

CABINET INFORMATION ITEM ONLY

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

8 DECEMBER 2022

REPORT OF SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET INFORMATION ITEM

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

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 in supporting residents, employers and community partners with learning opportunities and employment initiatives to meet social and economic priorities during the 21/22 academic year. It demonstrates the ongoing success of the Learning and Skills Service and its Governing Body as an advisory committee empowered by Cabinet to provide challenge, support and strategic oversight.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the report be noted.

DETAIL

Governance and management of the Service

1. The Governing Body was first established in October 2016 and since that time has supported the Service by utilising its skillset, experience and knowledge across different sectors to provide challenge and insight to ensure the Service continues to meet the needs and priorities of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
2. The Service is fully funded by external grants allocated by funding bodies including Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). These grant allocations contribute to the overall Council financial position and are regularly reviewed through close governance and performance monitoring.
3. The value of the contribution from the Governing Body along with the management arrangements for the Service have been validated by independent advisors, Ofsted inspectors, and external quality standard assessors.
4. Governors play an active role in quality assurance and improvement. In order to ensure that the Governing Body continues to remain strongly positioned, its membership is regularly reviewed and was recently updated following the repositioning of the Service to the Finance, Development and Regeneration directorate of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

5. The current membership of the Governing Body for the 22/23 academic year is as follows:

Position	Full name	Role
Chair of Governors	Councillor Nigel Cooke	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing (also Link Governor for Equality and Diversity)
Member	Councillor Jim Beall	Deputy Mayor Councillor for Roseworth Link governor for safeguarding
Member	Chris Renahan	Assistant Director - Inclusive Growth and Development for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Senior Management Team Representative
Member	Craig Taylor	Adult Learning and Skills Manager for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Staff Representative
Member	Julie Marsden	Economic Development Manager for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Economic Growth and Regeneration Representative
Member	Kevin Cooper	Learner Representative
Member	Jon Carling	Chief Executive for Catalyst Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Member	Lynsey Robinson	Director, Digital City, Teesside University Employer Representative for Digital Sector
Member	Jacqui Taylor	Education and Employer Representative
Member	VACANT	Employer Representative for local industry and commerce

Performance of the Learning and Skills Service

- There were 3975 enrolments during the 21/22 academic year. This was an increase of 34% compared to the previous academic year and demonstrates the strong response of the Service in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Learners and apprentices continue to show tremendous resilience and determination despite the ongoing implications and pressures they have faced in their personal and working lives.

8. The achievement rate for Adult Education Budget programmes is 93.6%, of which, the Adult Skills achievement rate is 88.1%. This is an increase of 2% overall and an increase of 3.8% in Adult Skills provision resulting in more people achieving the qualifications to support their work and life goals.
9. The Service is also keen to recognise not only the tangible achievements of learners such as those achieving recognised qualifications, but also the ‘softer skills’ which learners develop to support them in life. The feedback table below demonstrates that the vast majority of learners were able to improve 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
I feel more confident in my own ability	98%
I am more open to new ideas and experiences	98%
My well-being has improved	97%
I am more aware of my own strengths and area for development	97%
I have clearer goals and ambitions for the future	96%
I feel able to develop my own skills outside of the classroom	97%
I feel more able to take part in my own community	93%
I feel more confident to access services on-line	89%

10. The Service continues to strategically maximise and target its funding to support those in greatest need and to help tackle inequalities in the borough. As a result, 55% of learners engage from a disadvantaged area and 22.2% of learners who participate are identified as having no prior attainment / qualifications.
11. As well as supporting those who are most vulnerable, the Service delivers a range of apprenticeship programmes aligned to support employers and meet local and national economic priorities. However, the apprenticeship sector has suffered significantly in the wake of the pandemic with recent national research by the Learning for Work Institute (October 2022) indicating that only 53% of apprentices on the new-style standards were retained on their programme. The Service has witnessed similar retention issues which has resulted in an achievement rate of 50%.
12. Despite this, of those apprentices who do achieve and complete their programme, 92.2% enter a positive destination, of which, 90.2% enter employment. This demonstrates that those apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by their employer to be retained in their workforce.
13. In a letter released in June 2022, the Secretary of State for Skills also “set a stretching ambition to reach a 67% achievement rate on apprenticeship standards by 2025”.
14. The Service is determined to meet and surpass this national target. To support our aspirations, a new dedicated Apprenticeship Coordinator post has been created within the staffing structure. This investment and dedicated focus will enable the Service to closely manage apprenticeship provision to increase the number of apprentices completing and achieving their programmes. This drive will also be supported by the fulfilment of an Apprenticeship

Improvement Plan from which the Governing Body will be able to provide further support and strategic insight to help fulfil our objectives.

Alignment within Inclusive Growth and Development Service

15. In April 2022 as part of the wider corporate and senior management team review in Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, the Learning and Skills Service was realigned to the Inclusive Growth and Development service area within the Finance, Development and Regeneration directorate.
16. This repositioning of the Service has helped to facilitate and support the collaborative work being undertaken, for example, in the new Employment and Training Hub located at Wellington Square.
17. Due to this alignment, the Service has been able to utilise its funding to deliver a series of sector based work academy programmes to support local employers who engaged with the Employment and Training Hub seeking support to recruit a skilled workforce. In 2022, the Service has delivered 8 programmes for employers including Tata Food and Beverages, Stagecoach, Arriva and supported 6 health care providers through 3 care academy programmes. Over 40 learners participated in these programmes with approximately half securing employment.

Multiply Programme

18. The UK government has committed that the first priority of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be the Multiply programme. Multiply aims to increase the levels of functional numeracy in the adult population to enable: more adults to achieve maths qualifications; improve labour market outcomes; increase functional numeracy across the adult population.
19. TVCA secured funding from the Department for Education and recently invited proposals from providers on its Skills Framework to deliver 'community level engagement interventions of the Multiply programme'. As a result, the 5 Tees Valley Local Authority Learning and Skills teams submitted a collaborative bid, led by Hartlepool Borough Council, to work in the heart of our communities and complement the existing numeracy work being undertaken through the use of our Adult Education Budget funding.
20. This £1.56m bid was successful and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will receive approximately 25% of the funding (£380k) to support 1100 residents between December 2022 and March 2025. The Multiply programme will target adult learners aged 19+ who have not previously attained a GCSE Grade 4 / C or higher Maths qualification.
21. This opportunity further demonstrates the ability of the Service to target those in greatest need in our communities and develop the skills and outcomes to support social and economic wellbeing.

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