
From: Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Subject: 24/00045 KCC CLS Accountability Agreement

Key Decision : Overall service value exceeds £1m and affects more than two Electoral Divisions

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All divisions and Members.
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>)

Summary: There is a DfE requirement for an Annual Accountability Statement identifying a limited number of key targets for future delivery, as part of the contractual annual Accountability Agreement

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to:

- i. APPROVE the Annual Accountability Statement; for submission to the DfE; and
- ii. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children's, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, to take the relevant actions as necessary to implement the decision, including future annual sign off and submission of the Annual Accountability Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Accountability Agreements were introduced by the DfE in the 2023 to 2024 academic year and consist of a 2-part document setting the overall expectations of providers (including local authorities delivering more than £1 million of post-16 provision) in return for funding. The agreement focusses on what colleges, designated institutions and local authorities deliver in the year ahead and how they intend to support local, regional, and national needs. These annual Statements should in all cases be informed by providers' longer term strategic plans and ambitions and (for those institutions within scope) the actions and outcomes from the Local Needs Duty.

- 1.2 Part 1 of the agreement is the 'accountability framework'. DfE are using it to set out National Skills Priorities as well as the essential terms and conditions that providers need to meet in return for funds. Part 1 identifies required levers to ensure the effective management and assurance of public funds, the protection of learners as well as requiring sound governance.
- 1.3 Part 2, the 'annual Accountability Statement' is a provider document that is owned by KCC/ CLS as the provider and should set out a small number of outcome targets for areas of curriculum that providers are planning to change for the coming year. These targets reflect contributions to priorities outlined in Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), being led by Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) working with employers, providers and local stakeholders including MCAs, local authorities, and other agencies and to National Skills Priorities listed below. Local authority learning organisations within scope should make reference to their tailored learning provision, particularly where this meets local skills needs.
- 1.4 The content of the annual Accountability Statement is scrutinised and agreed by CLS 'Client Group', consisting of representation from relevant internal departments, prior to being submitted for sign off.
- 1.5 Providers must submit their next annual Accountability Statement to the DfE by 30 June 2024.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The annual accountability statement is required to secure the majority of the revenue funding needed to support the operation of Community Learning & Skills service (CLS, is also supplemented by fee income). This funding is also conditional on meeting additional criteria. CLS aims to be a self-funded service, with direct costs, funded from either the ESFA funding and supplementary fee income. The strategic aims of the ESFA funding is changing and will require the Council to consider changes in services provided which is expected to lead to a short term deficit, where costs will be higher than income received, as the service changes to meet the new requirements.
- 2.2 The ESFA funding contracts covered by the accountability statement are the Adult Skills Fund, comprising Tailored learning and Adult Skills core, Free courses for jobs and the 16-19 Education contract. The annual value (indicative for 24/25) of these contracts is £ 9,520,878 and are broken down as follows:
 - Tailored Learning £6,705,376
 - Adult Skills Core £1,995,762
 - Free Courses for Jobs £90,296
 - 16-19 Education £729,444
- 2.3 The tailored learning funding is a fixed grant which is intended to support the Council in delivering its agreed identified learning aims which are set in line with the ESFA strategic aims of the grant. The amount of funding received for the other funding categories is dependent on either the number of specific qualifications achieved by learners, or the number of learners taking part in specific courses.

- 2.4 In the case that the ESFA does not receive a suitably authorised accountability statement, funding will not be provided to KCC. The accountability statement constitutes a contractual obligation and as such the ESFA makes clear that failure to comply will result in payments being frozen.
- 2.5 Without this funding the service would either need to be funded by the Council's general fund (i.e. council tax) or the service would need to cease.

3. Legal Implications

- 3.1 KCC does not deliver the CLS services pursuant to specific statutory powers or duties. KCC is required to deliver the CLS services in exchange for funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency ("ESFA").

4. Equalities implications

- 4.1 None identified.

5. Data Protection implications

- 5.1 DPIA was not considered necessary due to the lack of personal / sensitive information.

6 Other corporate implications

- 6.1 The changes to KCC CLS will support priorities for several other functions and departments for the Council.
- 6.2 Adult Social Care & Health –targets support health and wellbeing outcomes
- 6.3 Growth, Environment & Transport – working in partnership with them to achieve their goals.
- 6.4 Public Health – working in partnership with them to achieve their goals.

7 Governance

- 7.1 The Corporate Director, through the Officer Scheme of Delegation, will inherit authority to sign off future Accountability Statements, in consultation with the Cabinet Member of Education and Skills.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The proposed decision will ensure compliance with DfE contractual obligations, and so ensure continued release of funding to KCC CLS.

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9. Background Documents

- [DfE external document template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

10. Appendices

Appendix 1. CLS Accountability Statement
Equality Impact Assessment

11. Contact details

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