

Item No. 4.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 January 2011	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Deputation Requests - Save Southwark Adult Learning	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	

Save Southwark Adult Learning

1. A deputation request has been received from Save Southwark Adult Learning (SSAL), the deputation request states:

‘We are extremely concerned about the future of adult learning in Southwark following large fee rises, cuts in concessionary access and 'new learner' targets which are almost certain to herald the closure of many arts, crafts and well-being courses. As students who cannot now afford to continue with our studies, we would like to highlight the devastating loss these closures mean for people who rely on their classes for maintaining well-being, keeping active, maintaining community contact, and developing job-related skills. We would like to appeal to the council to designate all these course as three-term courses, to allow those on benefits to continue at concessionary rates, and to investigate all options to save this service.’

Comments of the Strategic Director of Environment & Housing

2. The Adult Learning Service is funded entirely through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) with budgets being allocated on an annual basis. Because of the way we are funded we do not receive funding for learners who wish to repeat a course or do additional courses in the same year – funding being received for individual learners to do one course only per year.
3. The focus on recruiting new learners is extremely important as our funders set strict learner number targets and if these are not achieved, can, and do clawback money from service providers.
4. Learners are welcome to return to do repeat or additional courses but will need to pay the repeat learner fee. It is important to note that courses aimed at some of our most vulnerable people remain completely free of charge to eligible learners. These include literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Many family learning courses are also offered free of charge.
5. 85% of our learners last year were in receipt of concessionary rates and we do not expect this to substantially change this year. We are not proposing to increase concessionary or repeat learner fees next year. In addition to this, we have achieved the individual learner number targets given to us by the SFA for the first time in many years.

6. We remain committed to the provision of good adult learning opportunities in Southwark. The Thomas Calton Centre, the home of Southwark's Adult Learning Service is being invested in and re-furbished with a grant of £750,000 from the Skills Funding Agency and match funding of £250,000 from the council in order to improve the learning environment. It is our intention to offer additional learning opportunities once the work at the centre is complete.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Deputation Request File	Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB	Lesley John 020 7525 7228

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager		
Report Author	Lesley John, Constitutional Officer		
Version	Final		
Dated	24 January 2011		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Title	Comments sought	Comments included	
Strategic Director of Environment & Housing	Yes	Yes	
Cabinet Member	No	No	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			25 January 2011