

**AGENDA ITEM – Annual  
Report of the Learning and  
Skills Service**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**November 2018**

**REPORT OF SENIOR  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Portfolio: Regeneration and Housing – Lead Cabinet Member – Nigel Cooke**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNING BODY FOR THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE**

1. Summary

This report provides an update on the work of the Learning and Skills Service, including information on performance, governance and leadership. The report also highlights the outcome of an unannounced Ofsted inspection which took place in June 2018, along with information on the successes and strategic decisions taken by the Learning and Skills Service during academic year 2017/18 to meet local priorities.

2. Recommendations

1. Members note the positive outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of the Learning and Skills Service
2. Members note the performance of the Learning and Skills Service and the effectiveness of the leadership and governance arrangements.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

To demonstrate the ongoing success of the Governing Body for Learning and Skills as an advisory committee empowered by Cabinet to provide challenge, support and strategic oversight to the Service. The report also makes Cabinet aware of the positive outcome of a recent Ofsted inspection into the quality of adult learning.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

**AGENDA ITEM – Annual Report of the Learning and Skills Service**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**November 2018**

**REPORT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Annual Report of the Governing Body for the Learning and Skills Service**

**Summary**

This report provides an update on the work of the Learning and Skills Service, including information on performance, governance and leadership. The report also highlights the outcome of an unannounced Ofsted inspection which took place in June 2018, along with information on the successes and strategic decisions taken by the Learning and Skills Service during academic year 2017/18 to meet local priorities.

**Recommendations**

1. Members note the positive outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of the Learning and Skills Service
2. Members note the performance of the Learning and Skills Service and the effectiveness of the leadership and governance arrangements.

**DETAIL**

**Governance and management of the Service**

1. The Governing Body was established in October 2016 and since its inception has supported the Service through a period of transition and sustained improvements. The Governing Body provides challenge and insight from different sectors whilst ensuring the Service continues to meet the needs and priorities of Stockton Borough Council.
2. Governors play an active role in the quality assurance process, such as by participating in the annual self-assessment. This process identifies both good practice and areas for improvement resulting in the development of a Quality Improvement Plan. This plan is scrutinised and progress against identified targets is monitored.
3. The value of the contribution of the Governing Body, along with the management arrangements for the Service, have been validated by independent advisors and Ofsted inspectors.
4. The structure of the Governing Body for the 18/19 academic year is as follows:

- Chair and Link Governor for Equality and Diversity – Councillor Nigel Cooke, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing and Portfolio Holder for the Learning and Skills Service
- Vice Chair – Frances Hoy – Senior HR Manager, NIFCO Engineering
- Link Governor for Safeguarding – Councillor Jim Beall – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health and Deputy Leader of the Council
- Link Governor for Prevent – James Hadman, Catalyst
- Governor – Craig Taylor, Learning and Skills Service Manager, SBC
- Governor – Reuben Kench, Director of Culture, Leisure and Events, SBC
- Governor – Chris Renahan, Economic Growth Manager, SBC
- Governor – Jacqueline Taylor, Self Employed Marketing consultant and University Lecturer
- Governor – Katie Horbury, Learner Representative
- Clerk to Governors – Cath Kelly, Learning and Skills Service, SBC

### **Positive Outcome of the Ofsted Short Inspection**

1. In June 2018, the Learning and Skills Service was subject to an Ofsted Short Inspection, where it was identified that the service continued to be a good learning provider as judged against the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework.
2. To achieve a 'good' rating, a service must be able to evidence sustained good quality provision, progress against areas for development identified at the last inspection, effective implementation of new requirements, and effective arrangements for safeguarding.
3. Ofsted were very positive about the clarity of purpose and commitment of staff and Governors. Ofsted stated "New governance arrangements, recent management restructuring and the appointment of a new manager for the service have resulted in the establishment of a cohesive and committed team. Leaders, managers and staff are ambitious for their learners and their community. Governors receive regular updates regarding the progress that the team is making in improving the provision."
4. The inspection process identified next steps for the provider which have formed the basis of a Post Inspection Action Plan which will be monitored on a quarterly basis.
5. As part of the strategic planning process, the service is keen to ensure that the courses and qualifications offered continue to address the priorities of the Stockton Economic Growth Plan and the Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan. The Service has aligned the curriculum to the economic priorities of the Tees Valley Combined Authority and Stockton Borough Council.
6. This was done whilst ensuring the service meets the needs of the whole Stockton community. The Ofsted inspection report confirmed that "individuals, including those in the most disadvantaged wards, are able to learn new skills, increase their prospects of employment and improve their quality of life through learning and communicating with others."

7. Effective safeguarding is a fundamental requirement for any learning provider, reflected in the Inspection Framework. The Governing Body has a Safeguarding Link Governor and discrete Safeguarding Policy. In the event of any safeguarding concerns, staff and managers are confident and able to take appropriate action. They keep secure, accurate records and monitor issues to full resolution within suitable time frames. This area of work provides a good illustration of the added value of the Governing Body in bringing focus and expertise to bear on a crucial aspect of the Service.
8. Ofsted are unlikely to inspect the Service again for a number of years. However, we will continue to drive improvement in every aspect of the Learning & Skills Service.
9. The next step for the Service, its leaders and governors is to implement the Post Inspection Action Plan. We aim to exceed the recommendations of Ofsted and to work towards being recognised by Ofsted as an 'Outstanding' learning provider at a future inspection.

### **Performance of the Learning and Skills Service**

10. Whilst figures are still being finalised by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for the 17/18 academic year, the Service's own data indicates that the Service has ended the academic year with strong performance data with achievement rate performance significantly higher than the national average as shown in the headline table below.

Programme Type	Achievement Rate	National Average
Education and Training (Adult Skills)	92.6%	84.0%
Community Learning	99.8%	Not Applicable
Apprenticeships	74.2%	67.7%
	66.0% (Timely)	59.4% (Timely)

11. The service is also keen to recognise not only the tangible achievements of learners such as through achieving qualifications, but also the softer skills which learners develop. The feedback table below demonstrates that the vast majority of learners were able to improve their skills, increase their confidence, and have a greater understanding of their own health and well-being which ultimately help them to achieve or move closer to achieving their aspirations.

Statement	Positive Responses
My well-being has improved	90.3%
I feel more aware of my own strengths and area for development	91.9%
I have clearer goals and ambitions for the future	93.3%
I feel able to develop my own skills outside of the classroom	94.0%
I feel more able to take part in my own Community	91.6%
I feel more confident to access services on-line	90.9%
I feel more confident with my English & Maths	86.8%

12. By working closely in the community and with partner organisations, the service has been able to develop learning programmes to engage with those from the most disadvantaged wards. As a result, 61% of learners come from a disadvantaged ward and are supported to achieve their personal, social and economic aspirations. In line with local priorities, the service also continues to deliver provision which targets those requiring the most support with 16.9% of learners who join the service having no prior attainment / qualifications.
13. In April 2018, the service was notified by the ESFA that its apprenticeship provision in the previous 16/17 academic year fell below the required standard. The ESFA investigate when over 40% of apprenticeship cohort achievement rates fall below its published threshold. For Stockton Learning and Skills in 16/17, 40.8% fell into this category.
14. As a result, the service implemented a Rapid Improvement Plan to address the issues which was monitored and scrutinised by Governors, leaders, managers, delivery staff and the ESFA.
15. In response to the apprenticeship performance weakness, the Service has strengthened the quality improvement process and introduced termly reviews. Staff and governors now receive detailed accurate reports following these reviews to monitor progress against performance targets within the year. The impact of this work is starting to be demonstrated through the robust day-to-day scrutiny of the work carried out by the team of Assessors and through the increased involvement of employers in the review of apprentices' work.
16. As a result of this rapid improvement plan and the hard work of everyone involved in the service, only 7.5% of our apprenticeship provision currently falls below the threshold compared to 40.8% in 16/17.
17. Also the 17/18 indicative Timely Achievement Rate for apprenticeships has risen to 66.0% (6.6% above National Benchmark) and the overall apprenticeship Achievement Rate is 74.2% (6.5% above National Benchmark).

### **Devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the Tees Valley Combined Authority**

18. The Learning and Skills Service is currently funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for both of its Adult Education Budget (AEB) and Apprenticeship grant contracts. For the 19/20 academic year, the Adult Education Budget will be devolved from the ESFA to the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA).
19. This devolution of funds should allow the service to continue to work collaboratively with strategic partners such as other local providers and TVCA to ensure our curriculum offer meets the needs of both residents and employers.
20. There is also potential for providers to benefit from a simpler funding system and respond to community and employer demands more favourably, with TVCA affording greater flexibilities to providers compared to previous funding restrictions from central government. However, this outcome is not guaranteed and detailed planning within the Combined Authority is ongoing.
21. The next phase to position the service to be ready for devolution will be to develop a 'Delivery Plan' which will indicate our intended curriculum offer and priority areas. The Delivery Plan template will be issued by the Combined Authority who will be required to validate and approve our intended offer. This will then result in the award of our grant allocation contract to be issued in March 2019.
22. It has been signalled that provider grant allocations will be on par with that received from the ESFA in the 18/19 academic year. However, current Combined Authority outline

commissioning process does not confirm this intention and there is a risk of the devolution having a destabilising effect on the Learning & Skills Service.

23. Relevant staff and Governing Body representatives will continue to engage in a dialogue with TVCA to ensure the best possible outcome for the local economy and the residents of the Borough.
24. Alongside devolution, the service will continue to maintain strong links with the ESFA. For example, any performance interventions such as through Minimum Standards will continue to be managed and controlled by the ESFA rather than through the Combined Authority. The Apprenticeship grant contracts will also continue to be managed and issued by the ESFA. There will also continue to be an AEB contract direct with the ESFA for any learners who undertake programmes with the Learning and Skills Service but do not hold a Tees Valley postcode, for example learners from neighbouring authorities such as County Durham.

### **Priorities for 2018/19**

25. As part of the Learning and Skills Service Strategic Plan 2016-19, the long term priorities are as follows:
  - To provide a curriculum where learners can access provision from entry level to higher level (including apprenticeships) through a dynamic and flexible offer
  - To provide a curriculum that supports positive impacts against our local council and local economic priorities, meeting the needs of individuals, communities and employers
  - To collaborate internally and with partners in professional exchanges to raise standards in teaching, learning and assessment so that we become outstanding in all areas
  - Recruit and retain outstanding professionals who take responsibility for their own development and provide outstanding outcomes for learners
  - Strengthen further the governance arrangements of the Service to provide additional scrutiny, challenge and support to drive the Service forward
  - To adopt the 'Smarter Working in Stockton' (SWIS) approach to drive greater effectiveness and efficiency, optimising tools and working environments for employees

### **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

26. The L&S Service is actively targeting communities of greatest need and disadvantage. The Learning and Skills performance data shows that there are no significant achievement gaps between any group of learners, with or without protected characteristics. The strategic plans of the L&S Service are expected to have a positive impact for all communities.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

27. There are no financial implications arising from this report per se, however, the potential impact of decisions still to be taken by the TVCA, as outlined in paragraphs 22 and 23 will be monitored.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

28. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

29. This Learning and Skills Annual Report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

30. As detailed in **Appendix 3**, the Learning and Skills provision contributes to all of the council priorities and principles.

## CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

31. There are no corporate parenting implications arising from this report.

## CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

32. Consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Housing and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health has been carried out in line with the Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members

**Name of Contact Officer:** Craig Taylor  
**Post Title:** Adult Learning and Skills Manager  
**Telephone No.** 01642 528814  
**Email Address:** craig.taylor@stockton.gov.uk

Education related? Yes

Background Papers

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

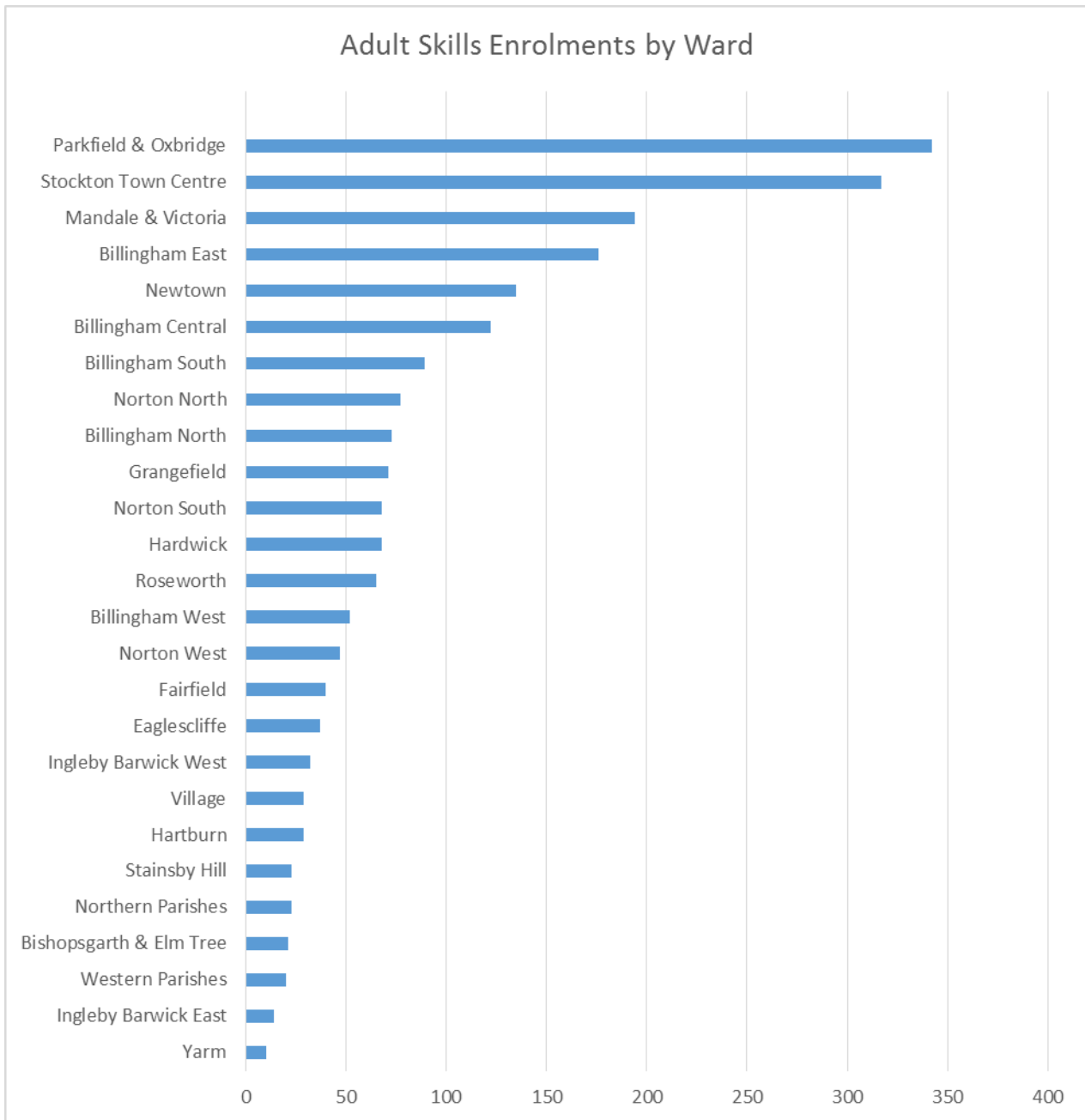
Property

No implications identified in relation to the Council's property.

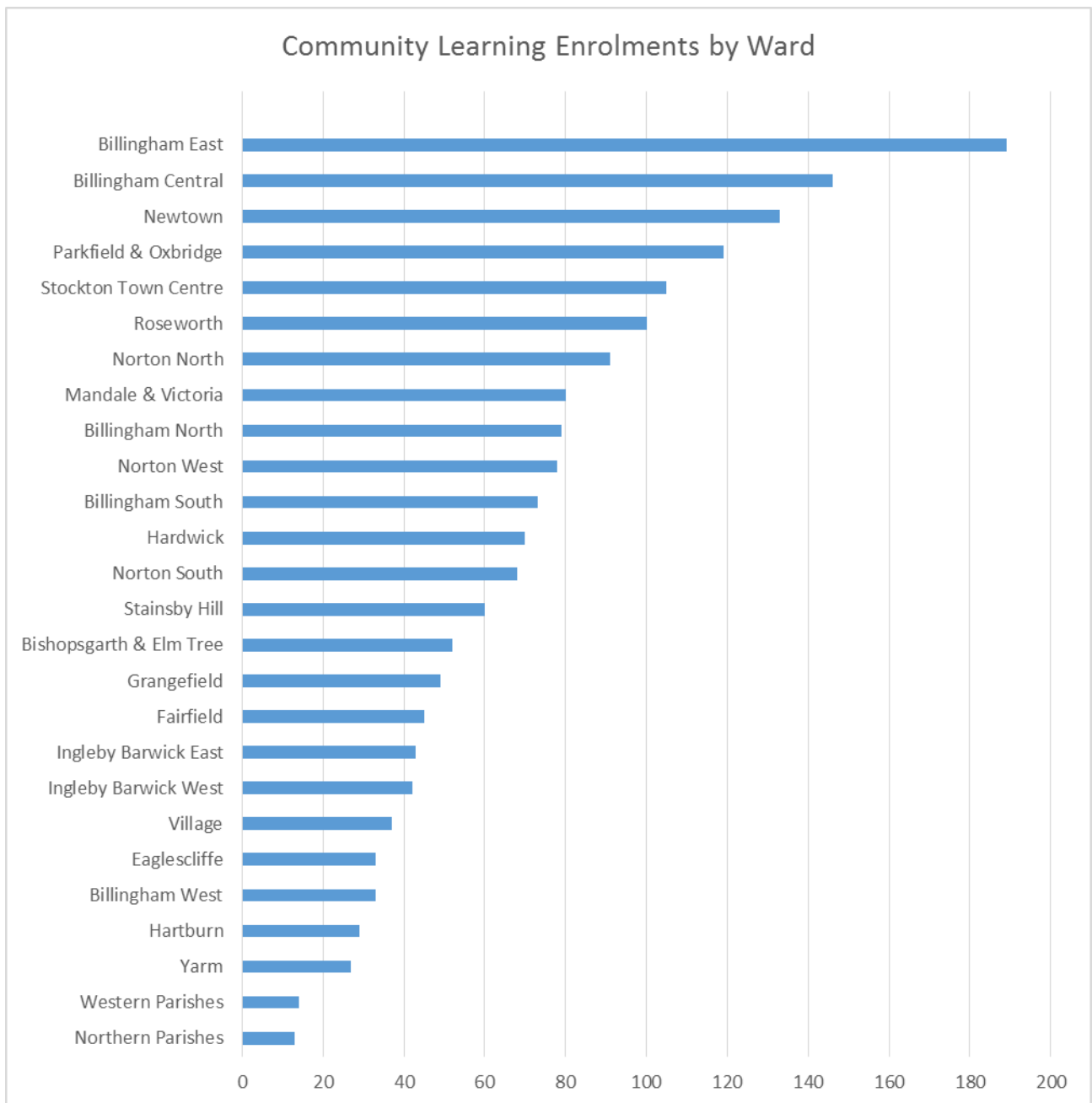




## Appendix 1



## Appendix 2



### Appendix 3

The table below identifies the courses implemented by the service which are designed to significantly contribute to the achievement of council and/or combined authority strategic priorities.

<b>Council Priority</b>	<b>Number of Courses</b>	<b>Number of enrolments</b>
Stockton on Tees at the heart of a vibrant and economically successful Tees Valley, providing real opportunities for residents	281	2158
A safe Stockton on Tees	55	510
Life chances are improved for children and young people, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable to poor outcomes	14	38
Every child has the best start in life	49	398
Ill health is prevented wherever possible	14	145
Enhanced quality of life for people with care and support needs	55	452
Stronger more cohesive communities	125	964
High quality, affordable cultural and leisure experiences for people to experience and be inspired by	22	263
<b>TVCA Priority</b>	<b>Number of Courses</b>	<b>Number of enrolments</b>
Business and Professional Services	40	256
Digital and Creative	73	696
Health and Social Care	138	1102
Logistics	8	50
Skills for Employment (English, Maths, ICT, Employability	291	2257
Other	26	432