrangements for increasing resident engagement. The review found that each provider had arrangements in place such as user groups, collective learner forums and focus groups. Whilst these have different names they largely have the same purpose of eliciting information on present provision and its development from current service users. Arrangements for formally collecting and sharing the views of wider stakeholders across the five providers are also being developed. The Council is examining what is the right level of partnership working and integration among the providers to meet resident needs

cost-effectively, and what organisational and governance arrangements will effectively achieve this. This work has been informed by a risk assessment.

Decisions made to date

Two key officer groups have been established to secure a partnership approach to forging greater service integration: a Community Learning Strategy Group, and an Operational Group. Both have already begun work, and their terms of reference, membership, purpose and responsibilities have been agreed - see Annexes A and B.

The Strategy Group is the lead group on all aspects relating to community learning and its development in the local authority, and has a key role in the Council's new governance arrangements. It will report to elected members and may, over time, include the relevant elected members in its membership. It is responsible for developing a new Community Learning Strategy, built upon five key propositions adopted from recent LSIS-sponsored strategic dialogue with adult learning providers nationally:

- developing partnerships and networks;
- forging greater service integration;
- becoming even more user/citizen led;
- designing and delivering 'a new curriculum for challenging times'; and
- giving priority to services that 'add value'.

The Strategy Group will provide over-arching direction for the work of the five Borough providers in relation to their community learning provision, and will make links with other Council services and with other informal learning providers working in Havering. Due

to the ‘transformation’ agenda currently underway within the local authority, and the subsequent restructure of the Local Strategic Partnership and associated sub-groups, the Strategy Group does not currently report into one of the corporate groups; it is however jointly chaired by the Directors of Children’s Services and of Culture and Community.

The Operational Group reports to the Strategy Group. It will advise them on all aspects of the delivery of community learning in Havering, and will coordinate and oversee the community learning provision made by the five Borough providers to ensure it best meets residents’ wants and needs. It is chaired by the Young People and Adult Learning Strategy Manager, and membership includes key staff from each of the five providers.

Havering Adult College governance arrangements

Havering Adult College has in recent years moved away from the traditional ‘governance’ model with a separate governing body, to a model in which the College uses a range of partnerships and meetings to obtain strategic direction, as outlined in Diagram 1. Interactions with the various groupings are detailed below, where they are not explained elsewhere in this case study.

Young People’s Learning Partnership: determines 14-25 policy within the local authority and members include the local schools, colleges and providers, as well as key agencies including Job Centre Plus, Connexions and Youth Services. The Adult College engages through this group to identify potential demand and progression opportunities for post-19 provision.



Diagram 1

Employability Development Group: links education with employment and contains local employers and employer representative groups, Job Centre Plus, local schools, colleges and providers. The Adult College engages through this group to develop its employability curriculum.

Learning Disability Partnership: this group determines learning disability policy across the local authority and includes a wide range of members including children's and adults' social services, health, and local service providers. The Adult College engages through this group to develop its foundation learning and learning disabilities provision.

Enterprise and Growth Partnership: determines the adult skills and enterprise policy for the local authority and includes a wide range of members including local employers and employer representative groups, Job Centre Plus, Connexions and skills providers. The Adult College engages through this group to develop its employability provision and to engage with other prime DWP funded providers.

Learner Forum: enables the Adult College to gain learner feedback across a range of areas, including the relevance of its curriculum and learner satisfaction. It also identifies and tests new areas of provision.

Stakeholder Group: this group enables the Adult College to gain feedback across a range of areas with a range of stakeholders, including health, early years providers and Age Concern, as well offering an opportunity to engage with new and existing stakeholders, and a networking opportunity for members.

Strategic overview and scrutiny of the Adult College is provided through the internal relationship with the local authority and the Lead Member for Children's and Young People's Services. Key decisions are agreed

with the Lead Member through the Council's existing democratic process.

Effects of the changing external environment for FE and Skills on the review: some future scenarios

Initiation of the community learning review in Havering pre-dates the publication of 'New Challenges, New Chances'; however the purposes and objectives for community learning (as set out on pages 13-14 of the BIS paper) are entirely consistent with the direction of travel in Havering, and provide a useful additional impetus for the work.

We very much welcome proposals for potential piloting of a community learning trust model, and are now beginning to test elements for the development of an appropriate local model for the Havering area. In one scenario, the five local authority providers could have a shared governance structure operated through an extended Strategy Group, with more formal reporting structures within the Local Strategic Partnership structure. Alternatively, and more radically, the Community Learning Strategy Group could form the board of governors of a community learning trust, with powers delegated from the Council's Health and Wellbeing Board. In this case, membership might be expanded to include representatives from the groups identified in Diagram 1 and other key external agencies and partners, including the NHS and Voluntary Community Sector.

Assuming planned work on this agenda progresses as envisaged, future governance of community learning in Havering is expected to become very much more integrated than at present. It is possible that, by 2013/14:

- the role and terms of reference of the Community Learning Strategy Group will have been developed further so that it becomes the board of a

community learning trust for Havering;

- that Board would explicitly and pre-eminently provide governance for all Council provision of community learning in Havering;
- the Board may have delegated powers, thus separating it from the existing Council decision-making arrangements.

Given the Council's transformation agenda, it is also possible that some or all of the current local authority providers may have developed into a mutual concern, and so become a provider external to the Council, but commissioned by it to deliver community learning in Havering through Skills Funding Agency Adult Safeguarded Learning funding. In this scenario, the new provider would work under strategic direction from the Community Learning Strategy Group, against an agreed Havering Community Learning Strategy.

Next steps

Priority will be given to the following actions:

- development of a Community Learning Strategy;
- identification of a governance model for community learning, consistent with BIS guidance on community learning trusts, that is sustainable and best meets the needs of Havering residents; and
- increase engagement with, and improve accountability to, Borough residents.

Key lessons to share with others considering similar change processes

- Be clear about your overall aims or mission for the services provided, and seek to determine the governance structure most suited to achieving them.
- Have a clear overall view of what you seek to achieve through a service review, with a suitable resource allocation and timeline for undertaking the work, and secure a commitment from key governors, lead members and stakeholders. Plan it in stages so that it is seen to be manageable.
- Limit the additional workload on staff to what is absolutely necessary without compromising its value.
- Seek to identify immediate operational gains that will engage stakeholders in undertaking the review and implementing its recommendations.

Annex A

Havering Council Community Learning Strategy Group

Rationale

The Strategy Group will lead on all aspects of the provision and development of community learning (CL) in Havering. It will:

- inform the development of Council policy on CL;
- ensure the Council's policy is implemented in a way that maximises the benefits for residents and that provision is delivered cost-effectively;
- ensure that implementation takes due regard of the policies and situation in each of the two Directorates (Culture and Community and Social Care and Learning) and the five Council providers; and
- communicate clearly the purpose of CL provision in the Borough and its benefits to residents.

Terms of reference

The Strategy Group is the lead group on all aspects relating to CL in the local authority and provides direction for the development of CL in Havering. It seeks to ensure that high quality provision is made to meet the needs and wants of residents in a cost-effective way, and ensure residents know about this provision and how to access it. It will oversee and coordinate the work of the five Borough providers and provide reports and recommendations to the Council.

The Strategy Group has strategic responsibility for the provision and development of CL

within the organisational structures of the Culture and Community and Social Care and Learning Directorates of the local authority. In undertaking this responsibility it will work closely with others in the local authority and liaise with external providers of CL in the Borough. The Operational Group will report to the Strategy Group.

Membership

Group Director
Children's Services (Sue Butterworth)

Group Director
Culture and Community (Cynthia Griffin)

Head of Learning & Achievement (Mary Pattinson)

Head of Culture and Leisure Services
(Simon Parkinson)

Young People and Adult Learning Strategy
Manager (Trevor Cook)

Principal Inspector
HSIS (Grahame Smith)

Health & Wellbeing Manager
(Guy Selfe)

Libraries Manager
(Ann Rennie)

The group will be chaired by either Group Director.

Other invited and/or co-opted members or observers, to be agreed by the members.

Strategy Group Clerk: to be provided by the Young People and Adult Learning team.

Changes of staff or organisational changes which affect the membership of the group should be notified to the chair, who will take the appropriate action.

Purpose and responsibilities

- To keep the Council well informed of potential changes which could affect the provision of CL in Havering, such as significant changes in external funding.
- To produce and agree the strategy and associated plans for the provision and development of community learning in the Borough.
- To report to the Council as appropriate on all strategic matters relating to CL.
- To consult widely with all stakeholders on their needs and requirements and, in particular, with residents on the provision made.
- To identify and agree development priorities.
- To identify likely costs and benefits of development projects.
- To advise each of the two Directorates on aspects relating to the development and provision of CL in the Borough as required and as seen appropriate.
- To manage and establish sub-groups as appropriate.
- To determine the membership of the Operational Group and inform its work.
- To oversee the work of the Operational Group and the five providers and assure the quality of the work undertaken by them.
- To aim to operate for and on behalf of the Borough as a whole.
- To promote and evidence the value of Informal Adult and Community Learning to residents in Havering.
- To ensure that there is effective communication on all aspects relating to CL both within and external to the Borough and, in particular, to ensure that residents are well informed on the provision available and how to access it.
- To ensure that it is able to clearly demonstrate the value of the Borough's CL provision to individual residents, families and communities in Havering.
- To promote the London Borough of Havering's Equal Opportunities policy.
- To seek specialist advice where appropriate.

Meeting frequency

Quarterly

Annex B

Havering Council Community Learning Operational Group

Rationale

The Operational Group will co-ordinate and oversee the development of community learning (CL) provision made by the five Council providers in Havering. These are:

- Havering Adult College;
- The Libraries;
- Health and Sports;
- Fairkytes Arts Centre; and
- The Europa Centre.

The Operational Group will:

- inform the work of the Strategy Group;
- ensure that CL provision is made in a way that maximises the benefits for residents and is delivered cost-effectively;
- ensure that development of provision takes due regard of the policies and situation in each of the five Council providers and builds on their strengths; and
- assist the Strategy Group in communicating clearly the purpose of CL provision in the Borough and its benefit to residents.

Terms of reference

The Operational Group reports to the CL Strategy Group and provides it with

information and advice on the delivery of all aspects of CL in Havering. It is the delivery arm for provision of CL within the London Borough of Havering. The Strategy Group may, on occasion, require it to undertake specific tasks or projects.

The Operational Group provides a forum for the Council providers to take an overview of provision and its delivery in Havering. It ensures that provision is coordinated and coherent, and best meets residents' wants and needs. It has executive responsibility in resolving any disputes between providers on detailed operational aspects of provision in a way which is consistent with the policies determined by the Council and Strategy Group.

Membership

Young People and Adult Learning Strategy Manager
(Trevor Cook)

Principal Inspector – HSIS
(Grahame Smith)

Health & Wellbeing Manager
(Guy Selfe)

Libraries Manager
(Ann Rennie)

Fairkytes Arts Centre Manager
(John Shadwell)

Arts Coordinator: Fairkytes Arts Centre
(Mark Etherington)

Curriculum Manager: Adult College
(Darren Purdie)

Curriculum Manager: Adult College
(Dawn Young)

Head of Europa Centre
(Dan Alliott)

Health and Sports Development Co-ordinator
(Margaret Campbell)

Libraries Reader Development Manager
(Ruth Gedalovitch)

Policy Officer
(Catherine Robinson)

Chair appointed annually by members of the group.

Other invited and/or co-opted members or observers, to be agreed by the members.

Collegiate Clerk: to be provided by the Young People and Adult Learning team.

Changes of staff or organisational changes which affect the membership of the group should be notified to the chair, who will take the appropriate action.

Purpose and responsibilities

- To assist the Strategy Group by contributing to and implementing the agreed strategy and associated plans for the provision and development of Informal Adult and Community Learning in Havering.
- To contribute to the determination of the processes by which the delivery of the strategy and associated plans will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed and play an appropriate role in these processes.
- To keep the Strategy Group well informed on all matters relating to the operational provision of CL in Havering, including:
 - the demand for provision and its availability, commissioning and delivery;
- the performance of the five Council providers of CL in Havering;
- emerging trends and/or potential changes which could affect the provision of CL for Havering residents; and
- coordinating and overseeing all aspects of the operational provision of CL by the five Council providers, including:
 - the types, range and balance of provision offered;
 - models of delivery adopted;
 - use of accommodation;
 - appointment and use of tutors;
 - charges for courses and use of other revenue streams;
 - quality assurance.
- To support the Strategy Group in their work on:
 - actively seeking and bidding for additional funding from various sources, sometimes with external partners, to support the provision of CL in Havering;
 - increasing income through accessing commercial activities within and beyond the borough boundaries;
 - developing new modes of

delivery, particularly in partnership with other organisations; and

- identifying and implementing efficiency savings which could be made without compromising the availability or quality of the CL experience of residents.
 - To consult widely with residents on their needs and requirements in relation to CL and on the provision made.
 - To inform the Strategy Group of the need for new provision or where existing provision should be discontinued.
 - To ensure that there is effective communication on all aspects relating to CL, both within and external to the Borough. In particular to ensure that residents are well informed on the provision available and how to access it.
 - To ensure that it is able to clearly demonstrate the value of the Borough's CL provision to individual residents, families and communities in Havering.
 - To promote Community Learning in Havering.
- To assist the Strategy Group in:
 - identifying development priorities and the likely costs and benefits of development projects; and
 - monitoring provision secured with other providers in the Borough and through cross-border links.
 - To promote the London Borough of Havering's Single Equality Framework and to have particular regard for provision for protected, vulnerable and unrepresented groups.

Meeting frequency

Quarterly

For further information please contact:

Trevor Cook

Young People and Adult Learning Strategy Manager

01708 431250

07826 855955

trevor.cook@havering.gov.uk