

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	26 August 2020
<b>Executive Member</b>	Councillor Feeley – Executive Member for Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jayne Traverse, Director of Growth
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION CHANGES TO SERVICES AS A RESULT OF COVID19</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	<p>Firstly this reports sets out an update on the re-opening of the Adult Community Education (ACE) Service from Stamford Chambers from September 2020. Secondly the report includes an update on the Grant Agreement for the academic year 2020/21. Finally the report provides proposals to bid for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Local Authority Grant Programme prior to submission on the 21 September 2020.</p>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>Executive Cabinet is recommended to approve that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the Director of Growth undertake a compliant procurement process and thereafter enter into the necessary contact and any associated documents for a Virtual Learning Environment (section 2.3) if the Council wide proposal for the same will not meet the necessary timescale of 14 September 2020 of Adult Community Education. This procurement to be funded from the existing Adult Community Education funding.</li> <li>2. Grant Agreement 2019/20 variation document (appendix 1) for Adult Community Education is entered into for the period 1 April 2020 until such end date (of COVID19 Pandemic) as determined by GMCA and initially covering Academic year 2020/21.</li> <li>3. the proposals (section 4) for bids to the Local Authority Grant Programme are agreed.</li> <li>4. the Director of Growth will be responsible for the entering into any agreements on relation Local Authority Programme Grant, subject to appropriate due diligence and for the delivery of services pursuant to the Local Authority Grant Programme including managing performance and complying with the terms of the grant agreement.</li> </ol>
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	In line with corporate policy
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer &amp; Chief Finance Officer)</b>	All costs of ensuring the service is safe to open will be met by the Economy, employment and skills service. All expenditure incurred that is funded by the Adult Community Education funding agreement will be closely monitored to ensure all spend is eligible and maintained within the agreement. The bid for the Local Authority Grant Programme will be reviewed and checked to ensure it correctly meets the eligibility criteria.
<b>Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	It is critical that in undertaking a procurement exercise and thereafter entering onto the required contractual documentation for the provision of a Virtual Learning Environment that advice is

sought from STAR to ensure that a compliant process is undertaken and that officer should ensure that all of the Council's Standing Orders and internal processes are complied with to avoid successful legal challenge; damage to reputation and to ensure that good value for more is obtained. Given that there is also a council wide procurement being undertaken it will be important for there to be close collaboration, particularly with IT to ensure that whatever system is compatible, supportable and that any costs implications of removing this element from the council wide programme are carefully considered and approved by finance.

With reference to the grant agreement; the variation attached has been drafted to acknowledge the limitations on delivery as a result of the restrictions being imposed as a result of the covid pandemic. Members need to be content that officers will continue to be mindful of the terms of the varied funding agreement to ensure that all of the conditions continue to be met so as to avoid any claw back or other similar provisions.

With regard to the application for and the subsequent entering into of any agreements it will be important for the necessary due diligence to be undertaken by the service supported by finance and legal to ensure particularly in relation to claw back, reporting and monitoring provisions.

**Background Information:**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Paul Smith (Assistant Director Strategic Property)



Telephone: 0161 342 2246



e-mail: [david.berry@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:david.berry@tameside.gov.uk)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An Executive Decision was taken on the 22 July 2020 regarding Adult Community Education (ACE) delivery as a result of COVID19, developing plans to reopen from Stamford Chambers in Ashton-under-Lyne in September 2020 and to consider the Grant Funding Agreement Variation for the service at a future Cabinet. This report provides an update on how the service can reopen and recently received Variation to Grant Funding Agreement for approval prior to the 2020/21 Academic Year.
- 1.2 This report also sets out proposals for the Local Authority Grant Programme prior to submission by 21 September 2020. These proposals are in draft and may evolve as we review with Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

## 2. REOPENING STAMFORD CHAMBERS

- 2.1 Stamford Chambers is the primary location for delivery of the ACE service to learners aged 19+. The service provides adult education qualifications (e.g. English, maths, retail, childcare, digital) up to Level 2 and community learning (e.g. English for speakers of other languages, confidence building). The service has been virtual since the 18 March 2020 due to the impact of COVID19. On the 16 July 2020 Government Guidance changed to enable adult education providers to reopen for the start of the 2020/21 academic year (September 2020 onwards). The Government guidance states:

### ***'Opening to all learners in September***

*You should plan on the basis that, from September 2020, all learners will return to a full high-quality education programme. This is possible because we are continuing to make significant progress in tackling the virus. The prevalence of the virus has reduced and the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running. Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of young people and adults being able to take part in a full education, including attending on site, with appropriate controls in place to manage the transmission risk. This guidance will be kept under review and will be updated as necessary.'*

- 2.2 The planning work for reopening the service has taken into account Government Guidance and learner feedback. The Service intends to reopen with a high quality offer which provides a safe environment and meets our obligations of our commissioners (Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and GMCA). Our project team has included Facilities Management, Health and Safety and IT with plans reviewed and endorsed by the ACE Governing Board on the 29 June 2020. All risk assessments have been completed and are being implemented and reviewed with Health and Safety and Facilities Management.
- 2.3 The key changes to Service delivery are summarised below from risk assessments and planning documentation:
  - A. Re-open on the 31 August 2020 to staff to enable planning for the start of the academic year and to learners on the 14 September 2020.
  - B. Provide a full curriculum with the exception of some community (based) learning courses.
  - C. Initially open to learners who are on a break in learning from the 2019-20 academic year who did not complete their qualification due to COVID and those who have completed a course and are able to progress to the next level of learning. New learners would be engaged from September with a target start date in Term 2 from January 2021.
  - D. Operate from Stamford Chambers only in September 2020 and consider community learning venues (following risk assessments) later in the academic year.
  - E. Reduce daily learning capacity from 118 to 53 learners based on Government Guidance for safety. ACE is planning for 182 learners and 225 enrolments in term 1.

- F. Limit classes to 2 hours with learners in bubbles.
- G. Regular cleaning of the building.
- H. Introduce floor markings, protective screens and hand sanitisers and reconfigure rooms.
- I. Signage of safety and hygiene messages and effective communication with learners before they arrive for learning.
- J. Provide toilet facilities based on request only.
- K. No external organisations permitted to use ACE initially to limit activity and people in building.
- L. Introduce a high quality Virtual Learning Environment package to provide blended learning from September 2020 to build on face to face learning and move some course to be fully online by December 2020 (retaining high quality teaching and learning). This will support future service delivery should face to face service need to be suspended due to COVID19.

2.4 The changes set out above would enable the service to meet our Grant Agreement with the ESFA and GMCA and provide a safe and high quality learning environment for Tameside residents. The service would track and change in line with Government Guidance.

2.5 The procurement of a high quality Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is being led corporately by IT across TMBC. ACE have proactively been part of the corporate project group to procure a VLE and have also twin tracked so that the service could procure separately should this be needed. The ACE Governing Board have provided specific instruction to ensure the VLE is implemented in timely manner for delivery in 2020/21 and meets the needs of ACE. The service requires a VLE that is high quality, meets the needs of our vulnerable learner cohort and will meet the standards of the Inspection Framework. The systems below have been reviewed with quotes received. Should ACE need to procure separately to the wider Council due to different levels of need or different timescales for implementation a data Protection Impact Assessment would be completed and STAR procurement and IT have been engaged already to take forward and implement. The cost of procuring a system separately from the corporate IT project would be met from existing ACE budgets.

<b>System</b>	<b>Annual cost and length of contract</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Its learning</b>  (9 million users, biggest LMS provider in Europe)	2 year minimum contract £4,000 yr1, £3,000 yr2  Inclusive of: <i>Admin Training (4 Hours) Staff Training (2 Hours) Cloud integration (Microsoft / Google) Full technical Support</i>	Fully embedded Learning Management (System) LMS (assess / reflect / report / plan).  E-ILP available for all courses.  Wide variety of assessments tools: multi choice, true/false, fill the gap, missing words, mix & match, rate high to low.  Video / audio tutor feedback options fully integrated.
<b>Google G - Suite</b>  (80 million users)	£995 per year (free if LA adopts in school education)  <i>Plus an additional £450 for 'rocket launch', One-off Start -up cost</i>	Includes Google IT support: 9-5pm, Mon-Fri.  Acceptable level of assessment tools. Video / audio tutor feedback is available from apps eg. screencasterfy.  E-ILP's are not as standard (in-house development required)

	<i>£750 for 6 hr 1-day CPD for staff (up to 20 staff).</i>	Discounted IT kit available if Gsuite acquired
<b>The Skills Network</b>  (500,000 users in UK)	£3,750 per year	<p>Their main USP is providing L1, L2 and L3 online courses for staff to follow as CPD. Some are sold as full cost or are AEB fundable.</p> <p>25 of these CPD courses are included in the annual contract</p> <p>Acceptable level of assessment tools. No video / audio tutor feedback is available. No E-ILP.</p>

### 3. GRANT AGREEMENT 2020/21

- 3.1 ACE has two commissioners; GMCA £818,418 and ESFA £4,570. The ESFA element of the contract covers residents outside Greater Manchester. We have received the ESFA contract. On the 30 July 2020 we received a GMCA Grant Funding Agreement Variation (appendix A). The GMCA Variation retrospectively covers the period 1 April 2020 until an end date of the COVID19 Pandemic (currently unknown) as determined by GMCA and therefore covers the Academic Year 2020/21. ACE has also received an Indicative Funding Allocation Letter as included in the Executive Decision on the 22 July 2020.
- 3.2 GMCA continue to financially support providers in a challenging environment due to the impact of COVID19 with regular partnership meetings taking place. GMCA have provided assurance that performance management arrangements are suspended and have removed funding clawback conditions. Tameside Council are required to confirm that the Grant will be used to protect the employment of staff covered by the Grant (21 roles, currently 19 employees in employment/16 Full Time Equivalent). The grant fully covers the costs for the delivery of the service with no TMBC funding provided. The Council should expect a Grant Agreement for the 2020/21 Academic Year in the future.
- 3.3 With regards to risk the suspension of performance management and removal of funding clawback conditions enables ACE to deliver a service responsive to the impact of COVID 19. This means that should the service need to be suspended in delivering face to face services the impact on performance (lower learner enrolments and completions) would not result in loss of funding from GMCA. Tameside Council will continue to work with the GMCA partnership arrangements to be pragmatic, flexible and responsive as the impact and short and medium term impacts of COVID are known.

### 4. LOCAL AUTHORITY GRANT PROPOSALS

- 4.1 In order to increase access to adult education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and digital inclusion GMCA has identified an opportunity to support Greater Manchester Local Authorities (LA) work & skills priorities, with up to £150k available for each LA, split evenly across the following strands:
- a. Alleviating Barriers to Adult Education (up to £50k)
  - b. Digital Inclusion (up to £50k)
  - c. ESOL (up to £50k)
- 4.2 GMCA has also made £50k available for each Local Authority through the Digital Kit and Connectivity Fund which must be linked to the Digital Inclusion strand.

- 4.3 It is anticipated that go live for projects funded by this grant can begin from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020, and must be complete by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021 (or later on approval by GMCA). Proposals to this fund can be made over 2 rounds with Round 2 applications to be submitted by 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020 (most GM LAs are submitting in Round 2). Participants receiving support via these programmes must:
- Be aged 19+ on start date
  - Be eligible for AEB funded provision at the point of progression from this programme
- 4.4 This grant will not fund:
- Business as usual activity carried out by the work & skills team
  - Duplicate any offer currently already running within the Local Authority
  - Capital expenditure; unless via the Digital Skills & Connectivity Fund
  - Any regulated or accredited training provision
  - Any projects that undermine the viability of devolved AEB, including the latest published funding and performance management rules
- 4.5 The TMBC Economy, Employment and Skills Services will lead on the proposals, implementation and successful delivery. The proposals will be developed in partnership with GMCA and key local partners and evolve over the coming weeks in preparation for submission by the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020 deadline. The grants will support the ongoing provision of adult learning across Tameside. The table below sets out initial proposals for comment and review which will continue to be developed and evolved upto submission on the 21 September 2020.

GMCA Strand	Proposal	Rationale	Expected Outcomes	Costings
Alleviating Barriers to Adult Education (up to £50k)	<p>Part 1 - Commission a Young people (age 19-30) Transition Worker to directly work with residents who are NEET to access and sustain adult education in 2020/21</p> <p>Part 2 - Commission a Marketing Campaign and materials to engage hard to reach groups in adult education</p>	<p>Part 1 – TMBC currently commissions Positive Steps to deliver Transition Worker focused on increasing employment for NEET 16-24 year olds. A post focused specifically on adult education would meet need created by youth unemployment as a result of COVID.</p> <p>Part 2 – Create high quality targeted marketing materials including video, flyers, paid community engagement by cultural groups.</p>	<p>Part 1- Increase 19-30 year olds completing courses.</p> <p>Decrease 19-30 year olds who are not in education, employment or training</p> <p>Part 2 – Increase in engagement in adult education from: BAME communities Men aged 35-49 Long term unemployed Young people aged 19-24</p>	<p>Part 1 - £25,000 to commission transition worker until 31 July 2021. £1,250 TMBC management fee.</p> <p>Part 2 - TBC up to £23,750.</p>
Digital Inclusion (up to £50k)	Part 1 - Commissioning of small £5k targeted	Part 1 – Cultural /VCSE organisations are effective in	Part 1 – Increase learners onto adult education courses who are	Part 1 - £25,000 split into 5 targeted pieces of work. TMBC

	<p>community programmes to increase access to digital inclusion delivered by Tameside Cultural/VCSE organisations</p> <p>Part 2 – Commission a dedicated Digital Inclusion Officer for Adult Education across Tameside until 2020/21 to increase capacity within the provision to support 121 learner needs on digital learning</p>	<p>engaging residents in a peer model to increase digital inclusion to support progression onto adult learning.</p> <p>Part 2 – Adult Education provision is accessed by vulnerable groups who require 121 support to use technology. This role would provide targeted bespoke student support in addition to business as usual teaching.</p>	<p>previously digitally excluded</p> <p>Part 2 – Increase in learners completing digital qualifications.</p>	<p>management fee £1,250</p> <p>Part 2 - £23,250.</p>
ESOL (up to £50k)	Further exploration with GMCA Task and Finish group of Manchester Adult Education Service pan GM model	Increasing co-ordination of ESOL provision will support residents to access and engage learning	Improved co-ordination of ESOL provision and access reducing waiting lists	TBC
Digital Kit and Connectivity Fund	Laptops and tablets provided to digitally excluded adult learners.	Provided to digitally excluded ACE learners based on assessment of need to support blended learning at home.	Increase in digital inclusion and use of Virtual Learning Environments.	£50k

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 As set out at the front of the report.