

Cabinet

2 June 2026

Medway Adult Education Annual Accountability Statement

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Harinder Mahil, Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment

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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. This year responsibility is being transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), however guidance still sits with 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. This year we are required to submit a section on the Local Needs Duty – a review of how well our education and training meets local needs and what action we propose to take to further meet those needs.

1. Recommendation

1.1. The Cabinet is recommended to consider and approve the submission of the Medway Adult Education Accountability Statement, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, to the Department for Education.

2. Suggested reasons for decision

2.1. The draft accountability statement meets the Department for Education requirements and demonstrates Medway Adult Education'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 Medway Council Plan, notably the priorities 'Benefitting from good education, quality jobs and a growing economy' and 'Improving health and wellbeing for all'. The opening of the statement explains how the One Medway Council Plan is central to our strategy.

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 two funding and accountability consultations which described how the system will be reformed. The accountability statement is a product emerging from these reforms. The accountability statement should set out what colleges, designated institutions and local authorities in scope will deliver, using the department's funding.
- 4.2. The 'annual accountability statement' is a provider-owned document. It should set out a small number of outcome targets for areas of your curriculum that you are planning to grow, reduce, or improve in 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.
- 4.3. The Local Needs Duty is a statutory requirement for all governing bodies in scope. Governing bodies are required to periodically review (undertaken every three years, sooner if there are substantial changes in circumstances) how well the education and training they provide meets local needs and consider what actions they might take to meet those needs better.

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. This year it also incorporates how it supports the Get Kent & Medway Working Plan and key programmes such as Connect to Work. 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. Due to recent cuts in Adult Education funding from Government, language in the statement has often had to change from 'grow' to 'priorities' or 'ensure quality'.

5.4. A Diversity Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report as Appendix 2 to the report.

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 31st July	CII
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
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
Reduction in funding	MAE has seen funding reduced significantly in 26/27, this hampers the ability to grow services.	Concentrate on prioritising and increasing quality. Medway Council has mitigated this by providing funding.	AIII

For risk rating, please refer to the following table:

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely	I Catastrophic
B Likely	II Major
C Unlikely	III Moderate
D Rare	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 key financial implication is that this statement is required to receive our annual grant agreement. Without this our c£1.7m grant is at risk.

10. 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: Medway Adult Education Accountability Statement

Appendix 2: Diversity Impact Assessment

Background Documents

None