Oxfordshire Community Learning Strategy: Joint strategy agreed between Oxfordshire’s Community Learning funded providers, January 2014 – July 2015

1.0 Introduction

This is the joint Community Learning strategy for the six adult learning providers in the County in direct receipt of Community Learning funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA):

1. Oxfordshire Skills and Learning Service, Oxfordshire County Council (OSLS)
2. City of Oxford College (COOC)
3. Banbury and Bicester College (BBC)
4. Abingdon & Witney College (AWC)
5. The Henley College (THC)
6. Workers’ Educational Association (WEA)

This document firstly outlines the national context of recent significant changes in government strategy, policy and funding rules for the use of Community Learning funding to SFA funded providers. The current Oxfordshire context is then outlined before a vision for the future is presented using the three core themes of partnership, participation and ‘Pound Plus’. Finally, the framework is set out for reviewing and measuring the impact of this strategy.

Providers receive an annual allocation of Community Learning funding from the Skills Funding Agency in the form of a grant. This is protected for 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 but is subject to Government review for 2016/17 onwards and is likely to reduce. In addition to this, the Oxfordshire Skills and Learning Service (OSLS), which is by far the largest provider of Community Learning in the County, will become independent from Oxfordshire County Council in April 2015. This could have an impact on the use of Community Learning funding and for this reason this strategy does not go beyond July 2015.

2.0 Background

The current SFA Community Learning funding stream was formerly called Adult Safeguarded Learning (2006/7 – 2011/12) and prior to that Adult and Community Learning, both of which nomenclatures comprised four separate funding sub-categories:

- Personal and Community Development (PCDL)
- Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC)
- Family Language, Literacy and Numeracy (FLLN)
- Wider Family Learning (WFL).

The amount of funding allocated nationally to these four combined funding streams has remained static for the last 9 academic years at £210 million per year since 2005/6, resulting in a year on year decrease in value in real terms.
The long-standing use of the term ‘community learning’ in the adult education sector, compared with the term as it is now used by BIS to denote a specific funding stream with restricted uses and conditions, can lead to some confusion about the nature and practice of ‘community learning’.

The new Community Learning funding stream applies to some learning programmes that would not previously have been referred to in the sector as community learning. Conversely, it does not apply to some learning programmes which the sector would normally refer to as community learning but which are funded through other SFA funding streams. It is therefore important to distinguish between community learning in practice and Community Learning the funding stream, the nomenclature and funding rules of which could change yet again in the future.

For the purpose of clarification, this strategy document relates to provision funded through the current Community Learning funding stream which is defined as:

“...a range of community-based and outreach learning opportunities, primarily managed and delivered by local authorities and general further education colleges. This broad range of provision, usually non-regulated, is to bring together adults (often of different ages and backgrounds) by helping them to pursue an interest, address a need, gain a new skill, become healthier, or learn how to better support their children”.

3.0 National Context

The objectives of the Government’s new Community Learning funding stream are to:

- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate.
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.
- Widen participation and transform people’s destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances.
- Develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient, connected and pro-active citizens.

Through achievement of these objectives, the purpose of Government Supported Community Learning is to:

- Maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people’s circumstances.
- Promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement.
- Maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

(see Appendix A for detailed objectives)

All providers directly funded for Community Learning by the Skills Funding Agency are now required work in a strong local partnership with a clear strategy, priorities and delivery objectives underpinned by engagement and consultation with
communities, Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Councils and other key local stakeholders. Such partnerships are referred to as ‘Community Learning Trusts’, although these do not need to be legally and independently constituted as such.

Government Community Learning funding will now be regarded as a partial contribution towards the costs of Community Learning programmes. All providers are now required to operate the **Pound Plus** framework which measures:

- The additional financial contribution made towards the cost of Community Learning delivery from a range of sources such as fee income, grants, sponsorship, in-kind resources, sales and use of volunteers.
- The additional Community Learning funding realised from savings made through a range of measures such as rationalisation of provision, improved efficiency, use of volunteers, self-organised groups and shared services.

As with other SFA-funded provision, all courses using Community Learning funding are subject to Ofsted inspection and therefore must meet the rigorous quality standards of the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework.

### 4.0 Local context

Oxfordshire County covers an area of over 1,000 square miles and has a population of 654,000. It is largely a rural county with a number of urban conurbations, by far the largest of which is the City of Oxford which accounts for 23% of the county’s population at 152,000 and is the fourth fastest growing city in the UK. The population of the city is swelled during term time by the students of the two universities.

The economy of Oxfordshire is 85% based in the service sector, in particular the hotel and restaurant industry, the finance and IT sector, and public administration, health and education. Oxfordshire also contains one of the largest concentrations of research and development activity in Western Europe and there is a strong science and engineering sector.

The population of Oxfordshire is diverse. There is a 9% Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population in the county as a whole, but the City of Oxford is by far the most diverse with a 22% BME population.

The national Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) show the population profile of the County as one of extremes, with some wards in the 10% most privileged whilst other areas are in the 10% most disadvantaged in England. For example, five wards in the county have 60-65% of residents with at least a level 4 qualification, whilst five other wards have 45-55% of adults with either no qualifications at all or only a level 1 qualification. Most of the deprivation is in wards in the two largest urban areas, Banbury and City of Oxford, with a number of small ‘pockets’ of deprivation within other wards in the county.

Although Oxfordshire as a whole has a relatively low unemployment rate, there is a high correlation between wards with low levels of qualifications and areas with the highest unemployment rates in the county. The county is also a healthy one when
considered as a whole, but there are significant health inequalities in those areas
with multiple disadvantage. For example, life expectancy in the most deprived areas
is 7 years lower for men, and almost 6 years lower for women, compared to those
from the least deprived areas.

There is a significant problem with homelessness in the City of Oxford due to a
combination of chronic shortage of affordable housing and high private sector rents.
There is a high rate of rough sleeping and households in temporary accommodation.

The City of Oxford has a significant refugee and asylum seeker population. Outside
London and Kent, Oxford has one of the highest numbers of refugee children and
unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors in south-east England.

The Oxfordshire Skills Board has two priorities which align with government
Community Learning objectives:

- Enable all residents to make a positive contribution to their communities
- Ensure that all residents are able to develop the skills that enable them to
  successfully enter and remain in the workforce

However, the priorities of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership contain no
references to Community Learning or to any of its wider impacts.

5.0 Current use of Community Learning funding within Oxfordshire

The total current annual allocation of Community Learning funding to providers in
Oxfordshire is £2.27 million made up as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>SFA Community Learning Allocation</th>
<th>Percentage of total allocation to Oxfordshire</th>
<th>Target no. of unique learners in 13/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OSLS</td>
<td>£2,100,000</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Oxford College</td>
<td>£43,000</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banbury and Bicester</td>
<td>£19,000</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Henley College</td>
<td>£41,000</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abingdon and Witney</td>
<td>£28,000</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEA</td>
<td>£39,000</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>£2,270,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,705</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within OSLS there is a large Community Learning funded Universal Offer
programme of adult leisure learning (2,000 learners) in a network of 12 adult learning
centres across the County that is open to all adults who pay a fee contribution
according to a fees policy scale. Sixty per cent of OSLS Community Learning
funding and 100% of Community Learning funding of the other five providers is used
in partnerships with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community
organisations to either engage disadvantaged and excluded adults and families in a
broad range of targeted provision, or to train volunteers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current use of Community Learning funding</th>
<th>OSLS</th>
<th>COOC</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>AWC</th>
<th>THC</th>
<th>WEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universal offer (fee-paying adult leisure learning programme open to all)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted outreach provision for disadvantaged adults in partnership with community organisations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Learning for adults and children learning together, inc Family English and maths</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses for volunteers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for LLDD adults</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subcontracted provision to partner providers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.0 Vision for the future

The three strategic objectives of this joint strategy are:

1. **Partnership**
2. **Participation**
3. **Pound Plus**

#### 6.1 Strategic objective 1 - Partnership

We will:

- Work together as a strong local provider partnership to ensure funded provision for Oxfordshire aligns fully with Government Community Learning objectives.
- Form the core membership of the Steering Group of the Oxfordshire Learning Network - the Community Learning Trust for Oxfordshire.
- Plan Community Learning provision, whether direct delivery or subcontracted, together and in consultation with Oxfordshire’s voluntary and community sector organisations and residents.
- Build on our current broad range of partnership work to further develop high quality adult learning experiences in community settings through community led projects and initiatives.
- Build relationships with the Oxfordshire Skills Board and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to raise awareness of how Community Learning contributes towards the achievement of social and economic goals.

#### 6.2 Strategic objective 2 - Participation

We will:

- Implement a range of measures to widen participation in Community Learning of hard to reach and non-traditional learners.
- Target the use of Community Learning funding for the following priority groups: (a tick in this table indicates those priority groups that provision is actively targeted towards and demonstrates that between the 6 funded providers, all priority groups are covered).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target priority group</th>
<th>OSLS</th>
<th>COOC</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>AWC</th>
<th>THC</th>
<th>WEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low skilled</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income or on income-related benefits</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and Minority Ethnic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed/not in paid employment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in rural areas without access to private transport due to age, disability or low income.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults with LDD</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovering from mental illness</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovering from drug or alcohol dependency</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of homelessness</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-offender, serving their sentence in the community or on probation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low levels of English or maths</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in areas with low participation in post-16 education.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in areas in the 10% most deprived nationally</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65 years</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care leavers aged 19+ years</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees and asylum seekers (that meet SFA eligibility criteria)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Increase our outreach programmes of Community Learning through partnerships with voluntary and community organisations.
• Build on current work in Banbury (eg the newly formed Banbury and Bicester College and the Family Learning programme of OSLS) to develop a broader Community Learning offer in the town.
• Develop Community Learning provision accessible to disadvantage adults living in rural areas.
• Incorporate promotion, encouragement and support for engagement in further learning opportunities and volunteering into all provision.
• Encourage volunteering through the development of volunteer training programmes delivered in a broad range of contexts in the public, private and voluntary sector.

6.3 Strategic objective 3: Pound Plus
We will:
• Build Pound Plus calculations into all direct delivery and subcontracted Community Learning provision.
• Encourage financial contributions from learners where this is appropriate and feasible.
• Encourage financial and in-kind contributions from community partner organisations.
• Increase the involvement of volunteers in the delivery of Community Learning.

7.0 Reviewing and evaluating the strategy
We will:
• Use 2013/14 data to create a set of baseline key performance indicators (KPIs) for the partnership relating to Pound Plus and quality and will use these to set appropriate targets for 2014/15.
• We will review and evaluate this Community Learning strategy against these KPIs every six months in consultation with the wider Steering Group of the Oxfordshire Learning Network – the Community Learning Trust for Oxfordshire.

8.0 Conclusion
This partnership is committed to the Government’s aims and objectives for the use of Community Learning funding. We will work towards the achievement of these objectives together as a partnership of directly funded providers for the County and through the Oxfordshire Learning Network – the Community Learning Trust for Oxfordshire.
Appendix A:
Purpose and Objectives of Community Learning Funding

From BIS ‘New Challenges New Chances’ (November 2011)

Purpose of Government Supported Community Learning:
- Maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people’s circumstances.
- Promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement.
- Maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Objectives of Government Supported Community Learning:
- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.
- Widen participation and transform people’s destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances, e.g.  
  - improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning  
  - acquisition of skills preparing people for training, employment or self-employment  
  - improved digital, financial literacy and/or communication skills  
  - parents/carers better equipped to support and encourage their children’s learning  
  - improved/maintained health and/or social well-being.
- Develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient, connected and pro-active citizens, leading to:  
  - increased volunteering, civic engagement and social integration  
  - reduced costs on welfare, health and anti-social behaviour  
  - increased online learning and self organised learning  
  - the lives of our most troubled families being turned around.
- Commission, deliver and support learning in ways that contribute directly to these objectives, including:  
  - bringing together people from backgrounds, cultures and income groups, including people who can/cannot afford to pay  
  - using effective local partnerships to bring together key providers and relevant local agencies and services  
  - devolving planning and accountability to neighbourhood/parish level, with local people involved in decisions about the learning offer  
  - involving volunteers and Voluntary and Community Sector groups, shifting long term, ‘blocked’ classes into learning clubs, growing self-organised learning groups, and encouraging employers to support informal learning in the workplace  
  - supporting the wide use of online information and learning resources  
  - minimising overheads, bureaucracy & administration.