

### **Learning Revolution**

The Learning Revolution White Paper (March 2009) sets out a new and exciting vision for informal learning (IAL) and how we can best support the ways people want to learn. It gives us an opportunity to link IAL to well-being for all, including developing a culture of learning in families, responding to demographic changes in the community, supporting communities through the after-effects of recession, engaging people in new technologies and providing a stepping stone to gaining new skills and qualifications. It is part of a broader learning and skills journey that can enable citizens to keep learning throughout their lives.

The White Paper offers a broad definition of IAL and sets out principles for implementing informal adult learning policy. It also introduces the concept of the Lead Accountable Body (LAB) for IAL. This is a new role which local authorities in England have been invited to undertake - 'to create strong partnerships to implement their local vision of informal adult learning'. Surrey County Council is keen to respond to this challenge and is applying for LAB status.

### **Surrey County Council and Lead Accountable Body Status**

From August 2011, the Skills Funding Agency plans to channel its 'Adult Safeguarded Learning' budget that supports IAL through identified lead accountable bodies. Assuming Surrey County Council is successful in its bid to be the LAB for Surrey, it will need to pull together relevant partners and develop a local plan for all types of informal adult learning. The key will be that learning meets local needs and supports a range of social and economic priorities. The Skills Funding Agency will agree the headline targets within the plan.

### **Skills Funding Agency**

On the 1st April 2010 the Skills Funding Agency assumed responsibility for funding and regulating post 19 Further Education and Skills. It is an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

Its mission is to ensure that people and businesses can access the skills training they need to succeed in playing their part in society and in growing England's economy. It will do this in the context of policy set by BIS and is informed by the needs of businesses, communities and regions, and sector and industry bodies. It will invest public spending – circa £4 billion per year - in colleges and training organisations to fund training for adults in England.

The Agency is a national and regional organisation with a main office in Coventry. It does not have local area teams, but has some local offices – the nearest for Surrey are in Reading and Brighton.

### **Managing Change**

In December 2009 the three Action for Community Partnerships met together as one for a consultative seminar which considered how Surrey should prepare for the 'new landscape'. Since then a number of actions have been

taken forward including the establishment of a Transition Group (and the production of this newsletter).

The Transition Group, set up by the Skills Funding Agency and the Surrey County Council, met for the first time in February 2010. Chaired by Frank Offer, the group decided that it should not limit its scope to informal learning but should be concerned with all aspects of adult learning and skills. It will help to support the implementation for new adult arrangements, including preparations for becoming the LAB. Specifically it provides support with:

- Planning and coordinating the transition of commissioning of informal adult learning and any further budget lines that move to Surrey County Council.
- Coordinating transition communications.
- Advising on the development of a holistic adult learning plan for 2011-2015
- Advising relevant decision making bodies on skills priorities for Surrey
- Advising on the development of the Adult Advancement and Careers Service

Membership includes representation from Surrey County Council, Skills Funding Agency, college and ACL providers, the voluntary and community sector, Surrey Strategic Partnership, Surrey Economic Partnership and Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership.

### **Adult Learning Network**

At the December 2010 seminar it was also proposed that the three Action for Communities Partnerships should continue to meet as a single 'Adult Learning Network'. The Transition Group will continue to consult, communicate and engage with the Adult Learning Network.

### **Next Steps in Surrey**

An important step in preparing LAB status will be to develop an adult learning plan for 2011-2015. The development of the plan will be led by Surrey County Council with support from the Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership. Members of the Adult Learning Network will be consulted on the plan and more details about the consultation will be circulated after the next meeting of the Transition Group (19<sup>th</sup> April 2010). The plan will take account of The Learning Revolution vision for Informal Adult Learning, the skills agendas and information about local learning needs and issues. It will guide the commissioning process.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS PLEASE CONTACT:**

Frank Offer, Surrey County Council  
[frank.offer@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:frank.offer@surreycc.gov.uk) tel: 020 8541 9507

Kevin Delf, Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership  
[Kevin.delf@surreyllp.org.uk](mailto:Kevin.delf@surreyllp.org.uk) tel: 01483 487892

Philip Britton, Skills Funding Agency  
[Philip.britton@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk](mailto:Philip.britton@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk) tel: 0118 908 2168