

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

Date Written	10 th July 2020 *
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Service Area	Community Wellbeing
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	7 th October 2020

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Merthyr Tydfil Adult Community Learning Partnership Future Delivery and Welsh Government Funding 2020/21

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Cabinet on the challenges facing the Merthyr Tydfil Adult Community Learning Partnership (MTACL) due to the restructuring of the national Adult Community Learning Grant.
- 1.2 Continuation of the partnership with The College Merthyr Tydfil (TCMT) has been agreed alongside the restructuring of provision across the authority to enable the drawing down of the full ACL grant by the local authority and hence the management fee. This however still means a reduction in the ability of the service to offset management and coordination costs which have been possible in previous years. Therefore, there will be budgetary implications for the Council. In addition, there will be implications for partners that utilise this service area to process accredited outcomes and a charge will have to be applied in future to cover these costs.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S) that

- 2.1 The delivery framework Appendix B be approved.
- 2.2 The financial implications are noted and the increase in the Net budget to reflect the uncontrollable growth caused through grant changes by Welsh Government, be approved.
- 2.3 A full cost recovery approach for supporting and processing accredited outcomes on behalf of partners/services be implemented.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Post 16 learning is governed by the Inspection of Adult Learning under Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.
- 3.2 As members will be aware, from the previous report in July 2020, Merthyr Tydfil Adult Community Learning Partnership has recently been inspected by Estyn and overall, the outcome of the inspection was Good but with one area to be improved. The key focus of the improvements being coordinated approaches across partners which was not surprising given the reduction in capacity across the service area which has impacted upon the time available to develop these partnership approaches.
- 3.3 In addition to this, members will be aware from the same report that Welsh Government have introduced a revised funding model based on population density economic and educational disadvantage. The second stage of the review is far from complete and is set to consider a potential national strategic body for Adult Learning.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR MERTHYR TYDFIL

- 4.1 For MTCBC Adult Education the community learning grant allocation for 2019-20 was £45,327. In 2020/21 this figure increases to a potential figure of (£80,218.00) however the allocation has far more controls on how it can be drawn down and its use than in previous years. These are:
- A set funding formula for each type of course delivered which varies depending upon the level and type of learning being delivered and the number of individuals that achieve accredited outcomes through these courses
 - A set of key priority areas to focus delivery on national priorities e.g. literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, ESOL (English as Second or Other Language)
 - A restriction on any management/coordination charges across the grant capped at 3% of the total grant (£2,406) which will mean increasing costs to the core budget during 2020/21.
- 4.2 The current programme of delivery (Appendix A) within the grant would not allow the local authority to draw down the full grant. If the service were to remain as currently provided, then this would only draw down an estimated £17k (21%) of the grant. Some aspects of current delivery whilst seen as good practice by Estyn e.g. Family programmes would not be eligible within the structure of the new grant or allow for some of the costs these programmes incur.
- 4.3 In previous years ACL has been able to process accreditation for partners without any financial implications as the grant was able to meet this direct cost. The grant will no longer be able to absorb these costs (ineligible) as these courses are not delivered through the ACL grant.
- 4.4 Additionally, an Accreditation Officer post was previously funded through the core budget which could be utilised to undertake these processes. However, within the last round of efficiencies an early retirement request from the Accreditation Officer was accepted corporately, whilst having been refused by the department. Subsequently the post was removed from the ACL structure, leaving the department with no dedicated support for processing of accreditation or quality assurance of learner portfolios.

- 4.5 There is currently a match funding agreement in place between ACL and the MTCBC Working Skills for Adults 2 project, whereby the Adult Education Coordinator is the named quality nominee. If this agreement is not maintained, there would be a negative impact on the grant funding model.

5.0 RESTRUCTURING DELIVERY – WAY FORWARD

- 5.1 In order to examine the potential options for restructuring of the delivery and ensuring full use of the grant in line with eligibility, it is necessary to consider the implications for the remaining aspects of the service and these include:
- Priorities and Eligibility within the Welsh Government Grant
 - Franchise agreement with The College Merthyr Tydfil (£33k)
 - Partnership delivery The College Merthyr Tydfil (staff in Kind)
 - Management Coordination and Accreditation from the core budget. A net core budget which has reduced from £63,413 (2019/20) to £39,471 (2020 /2021)
 - Outcomes of the Estyn Inspection 2020
- 5.2 Further to a meeting with The College Merthyr Tydfil, which was later ratified by their Board, it has been agreed that Appendix B be progressed as this will:
- enable full draw down of the grant for MTCBC;
 - provide the outcomes The College Merthyr Tydfil require in line with a new contract to the value of 33k with MTCBC (standstill position);
 - enable the continuation of Family Programmes – identified as good practice by Estyn which continues to support the education priorities;
 - streamline delivery of ESOL within two partners – recruitment difficulties across three different organisations offering this service at present and an area for development identified by Estyn; and
 - enable MTCBC to draw down the full WG 3% management allocation.
- 5.3 Due to staff changes seen recently there will be no redundancies of Tutors to accommodate these changes within delivery. It is recognised however that a significant amount of training is required across the Tutor team to improve digital skills across all delivery but especially now given the different learning approaches required due to Covid 19.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 6.1 Due to the changes within the grant and the Welsh Government drive to ensure the grant is focused on delivery of learning, the authority will not be able to offset core to the extent achieved in previous years. The 3% management charge will contribute towards the budget deficit in management and coordination which based upon 2020/21 projections will mean a financial implication of circa £19,274. It should be noted that if full delivery is not achieved then both the drawing down of the grant and the management charges reduce, negatively impacting on these budget projections.
- 6.2 All accreditation processed through the department on behalf of any internal departments or external partners will incur a charge from April 2020/21 based upon a full cost recovery basis.

7.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	4 of 4	0 of 4	0 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	5 of 5	0 of 5	0 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics (<i>including Welsh Language</i>)	10 of 10	0 of 10	0 of 10
4. Biodiversity	1 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1

Summary:

No negative impacts have been identified against the Well-being Objectives, the Sustainable Development Principles and Biodiversity. The main positive impacts are;

- **Wellbeing objectives-** the proposal outlines and provides evidence that learners wellbeing is important and supported, there are good learning and training opportunities for citizen aged 16yrs plus. The skills and accredited learning provide the citizens of Merthyr Tydfil to gain employment and reach further educational goals such as further and higher education- increasing aspirations.
- **Sustainable Development Principles** the proposal outlines and provides evidence that safeguard the long-term educational needs of children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives. ACL has been developed within community groups and delivered working in partnership with key stakeholders in the County Borough.
- **Protected Characteristics and Welsh language** are that the proposal will provide access to arts and culture and will promote the use of the Welsh language and encourage people to use their Welsh skills when using Council services.
- **Biodiversity** the provision encourages awareness raising and understanding about the global world, impact of not recycling and diversity of plants and animals as part of its educational provision.

SUE WALKER
CHIEF OFFICER LEARNING

COUNCILLOR LISA MYTTON
PORTFOLIO MEMBER FOR LIFELONG
LEARNING

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Cabinet Report - Estyn Inspection of MTACL Partnership	15 th July 2020	Intranet - Cabinet Meeting 15 th July 2020
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

***Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect
of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.***

Appendix A; current ACL programme of delivery

	MTCBC ACL Delivery Structure			
	MTCBC Adult Education		MTCBC Adult Education and The College Merthyr Tydfil (TCMT) Franchise Delivery	
	Structure	Delivery format	Family Programmes	Franchise Delivery
Programme and Delivery Structure	1 Coordinator 1 PT Administration Officer 6 Community Tutors	Targeting Welsh Government Grant priorities of; Literacy, Numeracy, ESOL Digital Literacy. 2 MTCBC employed tutors deliver the programmes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 ESOL classes per week • Spanish, part cost recovery 	Partnership approach with The College Merthyr Tydfil (TCMT) since 1997. Delivering literacy and numeracy courses on a rolling programme to parents/carers in 10 local schools annually 3 TCMT employed tutors deliver the programme MTCBC ACL cover the coordination and delivery costs	Historic partnership agreement and annual contract with The College 3 MTCBC employed tutors deliver the programmes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 skills clubs • 1 ECDL • Rolling programme of online computer basics courses
Target breakdown (over an academic year)		ESOL: 4 classes per week. Target 32 learners Spanish: 2 classes per week. Target 16 learners	5 schools per semester, September- January, February-July.	Skills Clubs: Target 72 learners ECDL: Target 8 learners Online Basics; Target 12 learners
Annual Learner Target	NA	48 learners	100 learners	92 learners

Appendix B: proposed ACL delivery format for 2020/21

The current franchise delivery is shared between The College Merthyr Tydfil (TCMT) and MTCBC Adult Education, with MTCBC Adult Education concentrating on the delivery of Skill clubs (literacy and numeracy) and IT courses. Delivery of ESOL for the Merthyr Tydfil ACL Partnership will remain with The College Merthyr Tydfil and Adult Learning Wales, thus reducing duplication.

	MTCBC Adult Education		MTCBC Adult Education and The College Merthyr Tydfil (TCMT) Franchise Delivery	
	Structure	Delivery format	Structure	Delivery format
Structure and Delivery Details	1 Coordinator 1 PT Administration Officer 1 Accreditation officer 6 Community Tutors	ECDL & Online basics Target 20 learners Skills clubs x 7 classes Target 56 learners	3 tutors in kind contribution to remain in place for the delivery of Family Programme The franchise grant (£33k) to cover delivery costs of both the Family Programmes and 2 Skills Clubs	Family Programmes x 10 courses Target 100 learners 2 x Skills clubs classes -delivered by MTCBC employed tutors Target 16 learners
Target		Target total; 76 learners	Target total; 116 learners	