

Cabinet

3 June 2025

Medway Adult Education Annual Accountability Statement

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 Statement to the Department for Education (DfE) as part of its annual grant agreement. The statement 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. The first Accountability Statement was agreed and submitted to DfE in August 2023.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Cabinet is recommended to consider and approve the Medway Adult Education (MAE) Accountability Statement attached as Appendix 1 to the report, for submission to the Department for Education (DfE).

2. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

- 2.1. The draft accountability statement meets the DfE requirements and demonstrates MAE's contribution to national and local priorities, alongside partnership working with key stakeholders. It is in line with last two years approved statement.

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 Statement is consistent with the One Council Plan, notably the priorities 'Benefitting from good education, quality jobs and a growing economy' and 'Improving health and wellbeing for all'.

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 statement 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 statement 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. It is in line with and updated from last year's agreement.
- 5.2. Where possible data has been reviewed and refreshed, and new white papers such as 'Get Britain Working' have been taken into consideration, alongside how we will integrate with programmes such as Connect to Work.
- 5.3. A diversity Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

6. Risk management

| Risk | Description | Action to avoid or mitigate risk | Risk rating |
|---|--|--|-------------|
| Accountability Statement not signed and submitted | If the Statement is not signed and submitted it could affect our grant being paid | Submit prior to deadline of 30 th June | C2 |
| Accountability Statement doesn't meet national priorities | The Statement 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 |

| Risk | Description | Action to avoid or mitigate risk | Risk rating |
|------------------------------|---|--|-------------|
| Under delivery of objectives | The agreement contains objectives against our strategic aims, which DfE will expect us to complete. | The objectives are designed to stretch by be achievable. They are also aligned with existing service plan aims and objectives and will be closely managed. | CIII |

For risk rating, please refer to the following table

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

7. Consultation

7.1. Soft consultation takes place throughout the year, with national, regional and local priorities reviewed constantly. The Accountability Statement is in line with other statements of partners and comparators.

8. Climate change implications

8.1. Climate change outcomes are within the priorities set out in the accountability statement. We are aiming to embed recycling, 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.

9. Financial implications

9.1 The completion of this statement is a requirement of our annual grant agreement. Without this our c£1.9m grant is at risk.

9.2 In 2024/25 the Adult Education Service underspent its annual budget by £59,000.

Legal implications

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

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix 1: MAE Accountability Statement

Appendix 2: Diversity Impact Assessment

Background Documents

None.