



# Stoke-on-Trent City Council

## Adult Learning

### Accountability Statement 2023/24

#### **Purpose**

##### **Statement of purpose**

Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Adult Learning provision provides learning opportunities that improve people's lives, enabling them to participate in their communities and support growth and prosperity in Stoke-on-Trent. It is also designed to re-introduce learners to an accessible learning environment and provide a stepping-stone to higher level learning and qualifications.

##### **Service Vision**

To contribute and improve the lives of local residents and promote the city's economic growth, through the development and improvement of skills at all levels.

In delivering our vision we recognise the diverse needs of our learners. We have therefore structured this plan around our 6 different curriculum areas, these are:

- Family Learning
- Community Learning
- Adult Learning
- Apprenticeships
- Study Programmes
- Traineeships

##### **Strategic Aims and Objectives**

Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Stronger Together Strategic Plan set out the council's strategic vision, priorities and objectives for 2020-24

The five main priorities are:

- Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well
- Enable our residents to fulfil their potential

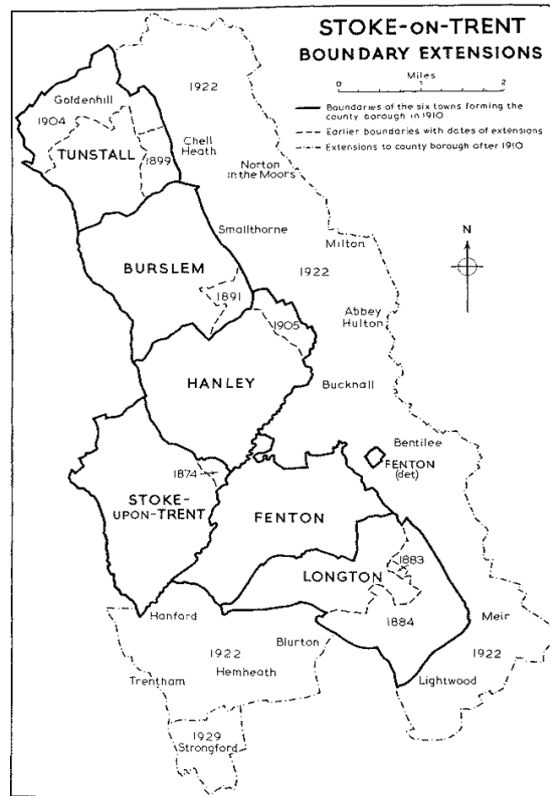
- Help businesses to thrive and make our city more prosperous
- Work with our communities to make them healthier, safer and more sustainable
- An innovative and commercial council, providing effective leadership to help transform outcomes

Stoke-on-Trent City Council’s Adult Learning provision has a part to play in all the five main priorities.

Whilst it is based on the current strategic Stronger Together plan, it will be adapted as the new administration’s priorities/corporate plan start to take shape. The six key themes are Cleaner, Greener, Safer, Fairer, Healthier and Wealthier – so as it goes through the formal council process we can ensure it reflects those, as well as the emerging Economic Development Strategy.

## Context

Stoke-on-Trent City Council’s post 16 learning service serves the whole of the Stoke-on-Trent area, reaching around 1,300 adult residents (just under 1,800 enrolments) in each academic year.



Commonly referred to as ‘the Potteries’, the City has been home to the UK ceramics industry for two-hundred years. Stoke-on-Trent is an amalgamation of ‘six towns’, the county borough of Hanley, the municipal boroughs of Burslem, Longton and Stoke, and the urban districts of Tunstall and Fenton.

The City is the 13th most deprived district in England and is home to an estimated 258,369 people (*The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD) 2019*).

32% of the population – 83,500 persons are classified as living in areas in the 10% most deprived in England – and more than half of the population (53% - 136,200 persons) live in areas classified in the 20% most deprived in England (*IoD, 2019*).

The City has an aging population with 17.14% of the population aged 65+, with 4.4% aged 80+ (*Census 2021*).

Employment rates now exceed regional and national averages – 127,500 persons, 78.5% of the working-age population against 73.5% regionally and 75.5% nationally. However, average Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) is £15,799 per capita (2020) which is 28% below the national average of £21,962 and ranks 301<sup>st</sup> of 309 English districts. (*Regional gross disposable household income, UK: 1997 to 2020*). There are around 13,100 workless households (16.2%) in the city, compared to 13% nationally. There are an estimated 47,800 people living in income-deprived households (*IoD2019*).

We are among the fastest local economies to rebound from the last recession, with £56 million levelling up investment in Stoke-on-Trent to shape our future. 2<sup>nd</sup> for job creation in the UK, with 1,975 jobs created through inward investment since 2020. Our GVA per capita has risen by 8.9% in the last year to £24,175 (*Levelling Up Update March 2023*)

The most significant growth sectors in Stoke on Trent, in employment terms are hospitality, administration, care, logistics and domestic services. (*Staffordshire Economic Bulletin no.31*)

We know there are skills gaps locally (*Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2022 Update*)

- 7.7% of working age adults have no formal qualifications (compared to 6.2% in England)
- Just over one quarter (29%) of local people are qualified to NVQ Level 4 (43.1% in England)
- 6.9% of local employers have staff that are not fully proficient due to skills gaps (5.5% in England)
- 35.6% of local people are in managerial and professional jobs (50.2% in England)

In total only 4,000 households (3.7%) do not have English as a main language compared with 4.4% nationally. 24.94% (29,925) of the workforce do not hold a recognised qualification at level 2 or above of which 13.7% do not have any qualifications (16,645) (*Census 2021*).

## **The Planning Approach**

Adult Learning's annual planning cycle commences in August and usually finishes in March of the previous academic year.

The service conducts a detailed analysis of national, regional and local priorities, taking into account the direction of Government policy, regional analyses and information produced Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the new LSIP and the local need and strategy identified through Stoke-on-Trent City Council's current Stronger Together plan 2020-24. This will be superseded by the new Economic Development Strategy and the new corporate plan once they have been formally approved.



We have a robust curriculum plan which sets out the following strategic intent:

Stoke-on-Trent City Council's adult and community learning curriculum will be developed to meet both national and local needs. Curricula is designed to engage and enable learners from a range of backgrounds to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours which allow them to lead independent fulfilling lives where they can reach their full potential and contribute to society, economically and socially.

Our curriculum will:

- ✓ Create opportunities for learners to learn how to be successful, and to gain and hone transferable skills, supported by relevant subject knowledge
- ✓ Empower learners to progress personally and into Further and Higher Education, apprenticeships or work
- ✓ Promote and embed a range of key themes which include maths, English, digital skills, Prevent, British Values, wellbeing and health

Through our curriculum, our learners:

- ✓ are challenged and stretched to achieve high standards and make significant progress relative to their starting point;
- ✓ are encouraged and supported to develop high quality personal, learning and thinking skills and become an independent learner;
- ✓ enjoy and commit to learning, and have high aspirations for their own futures;
- ✓ are resilient, healthy and safe.

We have met the intentions of our curriculum plan to a good level.

Governance, together with local engagement with external stakeholders are two things that are intrinsically linked within Adult Learning. We know that the closer the links with stakeholders, the better the insight into

local wants and needs, which is crucial to ensuring we provide relevant and purposeful skills, knowledge, and experience to the residents of Stoke-on-Trent.

We have an Employment, Learning and Skills Governing Body which oversees our Adult and Community Learning

Following the last inspection, we strengthened the terms of reference, membership and access to data of the Governing Body and we have just been inspected under the latest framework in July 2023 which recognised this much improved position.

The Governing Body is part of a much wider partnership governance structure designed to strategically improve outcomes for residents in the city and champion learning and skills

Management of Adult and Community Learning was split across our Children and Family Services directorate (oversees quality assurance and commissioning) and Housing, Development and Growth (directly delivers provision) however this will move across in entirety to Children and Family Services from 1<sup>st</sup> August.

As part of our plans for the future service, we will simplify and consolidate this management structure

## Planning for success

In order for the plan to be approved, it must be grounded in good research and strong relationships with other teams in the council, including council leaders, and with other local and partner organisations including employers, the Chambers of Commerce and learners themselves.

Strong links:

- DWP
- Local Employers

The service has close relationships with a wide range of employers through its JET service and this closely informs the developmental work. The development of a new Introduction to Teaching Assistance programme and Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning

- Other Council Services

Such as the Libraries and Information Service, Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Public Health, to ensure that the programmes the service delivers are responsive to local priorities.

- VCSE

Such as 'No.11' who support individuals with loneliness, low self esteem and poor physical & mental health

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Job Centre Plus

Our curriculum will:

- Lead to the development of skills, knowledge and behaviors that are valued by employers as well as becoming an active member of the community.
- Prepare learners to make informed and appropriate choices at the end of their programme of learning allowing them to access further or higher education or employment.
- Enable learners to fulfil their potential enabling them to live an active and fulfilled life.

Curriculum priority groups have changed significantly as a result of the country and city's Covid recovery and changes to legal entitlement qualifications in the Adult Education Budget Funding and Performance rules. These priority groups are listed below.

- Young people aged 16 – 19 or 24 with learning difficulties or disabilities
- Adults with Level 2 or below qualifications
- Adults with Level 3 or below qualifications
- Recently unemployed and needing re and/or up-skilling
- Unemployed – on out of work benefits, more chaotic vulnerable long term, building up hours of work
- Employed learners in the workplace who are entitled under the Learner Legal Entitlement to but have not yet achieved their first full level 3. (eligibility criteria is applicable)
- Low to moderate mental health needs
- Learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Homeless
- Domestic abuse victims
- Vulnerable families in children's centres, schools and other community settings
- Learners in later life
- Substance misusers
- Offenders/ex-offenders
- Ethnic minority groups
- Employee Well-being

Following on from the lessons learned during the pandemic in the 19/20 and 20/21 academic years, the curriculum planning process remains under review, considering the ever-changing landscape of skills needs in the city. In addition to this we are using the most effective delivery methods for each area of our provision, which now consists of face to face, on-line, blended and remote learning.

We are a small provider and we are considering whether our capacity and role in adult learning and post 16 is best served by being a direct provider. What we currently offer is well received and students do well through that offer. However, although we are a strong provider, the range of other post 16 institutions in the City also rated good or better has led us to consider whether we could be more effective as an influence on the learning, skills and employment landscape of the City, by commissioning and quality assurance of a wider range of offer in partnership with established post 16 institutions. We are considering this in the coming academic year in line with the Cabinet Paper we put through in March 2023.

The influence we can bring to bear in terms of sufficiency of opportunity, range of offer linked to our City-wide needs analysis and utilising the development of learning places, means that whilst what we do is good in terms of quality, we could capacity build in another way.

We are realigning our offer to meet the City's needs in the best possible way. Stage 1 involves the move of the Adult and Community Learning provision under the direct management of Children and Family Services and a newly appointed Education Standards and Partnerships Strategic

Manager who is a post 16 and ACL specialist. We are considering options of a commissioned model using a network of local providers to tackle skills and provision gaps in the city. Our aim is to ensure the highest quality provision and best value for money, taking a city-wide approach

We proactively work with partners to have a shared strategic approach to skills development in Stoke-on-Trent, including through our Local Skills Improvement Plan and with the Chamber of Commerce, local education settings and training providers and employers

We have been strengthening our role in championing quality and sufficiency of education, skills and training for young people, including through our Priority Education Investment Area and Young People's Learning and Skills Strategy We are ambitious for the economic development of Stoke-on-Trent and we want to provide the skills development necessary to bring every resident with us in our city's growth. We are targeting digital creative and technology, advanced materials and manufacturing, and green energy as key growth sectors

We are responding to the changing national policy context, including through increasing apprenticeships locally and supporting T Levels, working closely with employers and learners to meet their needs.

We champion access to education, training and employment for disadvantaged groups in the City, including those with learning disabilities/SEND, care leavers, ESOL learners and those who are economically inactive due to ill health.



## Our contribution to national, regional and local priorities

The service has the following key objective themes. The chart below outlines the objectives and how success will be measured. The key objective themes are aligned to the authority's current "2020 – 2024 Stronger Together" strategic plan. These will be reviewed following the publication of the new administration's plans

City Council Strategic Objective	Service target(s)	Impact and/or contribution to national, regional and local priorities
Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well	Develop an early help curriculum that supports adults and their families to live their lives well.	Improves the wellbeing and life satisfaction with Stoke-on-Trent (JSNA).
Enable our residents to fulfil their potential	Deliver Adult Education Funded programmes to 300 learners in 2023/24, enabling them to improve their job or education prospects.  We will improve digital inclusion in Stoke-on-Trent, increasing the digital skills and confidence of adult residents.	Adults will gain the skills they need to improve their job or education prospects and succeed whilst supporting the economy.  This supports the national priority Digital & Technology sector, as well as the national core transferable skills.
Work with our communities to make them healthier, safer and more sustainable	We will improve the outcomes of the 300 learners on English and maths courses, through improved attendance from 91% to 95% and achievement of maths from 70% to 75% and English from 78% to 83%.  100 learners and staff will support local charities and community groups through an enriched curriculum offer.	English and math's provision underpins all national, regional and local priorities, for example, the Stronger Together aspiration for people to gain the skills they need for jobs and independent lives.  Adults and young people with work together to develop transferable skills while improving the communities they live in.
An innovative and commercial council, providing effective leadership to help transform outcomes	Implement and sustain a quality assurance model that, continues to develop the overall quality of education across all subject sector areas.	All learners studying with Stoke-on-Trent Unitary Authority will receive a 'good' or 'outstanding' education.

Following agreement at Stoke-on-Trent City Cabinet, we will consider our role to commission, broker, support and monitor adult learning and skills opportunities across Stoke-on-Trent; encouraging social, economic, educational and personal progression for individuals, families and communities

We have started soft market testing and will transition across over the next 12 months with those learners needing to re-sit being potentially being introduced/brokered to other providers.

# Corporation Statement

On behalf of Stoke on Trent City Council, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Governing Board at their meeting on 18 July 2023.

The plan will be published on the Council's website within 2 months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link:

[Adult education | Stoke-on-Trent](#)

## Supporting Documents

[Stoke-on-Trent City Council Strategic Plan 2020-2024](#)

[Latest Ofsted Report](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

[Powering Up Stoke](#)

[The English Indices of Deprivation 2019](#)

[Census 2021](#)

[Regional gross disposable household income, UK: 1997 to 2020](#)

[Staffordshire Economic Bulletin no.31](#)

[Levelling Up Update March 2023](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2022 Update](#)