

**Decision Maker:** EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date:** Tuesday 8 March 2016

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** BROMLEY ADULT EDUCATION COLLEGE REORGANISATION PROGRESS UPDATE

**Contact Officer:** Jane Bailey, Director: Education  
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**Chief Officer:** Director: Education (ECHS)

**Ward:** (All Wards);

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1. Reason for report

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2016 Members requested that a report setting out the criteria to be used for selecting the 2016/17 adult education curriculum be presented at their next meeting.
- 1.2 Paragraph 3 sets out the criteria to be used and outlines the context for each of the criteria.
- 1.3 For information, paragraph 4 provides an overview of the forthcoming devolution and area review plans for all post-16 education funding. It is expected that this will influence future funding allocations and the type of provision for which they can be used from the academic year 2017/18 onwards.
- 1.3 At the same meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January members also requested a progress update on actions taken in relation to the Equality Impact Assessment Plan. The table in paragraph 5 shows the progress made to date.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**That the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of this report and provide comments to the Education Portfolio Holder**

**That the Education Portfolio Holder considers the content of this report, the comments of the Education PDS committee and agrees the criteria for selecting the curriculum for the 2016/2017 academic year.**

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
  2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council Supporting Independence:
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable:
  2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Adult Education Centres
  4. Total current budget for this head: Cr £220k (controllable)
  5. Source of funding: 2016/17 revenue budget
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 47 on permanent contract, 307 casual/sessional workers, 70.07 FTE
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
- 

### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance:
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Current 6,000, projected 4,000
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

### 3. DEVELOPING THE 2016/17 CURRICULUM

- 3.1 Planning for the 2016/17 curriculum will start in March 2016. The criteria used to determine the range of subjects will need to take into consideration the recommendations in the Ofsted Inspection report of March 2015, the local priorities of Bromley Council, national priorities for publically funded post-16 education providers and the Skills Funding Agency Funding rules for 2016/17.
- 3.2 In 2016/17 it is envisioned that all courses will meet one or more of the following criteria:
- Provide progression into employability and/or further study
  - Lead to recognised qualifications
  - Meet national and local learning and skills priorities
  - Contribute to learners' improved mental and/or physical health
  - Adhere to the principles of community engagement, particularly with regards to disadvantaged residents and communities in the Borough
  - Suitable accommodation and resources, either on BAEC premises or off site
  - Generate fee income or add value to the public grant through the Pound Plus principle.
- 3.4 **Progress into employability and/or further study.** These courses will provide steps towards employment, either in an employed capacity or through self employment. Through the development of skills and knowledge, the courses will help to improve the prospects of those in a current job role as well as for those seeking employment. Such courses also help to build people's confidence to either to start to look for work or start their own business. Programmes under this criterion will also provide stepping stones to further learning and training and re-engage people with the learning process after a long break from education. Provision will include identified progression routes from non accredited learning and/or entry level through to levels 2 and 3 with some leading directly onto further accredited study, either in-house or at other providers.
- 3.5 **Lead to recognised qualifications.** Courses will be planned that lead to a recognised qualification with a suitably regulated awarding organisation. These courses will meet the identified national government priorities for up skilling the workforce and integrating residents. Other courses will meet local priorities and may be delivered in partnership with, and on behalf of, other local stakeholders. All courses will meet criteria set out in the 2016/17 SFA Funding Rules.
- 3.6 **Meet national and local learning and skills priorities.** Courses in English, maths, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), job search skills and parenting skills will ensure public funding is used to help meet central government priorities. In line with the BIS Skills funding Letter for 2016/17, provision will include GCSE, Functional Skills and stepping stone qualifications in English and maths. Local priorities will be met by courses aimed at maintaining cognitive skills in older learners, such as modern foreign languages, or practical skills that delay the onset of dementia symptoms, such as creative arts and crafts. The local priority to support learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will comprise courses to promote confidence, effective communication, employability and life skills. Courses using static or mobile computing equipment will contribute to improved digital literacy, so that learners can make better use of public and commercial services and are more involved in local decisions.
- 3.7 **Contribute to learners' improved mental and/or physical health.** Courses that will help to improve self esteem, self confidence and general well being will continue to form part of the curriculum. Such courses help to promote social, cultural, spiritual and moral

development, and have been shown to benefit learners suffering from isolation and feeling vulnerable. Provision aimed at improving stamina, coordination and strength, especially with older learners at risk of muscle degeneration and arthritis, will also continue to form part of the curriculum. These courses will focus on maintenance of skills and a steady improvement in fitness levels. Targeted groups include people who may not participate in mainstream classes due to cultural barriers and those from low income backgrounds who cannot afford market rates to join a gym and participate in physical activities. The courses will contribute to Build a Better Bromley strategic objectives of reducing health inequalities for Bromley residents, and generating greater personal responsibility for health.

- 3.8 **Community Engagement.** This category will comprise of provision such as family English, maths and language (FEML), wider family learning (WFL), courses targeted at marginalised older people and the community partnership provision, including that delivered through sub-contracting arrangements. These courses contribute to the Build a Better Bromley overall vision. They foster intergenerational learning and offer progression to accredited courses at BAEC and meet identified needs of specific groups, such as older learners, ethnic minorities and young mothers; as well as increasing opportunities for people of different backgrounds to share in learning and increase community cohesion. Some courses under this criterion will focus on 'soft skills' increasing self and group confidence, sense of achievement and participation in public life.
- 3.9 **Accommodation and resources.** Provision will be planned to make best use of the accommodation available. The Poverest site will continue to be the main centre for discrete provision learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Learning needs, traffic flow and safeguarding will be considered when planning use of mainstream and specialist classrooms. All provision will maximise use of existing specialist facilities at both Kentwood and Poverest. Priority will be given to training that leads to recognised qualifications, or engages disadvantaged learners in education. Other courses will be planned to meet unmet local demand and help to generate income to help support a sustained local offer for residents.
- 3.10 **Fee income and the Pound Plus principle.** The adult education service will need to continue to generate income through the charging of student fees if it is to achieve a balanced budget. Therefore continuing to provide a range of popular, well attended courses that residents will pay subsidised or full costs rates for will remain s one of the objectives for the service. Adult Education managers will need to continue to monitor financial viability at individual course level so that only those courses that meet the required income levels run. At the time of planning courses, consideration will need to be given to levels of demand so that the fee income target needed to sustain the service is met.
- 3.11 Under Community Learning funding rules, providers are expected to add value to this public contribution to adult learning, this is known as the Pound Plus principle. When working with community partners adult education staff will continue to seek to maximise the value of the public grant by negotiating other forms of investment. These contributions may include use of accommodation and/or resources; specialist skills support e.g. interpreter, childcare, support staff; use of volunteers; other sources of funding or sponsorship.

#### 4. POST 16 AREA REVIEWS

- 4.1 In the March 2015 Budget, the Chancellor announced that government would be devolving further powers to the Mayor of London, including over skills and skills training. It is proposed that these powers will allow the Mayor to tailor skills provision to meet London's needs.

- 4.2 In its productivity plan “*Fixing the Foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation*” (July 2015) the national government indicated its intention to set up local and regional reviews of the post-16 education landscape. This 3 year plan will lead to the devolution of the Adult Skills budget, or Adult Education Budget as funding stream is being called from the start of the 2016/17 academic year. The expected outcome of this process will be a series of reports with clear recommendations for change in post 16 education and skills training at local and regional levels.
- 4.3 The phased review process for London will commence in March 2016.
- 4.4 For the purpose of this review process, London has been divided into 4-subregions, West, Central, South and East. The London Borough of Bromley is included as part of the East London sub-region and it is anticipated that the process for this region will commence in May 2016.
- 4.5 All four sub-regional groups will report to a London Wide Steering Group, which is to be chaired by the Mayor of London.
- 4.6 Once the review process is complete and a devolution deal agreed, each devolved area will have the delegated powers to adjust a provider’s funding allocation depending on the identified needs and priorities that have been agreed at the Steering group level.
- 4.7 It is currently anticipated that by 2017/2018 the recommendations of the steering groups will start to influence the process of agreeing local outcomes and funding allocations with providers. It is planned that by 2018/19 all responsibility for the Adult Education Budget will be devolved down to regional levels.
- 4.9 Other anticipated outcomes from the review and devolution process include; fewer, larger more resilient and efficient providers (i.e. mergers); more effective collaboration between remaining providers; sharing of back office services between institutions; increased use of technology to deliver and assess learning; better quality of provision through reduction/elimination of poor provision and the introduction of greater curriculum specialisation

## **5. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT PLAN**

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment on the likely outcomes of the proposed changes to the adult education service was undertaken in parallel to the consultation process. Feedback received from users, staff and other stakeholders was used to inform the impact assessment.
- 5.2 Table 1 below summarises the progress made to date against actions planned to mitigate anticipated negative impacts.

Negative Impact		Action to be taken	Expected outcomes	Timescale	Progress
1	Some older learners attending mainstream provision at Widmore will have further to travel and reduced choice of provision	Identify alternative venues and/or alternative providers across Bromley.	Dispersal of Leisure-type courses across different providers and/or venues across the Bromley area.	Process to start following the final decision.	List of alternative providers, locations and contact details under development. List of potential alternative venues for use by BAEC under construction and programme of site visits underway. In addition, the Council has stated a commitment to work with other providers to provide a robust adult education offer across the Borough
2	Reduction in available ESOL qualification classes for those currently accessing Widmore	Establish ESOL Community learning delivered through Community partners. Place classes at venues such as the Mottingham Centre and Church Halls.	ESOL provision dispersed into community venues across the Bromley area.	Process to start following the final decision.	Curriculum planning due to start March 2016. Potential alternative venues – see 1 above
3	Closure of nurseries at Widmore and Kentwood could present barrier for some learners	Identify alternative providers in order to signpost provision, and ensure eligible learners are made aware of funding for alternative nursery care.	Eligible learners will have access to alternative childcare provision across the Bromley area.	June 2016	Officers to liaise with early Years Team
4	Those living near to the Widmore Centre would no longer have a local adult education centre and be deterred from accessing Kentwood and Poverest	Identify alternative venues and/or alternative providers across Bromley.	Dispersal of Leisure-type courses across different providers and/or venues across the Bromley area.	Process to start following the final decision.	List of alternative providers, locations and contact details under development. List of potential alternative venues for use by BAEC under construction and programme of site visits underway.

5	Risk of older, retired residents who attend leisure classes becoming isolated resulting in deterioration of mental and physical well-being	Include the Social Services and Public Health departments of the Council in partnership arrangements to target provision at the most vulnerable learners to access them and deliver community provision.	Vulnerable learners will have access to community provision across Bromley in order to help their well-being.	May 2016	To be considered when establishing membership of Strategic Partnership Board – see item 9 below
6	Loss of some specialist classes at Widmore may lead to these trades being lost in the future.	Identify alternative existing providers, and those providers able to relocate resources to their own premises, outside of the council. Identify equipment that can be easily relocated to either Kentwood or Poverest.	The majority of the range of courses currently on offer will be offered by BAEC and other providers across Bromley.	Process to start following the final decision.	Inventories of equipment and resources complete and updated. Meeting with Audit planned for w/c 29/02/16 to agree process for release of equipment / resources that will no longer be used by council services.
7	Some courses which could aid adults to set up their own business or help students return to employment may be curtailed or reduced in volume.	Find alternative providers within the borough and signpost these providers on the BAEC website. Prioritise employment related courses where funding and facilities allow and where a local need is indicated.	Learners will have access to a range of employment-based courses across the Bromley area.	Process to start following the final decision.	Progress as item 1 above. In addition, courses that lead to employment are included as a key criteria for developing the 2016/17 curriculum, planning to start March 2016
8	Some creative art/craft based leisure courses may be discontinued which are recommended by medical profession for patients suffering from depression or mental illness. Some physical therapy classes act as a form of therapy and can help to manage or relieve pain.	Identify alternative providers within the Bromley area. Yoga and Pilates courses will continue as part of the provision offered by BAEC. Support tutors to make alternative arrangements outside the council, and signpost these courses on the BAEC website. Continue to work with existing community partners to support adults with mental ill health.	Continuation of a wide range of courses. Continued partnership with the Public Health and Social Services departments will help support signposting for medical referrals.	Process to start following the final decision.	As item 1 above. In addition: Appropriate trainers identified to help support tutors who opt to run courses independently of the Council. Officers in negotiation with regard to timings of training activities.
9	Disadvantaged adults who live within 3 miles of Bromley	Strategic Partnership Board partners will have remit to	A wide range of provision will be on offer in community	June 2016	Officers and Portfolio Holder to agree membership profile

	Centre will have no local adult education centre	ensure disadvantages groups have access to lifelong learning in local community venues.	venues to support disadvantaged adults in Bromley.		for new Board.
10	Increased user levels at Poverest site may result in lack of space at break times. The overcrowding may act as deterrent for some adults with learning difficulties and disabilities who are used to smaller groups and do not like crowds.	Working strategically to ensure LDD provision is put in place with staggered breaks to help the process.	Full integration of LDD users and no disruption to their learning and the LDD provision.	August 2016	Programme planning due to start March 2016. Space identified to extend seating area for break times at Poverest to help minimise overcrowding.
11	Some adults, in particular those with autism, will not cope well with forthcoming changes of consolidating three centres into two	Put strategies in place so all LDD learners are integrated.	Full integration of LDD users and no disruption to their learning and the LDD provision.	August 2016	Programme planning due to start March 2016

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Policy/Financial/Legal/Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Equality Impact Assessment Issued as Appendix 5 to the report Bromley Adult Education College Update to the Education PDS, 19 January 2016 (Report No ED16002)