



Cabinet Member for Education

Time and Date

2.30 pm on Wednesday, 20th April 2016

Place

Committee Room 2 - Council House

Public Business

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)
 - a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2016
 - b) Matters arising
4. **Determination of School Terms and Holidays 2017 - 2018** (Pages 7 - 18)

Report of the Executive Director of People
5. **Adult Education Service Fees Strategy - Academic Years 2016-2017**
(Pages 19 - 30)

Report of the Executive Director of People
6. **Outstanding Issues**

There are no outstanding issues
7. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Private Business

Nil

Chris West, Executive Director of Resources, Council House, Coventry
Tuesday, 12 April 2016

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Michelle Salmon, Governance Services Tel: 024 7683 3065 E-mail: michelle.salmon@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillors D Kershaw (Cabinet Member) and S Thomas (Deputy Cabinet Member)

By invitation: Councillor J Blundell

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting
OR if you would like this information in another format or
language please contact us.

Michelle Salmon

Governance Services

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Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Education held at 2.00 pm on
Friday 12 February 2016

Present:

Members: Councillor D Kershaw (Cabinet Member)

Other Members: Councillor A Andrews (Substitute for Councillor Blundell)
Councillor J Birdi (for the matter in minute 22 below)

Employees (by Directorate):

People P Barnett, A Coles, M McGinty

Resources C Bradford, M Salmon

Apologies: Councillor J Blundell (Shadow Cabinet Member)
Councillor S Thomas (Deputy Cabinet Member)

Public Business

20. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared.

21. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2016 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

22. Library Services in Coventry - Petitions

The Cabinet Member for Education considered a report of the Executive Director of People that presented petitions that had been received relating to the Library Services in Coventry and responded to the issues raised.

An e-petition titled 'Save the Mobile Library Service in Coventry', requesting that the Council reconsidered the proposal to close the service, was presented to the Council on 3 December 2015. The e-petition, bearing 16 signatures, organised by an Earlsdon Ward resident and sponsored by Councillor J Birdi, had been subsequently added to by a similarly worded hard copy petition which contained 193 signatures, giving a combined total of 209 signatures. Councillor Birdi along with the petition organiser, Mr G Williams, attended the meeting and spoke in support of the petition.

An e-petition titled 'Save Arena Park Library Community Hub', bearing 5 signatures, requested that the City Council looked again at the proposed "replacement" of Arena Park Library, fully identifies the impact of closing the facility and ensures that any proposed replacement was of a similar size location

and retains all of its current facilities and staff. The petition was received by the City Council on 27 January 2016. The petition organiser was unable to attend the meeting.

On 24 November 2016 Cabinet approved a 'Connecting Communities' report that contained a recommendation to hold a period of consultation from 7 December 2015 to 1 February 2016 on a set of ten proposals for changes to some services. These ten proposals would deliver the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) target of £1 million proposed in the original City Centre First Programme (now Connecting Communities) for 2016/17 and exceed this target for a full year effect by an additional £0.2 million. Proposals to achieve a further £3.8 million savings needed for 2017/18 would be developed following engagement and further consultation. The ten proposals which would deliver the saving required for 2016/17 included various proposals for changes to library services in Coventry.

In accordance with the City Council's procedure for dealing with petitions, those relating to library issues were heard by the Cabinet Member for Education.

The Cabinet Member indicated that he had recently spoken at a Council meeting on the review of library services as part of the Council's proposals to make savings. He had confirmed that phase 1 was to carry out a review and at that stage there were no proposals to close any library services. He further confirmed that the Council would be exploring all options for future service provision that would require the Authority to 'do things differently'.

Speaking in support of the mobile library service, Mr Williams requested that the Council did not scrap the mobile library, but instead explore the option of sharing this service with other Local Authorities, similar to the service in Warwickshire and Solihull. This would enable the Council to make savings but also keep the mobile library running. He indicated that cancelling the mobile library would mean that many people, especially in the rural parts of North-West Coventry, would be excluded from library services as the nearest ones would be in the city centre or other suburbs which were an unreasonable distance from their homes to travel to. He suggested that the mobile library travel routes and stops required review to enable further take-up of the service and that the Council explore the mobile library having a presence at city events such as those held in the Broadgate Square and the Godiva Festival at the Memorial Park. Mr Williams was concerned that on Wednesdays the only library proposed to be open would be the City Centre. Councillor Birdi supported the comments made by the petition organiser and requested that if the mobile library did close, the Authority implement a phasing out of the service and users were advised of the alternative provisions available to them.

The report indicated that officers had considered the suggested alternative option of sourcing a mobile library service from a neighbouring local authority. At present members of the local Library Service were able to borrow books from any of the City libraries, including the mobile library, and return them to a different one. If another library service were invited to provide a mobile service this would necessitate users joining the new providers library service and would mean they would only be able to return books to the mobile library or libraries in the neighbouring authority. The financial cost of any arrangement with a neighbouring provider would be disproportionate for the potential outcomes from the service

given the limited and declining use of the current mobile library. The decision to propose closure of the mobile library had been reluctantly, but in the knowledge that library books and other resources would be available in a large number of places across the different communities of the City. There were 2 mobile library stops which were further than 2 miles from one of the City's remaining libraries for residents in the rural North West of the City, those at Wall Hill Road and Oak Lane. For users of these stops there was a bus service three times per day into Coventry City Centre from Monday to Saturday and in addition, bus services were also in operation for Meriden, Nuneaton and Coleshill. Age UK would continue to deliver a Home Library Service which had capacity to serve more residents if required.

The recent review of library services had produced a balanced set of proposals which sought to maximise the availability of library resources in local communities and meet the needs of Coventry residents within available financial resources. The proposals envisaged a broadly similar number of fixed buildings in which library resources would be accessed by Coventry residents, currently 17 libraries. Coventry was a compact City and well connected by bus services into the City Centre.

The Cabinet member welcomed the public's participation in the consultation and thanked them for their responses and suggestions on future library service provision.

RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report, the matters raised at the meeting, and the petitions that had been submitted as part of the Connecting Communities Consultation, the Cabinet Member for Education recommends that the Cabinet take into account the issues raised through the petitions when considering the Connecting Communities report.

23. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

24. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.00 pm)

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Cabinet Member for Education

20 April 2016

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education – Councillor D Kershaw

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of People

Ward(s) affected: All

Title: Determination of School Terms and Holidays 2017 – 2018

Is this a key decision?

No - although school terms and holidays affect all wards of the city, it is not expected to have a significant impact on communities.

Executive Summary:

This report informs the Cabinet Member for Education of the outcome of the public consultation on the School Terms and Holidays dates for 2017/2018 and asks for his agreement of the School Terms and Holidays Calendar for 2017/2018.

Currently the Local Authority is required to set term and holiday dates for community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, pupil referral units and maintained nursery schools. All schools in England are free to decide when their school day should start and end.

Governing bodies are required to set term and holiday dates in foundation and voluntary aided schools. The academy trust is responsible for the duration of the school year and term and holiday dates for academies and free schools.

The public consultation on the Coventry school terms and holidays dates 2017/2018 took place from 10 March to 24 March 2016. There were 515 valid replies to the consultation. The most popular of the three options available was Option 1 with pupils beginning their Christmas holidays on Thursday 21 December 2017. This was the preferred option of other West Midlands Authorities.

Details of the three options for School terms and holidays dates 2017/2018 can be seen in the Consultation Document in Appendix 1 to the report.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Education is recommended to:

- (1) Consider the outcome of the public consultation on School Terms and Holidays and agree a calendar of School Terms and Holidays for 2017/2018.
- (2) Adopt Option 1 as the School Terms and Holidays Programme 2017/2018 for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools.
- (3) Invite the Catholic and Church of England Diocesan Authorities and the Governors of Trust Schools and Academies to recommend the same calendar for their schools.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: School Terms and Holidays 2017/2018 Consultation Document

Background Papers

None

Other useful documents:

[Education \(School Day and School Year\) \(England\) Regulations 1999](#) (for academic year length.)

[Responsibility for fixing dates of terms and holidays and times of sessions](#)

[Deregulation Act 2015, Schedule 16 \(Schools: Reduction of Burdens\)](#)

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Determination of School Terms and Holidays 2017 - 2018

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002 in the case of a community, voluntary controlled or community special school or a maintained nursery school the Local Authority is required to determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end, and the governing body is required to determine the times of the school sessions.
- 1.2 Governing bodies are required to set term and holiday dates in foundation and voluntary aided schools. The academy trust is responsible for the duration of the school year and term and holiday dates for academies and free schools.
- 1.3 The Deregulation Bill was to allow governing bodies of community, voluntary controlled, community special schools and maintained nursery schools in England to set the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end. This change will not take place.
- 1.4 The Local Authority believes that a standard set of holiday dates adopted by all Coventry schools will be better for school attendance, the organisation of admissions to Year R and Year 7, parents and carers where siblings attend different schools and for parents and carers arranging childcare and transport. Coventry schools will be requested to adopt the outcome of this consultation.
- 1.5 The current Coventry Local Authority principles and protocols were taken into account when setting the 3 options for consideration:
 - a school year is 195 days, with 190 pupil days and 5 teacher (INSET) days;
 - 1 teacher day is determined by the Local Authority and 4 days by individual schools;
 - statutory holidays are observed;
 - schools prefer, especially secondary schools, full weeks of teaching wherever possible;
 - schools prefer a full week break at half term and two full weeks at Easter and Christmas;
 - half term holidays are set at the same time as those of neighbouring Authorities if possible.

The comments from consultations of previous years are also taken into account.

- 1.6 The half term holidays and Easter holidays in the 2017/18 consultation options have been set to the preferred option dates of the neighbouring West Midlands authorities. Until these authorities have finished their own consultations their actual term and holiday dates are unknown.
- 1.7 There were 515 valid replies to the public consultation, which took place from 10 March to 24 March 2016. The most popular overall of the 3 options available was Option 1 with 256 votes. Option 2 had 76 votes and Option 3 had 170 votes. 13 respondents sent comments, but did not choose an option.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The full details of the 3 options for School terms and holidays dates 2017/2018 can be seen in the Consultation Document found in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 2.2 The protocols in paragraph 1.5 were complied with in all options.

- 2.3 In previous consultations head teachers and members of the public expressed a preference for school holidays to be set at the same time as those of neighbouring Authorities. In consideration of this viewpoint all consultation options have the same dates set for the half term holidays and Easter holidays as the preferred option dates of the neighbouring West Midlands authorities.
- 2.4 Teachers have expressed concern that pupils should have enough time in school after Easter to prepare properly for summer exams. They have also expressed a preference for equal term lengths. As the date of Easter Sunday varies each year this is not always possible. The table below shows the term lengths for each option offered in the consultation.

Table 1: Term Lengths for Consultation Options

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Autumn	74	70	73
Spring	54	58	56
Summer	67	67	66
Total	195	195	195

Please note that these term lengths include the five teacher days.

- 2.5 Easter Sunday is the first Sunday in the school Easter holiday in all options. This allows time after Easter for exam preparation. The Easter holidays in all options and Christmas holidays in options 1 and 2 are two complete weeks.
- 2.6 Having met the criteria in the protocols, paragraph 1.5, and preferences given in paragraphs 2.3 -2.4 there was very little scope for alternative options. Head teachers and teachers have frequently mentioned that incomplete teaching weeks lower attendance, but incomplete weeks are unavoidable due to bank holidays and the requirement that there are 190 teaching days in the academic year. The consultation options gave an opportunity to schools to make the best choice for their attendance.
- 2.7 Option 1 is recommended as the School Terms and Holidays calendar for 2017/2018 for Coventry Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools, and maintained Nursery Schools.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The Consultation Document was sent to head teachers and governing bodies of Coventry schools, Diocesan Boards of Education, Trade Unions and Early Years Providers. It was available to read on the Coventry City Council website, www.coventry.gov.uk.
- 3.2 Replies were collected online from the Coventry City Council website.
- 3.3 There were 515 valid responses to the consultation coming from 476 individuals and 37 organisations and 2 respondents with no description.
- 3.4 The most popular choice was option 1 with 256 votes (50%). Option 2 had 76 votes (15%), Option 3 had 170 (33%) votes and 13 (2%) respondents chose to send comments only.
- 3.5 The results can be seen in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Summary of Replies

	As an Individual	On behalf of an Organisation	Unknown	Grand Total
Option 1	234 (49%)	21 (57%)	1 (50%)	256 (50%)
Option 2	70 (15%)	5 (14%)	1 (50%)	76 (15%)
Option 3	160(34%)	10 (27%)		170 (33%)
Unknown	12 (2%)	1 (3%)		13 (2%)
Grand Total	476 (100%)	37 (100%)	2 (100%)	515 (100%)

Table 3: Summary of Replies by Type of Respondent (largest groups only are listed)

	Head teacher, executive head, deputy head teacher	Teacher or Teaching Assistant	Other School Employee	Early Years Provider	Parent or Carer	Member of the Public
Option 1	19 (63%)	91(57%)	29 (47%)	4 (50%)	111 (46%)	6 (27%)
Option 2	1 (3%)	21 (13%)	7 (11%)	2(25%)	35 (14%)	13 (59%)
Option 3	9 (30%)	45 (28%)	25 (40%)	2 (25%)	90 (37%)	3 (14%)
Unknown	1(3%)	4 (2%)	1 (2%)	0	7 (3%)	0
Grand Total	30 (100%)	161(100%)	62(100%)	8(100%)	243 (100%)	22 (100%)

3.6 Option 1 was preferred by organisations and individuals (see table 2 above) and by head teachers, teachers, other school employees and parents and carers. Members of the public preferred option 2.

3.7 The reasons for the choice were as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Reasons for Choice

Reason	Number of Replies	% of Replies
Better for family being together	275	57%
Prefer holidays after Christmas	230	47%
Better for Work	145	30%
Better for childcare	89	18%
Pupils need the rest	79	16%
Better for pupil attendance	68	14%
Staff and/or parents have more of a rest	63	13%
Better for the school curriculum	61	13%
Prefer holidays before Christmas	52	11%
Prefer earlier start to summer holiday	50	10%

3.8 The most popular reasons were “Better for family being together “, “Better for family being together”, “Better for Work “ and “Better for childcare “. The popularity of family issues may have been due to the large numbers of parents and carers responding.

3.9 Option 1 is recommended as the School Terms and Holidays calendar for 2017/2018 for Coventry Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools, and maintained Nursery Schools.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 When the cabinet member decision becomes effective schools will be informed of the approved school terms and holidays calendar for 2017/18. The approved calendar will also be displayed on the City Council website.
- 4.2 Catholic and Church of England Diocesan Authorities, governors of voluntary aided schools, governors of trust schools, free schools and academy trusts and will be informed and invited to recommend the same calendar for their schools

5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources

5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5.2 Legal implications

Under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002 in the case of a community, voluntary controlled, community special school or a maintained nursery school the local authority is required to determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end. The governing body is required to determine the times of the school sessions.

The governing body in the case of foundation, voluntary aided, foundation special schools and academies are required to determine school terms and holidays dates and school sessions.

The Deregulation Act 2015 was drafted to enable when in force, the responsibility for determining term dates in community, voluntary controlled, community special schools and maintained nursery schools to be moved from the local authority to the Governing Body. The Department for Education have notified local authorities that these provisions will not now be commenced.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

The Local Authority is required to determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end for community, voluntary controlled and community special schools and maintained nursery schools.

Appropriate school term and holiday dates can increase attendance and aid curriculum planning so helping pupil achievement.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Current legislation on the number of teaching sessions has been complied with. Trade unions were asked to consider the calendar options prior to the public consultation to ensure that the options were acceptable to their members. The public consultation considered in this report has enabled various points of view from school staff and governors, parents and carers and pupils to be taken into account.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Centrally employed staff on Teachers Pay and Conditions will have their holiday pattern determined by this consultation.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

The Consultation Document was sent to head teachers of Coventry schools, including Faith schools and Special schools, Diocesan Boards of Education, Trade Unions and Early Years Providers and was also available on the Coventry City Council website, www.coventry.gov.uk. The consultation was publicised on social media. The consultation document was available in other formats and languages on request.

The survey asked for comments from respondents to further inform the decision.

The data received mainly reflected the views of head teachers, teachers, and parents and carers of pupils.

There were 515 respondents and valid ethnicity information was given by 488 of these of which 429 were White British. There was a low response from the black, Asian and minority ethnic population, 11% compared to an expected 33%. Future School Terms and Holidays consultations will be brought to the attention of the Interfaith & Communities Forum chaired by the Deputy Leader of the Council.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

It is desirable to align school holidays with those of neighbouring local authorities to minimise the difficulties to families such as those where parents work or live in a different authority to that of the school attended by their children or where siblings attend schools in different authorities.

Report author(s):

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Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
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Sue Johnson	Head of Business and Performance	People	24/03/15	29/03/16
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Rachel Sugars	Finance Manager	Resources	24/03/16	29/03/16
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Councillor D Kershaw	Cabinet Member for Education	-	06/04/16	06/04/16

This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

Appendix 1
Coventry City Council People's Directorate
School Terms and Holidays 2017/2018 Consultation
10 March 2016 to 24 March 2016

INTRODUCTION

Coventry Local Authority is now seeking your views on school terms and holidays options for the 2017/2018 academic year.

The Governing Bodies of academies, free schools, foundation/trust and voluntary aided schools currently have the power to set the term and holiday dates for their own schools. The Local Authority is responsible for setting the school term and holiday dates for community, voluntary controlled, community special and maintained nursery schools.

The Local Authority believes that a standard set of holiday dates adopted by all Coventry schools will be better for school attendance, the organisation of admissions to Year R/Year 7 and for parents and carers arranging childcare and transport. The term and holiday setting procedure will continue for 2017/18 as in previous years and Coventry schools will be requested to adopt the outcome of this consultation.

BACKGROUND

Coventry takes into account the following principles in setting calendars for school terms and holidays:

- a school year is 195 days, with 190 pupil days and five teacher days;
 - one teacher day is determined by the Local Authority and four days by individual schools;
 - statutory holidays are observed;
 - schools prefer full weeks of teaching wherever possible;
 - schools prefer a full week break at half term and two full weeks at Easter and Christmas;
 - half term holidays are set at the same time as those of neighbouring authorities if possible.
- The comments from consultations of previous years are also taken into account.

TEACHER DAYS

A teacher day (INSET day) is a work day for teachers, but not a pupil teaching day

If a community or voluntary controlled school decides to close to pupils on an election day then one of the remaining four teacher days must be used for this purpose. This is also recommended for foundation/trust and voluntary aided schools and for academies. There are Local Elections currently set for 3 May 2018

Options for the 2017/2018 Academic Year

The Academic year starts on the same date in each option, **Tuesday 5 September 2017** for pupils and **Monday 4 September 2017** for teachers.

The half term holiday dates are the same in all three options as these are the dates agreed with other West Midlands Authorities and Warwickshire.

The Christmas holiday dates are different in each option.
Easter Sunday is at the start of the school Easter holiday in each option.
The Academic year end date depends on the Christmas holiday dates.
Until other West Midlands and Warwickshire Local Authorities have finished their own consultations their final term and holiday dates are unknown.

Coventry City Council is asking for your preference from the three options below. Holiday dates are inclusive.

Option 1

Autumn Term 2017

- Term Starts Tuesday 5 September 2017 for pupils (Monday 4 September 2017 for teachers)
- Half Term Monday 23 October 2017 to Friday 27 October 2017
- Term Ends Thursday 21 December 2017

Spring Term 2018

- Term Starts Monday 8 January 2018
- Half Term Monday 19 February 2018 to Friday 23 February 2018
- Term Ends Thursday 29 March 2018

Summer Term 2018

- Term Starts Monday 16 April 2018
- Half Term Monday 28 May 2018 to Friday 1 June 2018
- Term Ends Wednesday 25 July 2018

Option 2

As Option 1 with the following changes:

Autumn Term 2017

- Term Ends Friday 15 December 2017

Spring Term 2018

- Term Starts Tuesday 2 January 2018

Summer Term 2018

- Term Ends Wednesday 25 July 2018

Option 3

As Option 1 with the following changes:

Autumn Term 2017

- Term Ends Wednesday 20 December 2017

Spring Term 2018

- Term Starts Thursday 4 January 2018

Summer Term 2018

- Term Ends Tuesday 24 July 2018

These options are shown in calendar format bellow.

Option 1

Calendar grid for Option 1 showing months from August 2017 to July 2018. Days are color-coded: yellow for School Holiday, black for Bank Holiday, and blue for INSET day.

Option 2

Calendar grid for Option 2 showing months from August 2017 to July 2018. Days are color-coded: yellow for School Holiday, black for Bank Holiday, and blue for INSET day.

Option 3

Calendar grid for Option 3 showing months from August 2017 to July 2018. Days are color-coded: yellow for School Holiday, black for Bank Holiday, and blue for INSET day.

Your opinions are valued

The Consultation is open from Thursday 10 March 2016 to Thursday 24 March 2016

Please return your response before 5:00 PM THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2016

Please Make Your Views Known

Your views are important. Please make them known by completing the online feedback form on the Council's website http://www.coventry.gov.uk/consultations

Replies must be received before 5:00pm Thursday 24 March 2016.

What Happens Next

The consultation period runs from Thursday 10 March 2016 to 5:00 pm Thursday 24 March 2016. All responses received during the consultation period will be collated and reported to Cabinet Member (Education), on 20 April 2016, for his decision.

Following the decision by the Cabinet Member (Education), the dates of the Terms and Holidays for Academic Year 2017/18 will be available on the School Term and Holiday page of the Coventry City Council website

If you need this information in another format or language please contact us.

Telephone: (024) 7683 1581

E-mail: margaret.halpin@coventry.gov.uk Or Datateam.PD@coventry.gov.uk

Please use Terms and Holidays in your email subject title

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Please use Terms and Holidays in your email subject title



Cabinet Member for Education

20th April 2016

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education – Councillor D Kershaw

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director for People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Adult Education Service Fees Strategy – Academic Year 2016-2017

Is this a key decision?

No – although the Strategy affects all wards of the city, it is not expected to have a significant impact on communities.

Executive Summary:

Based on the requirements of Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funding and following the changes approved on 10 March 2015 in relation to Adult Education Service (AES) fees for 2015-16 academic year, this report makes recommendations for course fees for the academic year 2016-17.

The proposed amendments to the fee structure relate to:

- accredited courses funded through the SFA's Adult Skills Budget (ASB):
 - workplace based courses
 - classroom based courses (non-loans)
 - discrete courses for LLDD

- non-accredited Community Learning (CL) courses:
 - full fees
 - Passport to Leisure and Learning (PTLL) fees
 - 60 plus fees
 - courses incurring additional tutor resource costs
 - introductory courses offering progression on to vocational courses

- other fees and charges:
 - crèche
 - transport

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member for Education is recommended to approve the Adult Education Service Fee Strategy for the academic year 2016-2017.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: Key to abbreviations

Background papers

None

Other useful documents:

Department for Business Innovation & Skills, Skills Funding Statement 2013-2016, February 2014,

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278529/bis-14-p172a-skills-funding-statement-2013-2016.pdf

Skills Funding Agency, Funding Rules 2016/2017, Version 2, May 2014,

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/308105/funding_rules_2014_to_2015_version_2.pdf

Adult Education Service fees strategy – academic year 2015-16,

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=177&MId=10300&Ver=4>

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No.

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No.

Will this report go to Council?

No.

Report title: Adult Education Service Fees Strategy – Academic Year 2016-17

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Coventry City Council (the Council) has a contract with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to provide adult and community learning (ACL) services to learners across the city. The Adult Education Service receives its funding from the SFA. It receives no funds from the City Council. A small proportion of its income is achieved through enrolment fees from adult learners.
- 1.2 Coventry Adult Education Service (AES) provides accredited courses for learners aged 16 plus who are not in full-time education, and non-accredited courses for learners aged 19 plus.
- 1.3 The Service has reviewed its fees and proposes the fee strategy outlined in this paper aiming for fee levels that are appropriate in relation to: the City Council's overall 3.2% fee increase for 2016-17; funding levels and funding rules of AES's funding body, Skills Funding Agency (see 1.3 and 1.4 below); current market rates; and the ability of residents to pay the fees proposed.
- 1.4 The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) modified its funding for further education courses with effect from August 2013, including a reduction in the SFA contribution for learners on accredited courses, as explained in the AES fee policy for 2013-14, and these modifications remain in place. There is also a requirement on providers of Community Learning (that is, learning to help people to acquire new skills, reconnect with learning, follow an interest, prepare to progress to formal courses, or learn how to support their children better) to collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use this where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.
- 1.5 AES's funding from SFA for ASB funded provision includes an allocation for a Learner Support Fund (LSF) to support learners with low household incomes in course fees, exam fees and crèche and transport costs. This fund was reduced from £480,000 to £380,000 in 2015-16.
- 1.6 This paper is based on the expectation that SFA funding and objectives for AES programmes for the academic year 2016-17 remain broadly the same as for 2015-16. Enrolment rates will continue to be monitored on a termly basis.
- 1.7 AES's proposed fee rates are amongst the lowest local authority provider rates within the West Midlands, enabling AES to retain its successful strategy of sustaining high levels of participation amongst learners on low incomes or means tested benefits or with few or no qualifications.

2 Accredited courses

- 2.1 Learners on accredited courses are eligible to have their course either fully paid for or part paid for, or are expected to pay full costs if they do not meet SFA eligibility guidelines. AES currently receives funding from the SFA for any eligible learners at rates set annually by the SFA.
- 2.2 For learners on accredited courses who are only eligible for part funding, providers (AES included) are expected to make up additional monies by charging fees to these learners. Providers can charge a fee which is deemed appropriate.
- 2.3 AES is awaiting publication of the SFA funding rates for 2016-17.

3 Non-accredited (CL) courses

- 3.1 AES receives an annual allocation from the SFA to fund CL programmes, with the objectives of focusing public funding on turning around the lives of local people and maximising the impact of public funding on the social and economic wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are most disadvantaged and, importantly, adding value to the public funding for this provision.
- 3.2 In considering fees for the academic year 2016-17, AES has also had to take into account the following:
- the impact of the AES fees strategy 2015-16;
 - any ongoing impact of online enrolments for non-accredited CL programmes, introduced in September 2014;
 - retention rates by Passport to Leisure and Learning (PTLL) holders
- 3.3 Non-accredited fees will need to be increased where possible, taking account of the need to support disadvantaged people and those unable to afford to pay fees and to increase fees for those who can afford to pay for their learning.

4 Other fees and charges

AES currently offers free childcare to enable learners to attend accredited courses, and free transport to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and visually impaired learners who require it to attend their accredited courses. Following a £100,000 (21%) reduction in the Learner Support Fund which supports learners incurring these costs, AES needs to reduce its expenditure from this fund by introducing charges to learners for these costs. Other local providers do not provide 100% funding towards these learner costs. Many learners with transport needs are already in receipt of mobility allowance. Total annual transport claims for individual learners can range from approximately £200 to £2,000, with most claims under £1,000. Most learners requiring crèche provision require it only for children aged under two years, as funding exists nationally for nursery provision for two to four year olds.

5 Options considered and recommended proposal

5.1 Accredited course fee amendments – workplace based courses, classroom based courses (non-loans), discrete courses for LLDD

Workplace based courses

In addition to classroom based vocational provision, AES delivers vocational qualifications through workplace based courses. These are currently charged using the same methodology as for classroom based vocational courses but with course fees being reduced on a pro rata basis to reflect the reduced number of teaching hours delivered within this context. However, the SFA is removing co-funding in the workplace from 2016-17 as it is considered that employers should fund learning that takes place in the workplace. AES therefore proposes to charge employers to cover the entire cost of delivering workplace based courses with effect from 2016-17.

Classroom based courses (non-loans)

The majority of learners enrolling for these courses are eligible for full fee remission because of their financial circumstances and low level of existing qualifications, and of the relatively small number who are required to pay a fee, most face financial barriers, with many vocational courses supporting progression into or within sectors where wages are

relatively low (such as care, support for teaching and learning in schools, and administrative roles). Some learners who are co-funded, as opposed to fully funded, are nevertheless currently eligible for 100% fee remission if their household income is lower than £20,817, and the fee remission is funded by AES's allocated Learner Support Fund. There is evidence that fee paying learners choose to attend classroom based accredited courses with AES partly because fees are lower than those charged by FE colleges, and also because of AES's good reputation in relation to the quality of teaching, learning and support for learners. It is a requirement for AES to achieve learner number targets in order to maintain funding. AES recommends:

- maintaining 100% fee remission for fully funded learners, as required by SFA;
- maintaining fee remission for eligible co-funded learners, but with changes to the eligibility criteria and level of remission, so that learners with household incomes between £16,000 and £20,817 pay 50% of the fee (ie 25% of the fully funded rate), payable in instalments, and learners with household incomes lower than £16,000 continue to receive full fee remission.

Discrete courses for LLDD

Discrete accredited courses are delivered to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) as this is a key priority for AES, although not a requirement in relation to SFA funding rules. AES considers it important to introduce the principle of a contribution by learners towards the cost of delivering these courses. Therefore AES proposes introducing a flat rate fee of £10 per course to cover the cost of resources for LLDD learners, which it does not consider will have a negative impact on learner numbers.

5.2 Non-accredited CL course fee amendments – full fees, PTLL fees, 60 plus fees, courses incurring additional tutor resource costs, introductory courses offering progression on to vocational courses

Table 1 – CL enrolments: percentage of full fee payers, PTLL learners and learners aged 60 plus, 2014-15 and 2015-16 (autumn and spring terms)

Fee rate	CL enrolments - autumn 2014 and spring 2015	Percentage of all CL enrolments	CL enrolments - autumn 2015 and spring 2016	Percentage of all CLenrolments	Percentage increase/decrease in 2015/2016 compared with 2014/2015
Full fee	1,755	31%	1,625	31.9%	+0.9%
PTLL	2,272	40.2%	1,916	37.6%	-2.6%
60 plus	1,628	28.8%	1,552	30.5%	+1.7%
Total	5,655	100%	5,093	100%	

5.3 Full fees

In line with the SFA objectives mentioned above, AES recommends an increase from £3.10 to £3.25 per hour in 2016-17, in order to generate additional fee income as expected by the Skills Funding Agency whilst maintaining affordability for adult learners. For a ten week course of two hours per week, this would be an increase from £62 to £65 in 2016-17. There has been a decrease in enrolments so far this academic year compared to the autumn and spring terms in 2014-15, although the spring term enrolments have improved to virtually the same as last year. There has been no feedback from fee paying learners expressing a concern about fee increases so far and the percentage of full fee payers in relation to all learners increased by 0.9%, comparing autumn 2015 and spring 2016 with autumn 2014 and spring 2015. The increase in the first year is smaller than in the subsequent two years, because it is recommended that several courses will also

incorporate an additional fee element for the first time to reflect the additional costs of delivering these courses.

5.4 Passport To Leisure and Learning fees

In line with the SFA objectives mentioned above, AES recommends a modest increase in PTLL fees, from 25 pence per hour to 30 pence in 2016-17. For a ten week course of two hours per week, this would represent an increase from £5 in 2015-16 to £6 in 2016-17. PTLL learners represented 37.6% of all learners in autumn 2015 and spring 2016, compared to 40.2% in autumn 2014 and spring 2015. This may be linked to an ongoing decrease in the number of residents in Coventry claiming out-of-work benefits during the same period, which means a reduction in the number of people eligible for PTLL. Following the introduction of a fee for PTLL learners, along with online enrolments, in September 2014, the percentage of PTLL learners who enrolled but did not take up their place on their course increased from 6% in autumn 2014 to 9.9% in autumn 2015 (compared to 6.8% for learners as a whole). However, the significant decrease in non-take up of courses by PTLL learners since autumn 2013 (13.1%) has been sustained. The retention rate amongst PTLL learners in autumn 2015 was 89.34%, compared with overall retention of 91.73% in Community Learning. This represents a small decrease in relation to autumn 2014, which was 92.1% for PTLL learners and 93.8% overall; however the significant increase in relation to autumn 2013 (at 79.7% for PTLL and 84.3% overall) has been sustained. There has been no feedback from PTLL learners expressing any concern about the introduction of fees.

5.5 60 plus fees

AES recommends that the fee for learners aged 60 plus is increased from £2.35 per hour to £2.45 in 2016-17 (maintaining the same proportion of approximately 75% of the full fee rate as in 2015-16), which for a ten week course of two hours per week would be an increase from £47 to £49 in 2016-17. Some 60 plus learners are eligible for a PTLL and would therefore be eligible for the higher PTLL discount. Although the state pension retirement age has been increasing to bring women in line with men, and will increase further for both men and women, some local services continue to offer fee reductions for people aged 60 plus. As a percentage of all learners, those aged 60 plus have increased by 1.7% comparing autumn 2015 and spring 2016 with the previous autumn and spring terms, and there has been no feedback from learners aged 60 plus expressing any concern about fee levels.

5.6 Courses incurring additional tutor resource costs

Some courses (predominantly certain arts, crafts, floristry, digital imagery) incur additional tutor resource costs which AES has hitherto contributed. However, as these courses are more expensive to deliver, AES recommends that learners contribute to these costs. Curriculum managers have calculated the cost to learners, assuming an average of 12 learners per class, and AES recommends that full fee payers and learners aged 60 plus pay their full share of these costs (depending on the course, this might range from approximately £3 to £8 per learner per term), and that PTLL learners pay 50% of these additional costs (ie approximately £1.50 to £4 per term). It is recommended that these costs are incorporated within the termly fee publicised to learners rather than listed separately, on the basis of these courses being more expensive to deliver.

5.7 Introductory courses offering progression on to vocational courses

AES offers a small number of courses which offer learners an introduction to specific vocational subjects and offer progression on to accredited vocational courses. Short

introductory courses of 10 hours or less are currently free of charge to learners, and those of more than 10 hours charge the same fee rate as for Community Learning programmes. AES recommends that from 2016-17, all introductory courses charge a fee which is equal to the Community Learning PTLL fee, ie 30 pence per hour in 2016-17.

6 Other fees and charges

AES recommends a staged approach to charges to contribute to the cost of crèches and transport, as follows:

- for each learner with a child or children requiring crèche provision, introduce a charge of £5 per learner per term in 2016-17 (regardless of the number of children or number of courses being attended);
- for each learner eligible for support for transport costs, introduce a charge whereby eligible learners contribute 25% of their transport costs in 2016-17.

AES recommends the establishment of a hardship fund using the Learner Support Fund, whereby AES would have the discretion to apply criteria to provide increased financial support for learners with creche or transport needs in cases of exceptional financial hardship.

Table 2 - Coventry City Council Adult Education Service course fee amendments – summary of current 2015-16 and recommended rates for 2016-17

Course type	Current fee 2015-16	Recommended fee 2016-17
Workplace based courses	Variable based on funding rates and reduced teaching hours; full fee remission for many based on financial circumstances and existing qualifications	Employers to be charged full cost recovery
Classroom based courses (non-loans)	Variable based on SFA funding rates; full fee remission for many based on financial circumstances and existing qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain 100% fee remission for fully funded learners • Eligible co-funded learners pay 25% of fee in instalments if household income £16,000 to £21,000; no fee payable if household income below £16,000 • For non-eligible co-funded learners, where a gap exists between full fee and fully funded rate, increase to close gap by 2018-19
Discrete LLDD courses	Free	£10 per course
Courses - full fee	£3.10 per hr (£62 for 20 hrs)	£3.25 per hr (£65 for 20 hrs)
Courses - PTLL	25 pence per hr (min £2; £5 for 20 hrs)	30 pence per hr (min £2; £6 for 20 hrs)
Courses - 60 plus	£2.35 per hr (£47 for 20 hrs)	£2.45 per hr (£49 for 20 hrs)
Courses incurring additional tutor resource costs	In addition to above fees: Not charged	In addition to above fees: Full fee payers and 60 plus – full share (approx £3 to £8 per term) PTLL – 50% of full share (approx £1.50 to £4 per term)
Introductory courses offering progression to vocational courses	10 hours or less – free More than 10 hours – CL fee rate	All introductory courses – PTLL rate for 2016-17
Crèche	Free	£5 per learner per term
Transport	Free	Charge 25% of full cost

7 Results of consultation undertaken

- 7.1 A national Community Learning Learner Survey was undertaken by BIS in 2012, on which a report was produced in March 2013, providing positive feedback from learners across the country on their objectives regarding fees. A further survey was conducted by BIS in March 2014, Community Learning Learner Survey Wave 2, There have been no further consultations on non-accredited (CL) fees since this survey. There was very little change in the 2014 survey results compared with those of the 2012 survey; in 2014, 78% of respondents said they would be willing to pay for courses they would like to take over the next two years, with 11% saying "It would depend", and 11% saying they would not be prepared to pay. There were no differences in attitudes to paying fees in relation to respondents' ethnicity, household income, benefit receipt, gender, age or economic activity in the Wave 2 survey. Whilst AES fees have increased since these surveys, they remain very competitive in relation to those of similar neighbouring providers. Enrolments amongst people paying full fees or 60 plus fees have increased, and whilst PTLL enrolments have decreased (possibly linked to reduced eligibility amongst the wider population), PTLL learner retention rates have increased and rates of non-take-up of places has decreased. There has been no critical feedback by PTLL learners since the introduction of the nominal £5 fee or by full fee payers and learners aged over 60 about their respective fee increases. Discussion has taken place with colleagues within AES to agree the proposed fee structure for 2015-16, taking account of the funding levels and requirements of the SFA, staff knowledge of learner profiles within different areas of provision, and any impact of the fee changes implemented in September 2013. There remains no discernible impact on enrolments that could be specifically attributed to changes in fees.

8 Timetable for implementing this decision

- 8.1 Implementation: fee increases to be implemented with effect from 1 September 2016.
- 8.2 Monitoring: termly and at the end of the academic year.

9 Comments from Executive Director of Resources

- 9.1 Financial implications

The Adult Education Service is funded entirely from Skills Funding Agency (SFA) grant and fee income. As a result of reductions in grant funding it is necessary for the service to charge for courses where it is able.

The report proposes fee rates for accredited (ASB) courses for 2016-17 to be in line with current AES fee policy, which is connected to the SFA funding rates, as shown in Table 2 above. Fees for workplace based courses are currently based on SFA funding rates and reduced teaching hours, but with effect from 2016-17, employers will be charged the full cost of these courses.

Fee rates for non-accredited (CL) courses will increase as set out in the main body of this report and provide a balance between generating increased fee income and the need to maintain learner numbers on these courses.

For all courses, minimum numbers of enrolments are specified for courses to run, and this will continue in order to avoid courses running with insufficient enrolments. The fee rates, modes of delivery, and the financial sustainability of all programmes will be reviewed during the year, taking account of market conditions, to enable the Service to make appropriate changes to provision and fee rates for future years.

The increase in income for the 2016/17 academic year based on these proposals is expected to be in the region of £30k, assuming similar levels of activity to previous years. The increase in income will be reinvested within AES to extend provision to people who cannot afford to pay in accordance with SFA grant guidance.

9.2 Legal implications

The public sector Equality Duty requires all the Local Authority decision makers to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day functions, including when shaping policy, and in respect of the delivery of services. The public sector equality duty requires the Local Authority to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities, and to identify the steps needed to achieve this by applying a rigorous analysis to any proposals, their potential adverse impacts and the measures needed to minimise any discriminatory effects.

10 Other implications

10.1 **How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

AES provides vocational opportunities that allow adult learners to gain skills and qualifications to improve their job prospects and career progression, supporting economic activity in the city. The range of qualifications offered are in vocational areas where there is an identified need within the city. The impact of CL courses also includes the development of skills to improve job prospects and career progression, as well as skills that learners apply to volunteer within their communities or support their children and families. Many CL courses contribute to learners' improved health and fitness and improved self-confidence and wellbeing. The proposed changes maintain fee levels that remain affordable for Coventry residents and that are competitive in relation to similar providers. A substantial ESOL programme supports large numbers of learners facing disadvantage and barriers to learning to improve their English language skills in order to play a fuller role within their local communities.

10.2 **How is risk being managed?**

The fee rate is being set for the academic year 2016-17, taking into account current SFA funding levels and methodology and the need to maintain affordability for learners, in order to maintain learner numbers and thereby achieve funding targets. It is not anticipated that the proposed increases in income would result in any significant decrease in enrolments.

10.3 **What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

10.4 **Equalities / EIA**

An EIA was completed March 2016 in relation to the 2016-17 fees strategy, with no negative impacts identified. An analysis of learner enrolments in autumn and spring terms 2015-16 shows an overall small increase in enrolments by full fee payers and learners aged 60 plus compared with autumn and spring terms 2014-15.

In autumn and spring terms 2014-15, PTLT enrolments represented 40.2% of all enrolments, and in autumn and spring terms 2015-16 they represented 37.6%, a decrease of 2.6%, which may be linked to an ongoing decline in the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits in Coventry.

10.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

10.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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Appendix 1: Key to abbreviations

AES	Adult Education Service
ASB	Adult Skills Budget
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
CL	Community Learning
LLDD	Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
LSF	Learner Support Fund
PTLL	Passport to Leisure and Learning
SFA	Skills Funding Agency

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