

CABINET

8 AUGUST 2023

MEDWAY ADULT EDUCATION ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Tracy Coombs, Portfolio Holder for Education

Report from: Sunny Ee, Assistant Director for Regeneration

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Summary

Medway Adult Education (MAE) is required to submit an Annual Accountability Agreement to the Department for Education (DfE) as part of its annual grant agreement. The agreement is used by the DfE to assure the use of public funds. It is also a useful strategic document to share with partners and as a backdrop to strategic conversations with the DfE. Providers in scope are: all further education colleges, all sixth form colleges, institutes for adult learning/designated institutions and local authorities delivering post-16 provision in excess of £1m. Medway Adult Education is in scope.

1. Recommendation

1.1. Cabinet is recommended to consider and approve the Medway Adult Education Accountability Agreement, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, to be submitted to the Department for Education (DfE).

2. Suggested reasons for decision

2.1. The draft accountability agreement meets the DfE requirements and demonstrates MAE's contribution to national and local priorities, alongside partnership working with key stakeholders.

3. Budget and policy framework

3.1. The DfE require that the agreement must be signed and approved by MAE's governing body, therefore this is a matter for Cabinet.

3.2. The Accountability Agreement is consistent with the Council Plan, notably the strand 'Residents with Jobs & Skills' whilst interacting with others such as 'Healthy and Active Communities'.

4. Background

- 4.1. In the Skills for Jobs White Paper, the government set out its vision to transform further education. This was followed by 2 funding and accountability consultations which described how the system will be reformed. The accountability agreement is a new product emerging from these reforms. It is a 2-part document setting the overall expectations of providers in return for the Department's funding investment.
- 4.2. Part 1 replaces the existing annual grant funding agreement, which is used to set out national skills priorities as well as set out essential terms and conditions. Part 2 is a new document that is owned by individual providers. Providers are required to set out a small number of outcome targets for areas of your curriculum that you are planning to change for the coming year. These targets reflect how you are contributing to priorities outlined in Local Skills Improvement Plans, working with employers, other providers and local stakeholders and to National Skills Priorities.

5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1. The accountability agreement demonstrates how MAE is aligning with the Skills & Employability Plan for Medway and with the Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan. It also demonstrates how MAE is meeting the national priorities and working with key local stakeholders like MidKent College, Job Centre Plus and voluntary sector partners.
- 5.2. A diversity Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report as appendix 3.

6. Risk management

6.1

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Accountability Agreement not signed and submitted	If the agreement is not signed and submitted it could affect our grant being paid	Submit prior to deadline of 31 st August	CII
Accountability agreement doesn't meet national priorities	The agreement is required to meet national priorities and may be rejected if it doesn't.	MAE meets key priorities in English, Maths and digital skills which is reflected in the agreement.	CIII
Under delivery of objectives	The agreement contains objectives against our strategic aims,	The objectives are designed to stretch by be achievable. They are also	CIII

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
	which DfE will expect us to complete.	aligned with existing service plan aims and objectives and will be closely managed.	

For risk rating, please refer to the following table (please **retain** table in final report):

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	I Catastrophic II Major III Moderate IV Minor

7. Consultation

7.1. Due to the time restrictions only low level consultation took place, largely within Medway Council, but also with MidKent College. Responses were positive, and there was alignment on a number of aspects with MidKent College's agreement.

8. Climate change implications

8.1. Two key objectives within the accountability agreement meet Climate Change aims. Firstly, we are aiming to embed fuel poverty, energy and climate change awareness into programmes. This will help to reduce significant barriers for learners, and increase awareness of how residents can help with climate change.

8.2. Our second related objective is transforming our services, using digital to improve the learner experience. This involves moving all registers online, encouraging learners to enrol online and reducing our paper usage. This is key to increasing our sustainability.

9. Financial implications

9.1. The key financial implication is that this agreement is required to receive our annual grant agreement. Without this our c£1.8m grant is at risk.

10. Legal implications

10.1. The Accountability Agreement is in line with the contractual obligations within our ESFA contract.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: MAE Accountability Agreement

Appendix 2: Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

None