



Your Moray

REPORT TO: COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2019

SUBJECT: FUTURE ESOL PROVISION

BY: HEAD OF ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS, MORAY COLLEGE UHI

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 Scottish Funding Council guidance letter 2019 to Scotland's Colleges states that 'together with Community Planning Partnership (CPP), Colleges should establish joint delivery plans that make clear how local need is being met.
- 2.1 These plans should establish a pipeline of provision which supports progression into formal accredited college courses where appropriate.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Board consider and note the options for the continuation of ESOL provision in Moray as detailed in section 4 of the report.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Moray College UHI and Moray Council have worked in partnership to deliver ESOL in the community for many years. Moray College UHI deliver classes from SCQF levels 4-6 with Moray Council providing introductory levels from SCQF 1-3. A changing financial landscape has seen the withdrawal of actual monies from Colleges to support this partnership. Moray Council is currently reviewing budget allocated to ESOL delivery which puts the introductory provision under considerable threat.
- 3.2. There is an increasing pressure on Moray College UHI reflecting a growing demand for upper-level classes which prepare learners for accredited external exams. The college will continue to look at expanding this offering and consider introducing additional courses in the future which may include: Cambridge ESOL exam preparation courses, IELTS exam preparation (for HE study in UK or medical professionals) and Business English.
- 3.3. It is vital that there is not a gap created in ESOL provision for Moray residents who have a lower level of language ability (from beginner to Level 4). These learners will need continued support to help them progress with their language learning and to integrate into the community. This group includes the Syrian

Refugee community for whom Moray Council has an obligation to provide language support.

- 3.4. There are currently 820 non-native speakers across Moray schools and nurseries (ages 3-18). Approximately 200 of these learners are considered fluent in English language, whilst a large number show a level of competence. There are still however more than 100 learners who have little or no English. The majority of these learners are supported by Moray Council EAL department. Moray College UHI provides National 5 and Higher ESOL classes for Senior Phase pupils across Moray.
- 3.5. DWP Job Centre Plus in Moray reports a number of clients who are not currently in employment as a consequence of poor English language skills. There are no statistics to back this claim however.
- 3.6. Currently ESOL classes in Moray are free of charge at all levels.

4. FUTURE OPTIONS

Moray College UHI community-based ESOL

- 4.1 Moray College UHI will continue to deliver accredited SCQF 4-6 courses providing progression routes for learners
- 4.2 Moray College UHI proposes to introduce lower-level ESOL classes from beginners' – Level 3.
- 4.3 To ensure viable classes and greater efficiency, initially one mixed level 2/3 class would be proposed, to be held once weekly in Forres (2 hours) and one mixed post-beginner/Level 2 class would be held in Elgin (2 hours).
- 4.4 These classes would be taught off campus. Learners would have to option to attend both classes and therefore receive 4 hours of language learning weekly.
- 4.5 If demand increases and classes are viable, further classes would be offered.
- 4.6 This 'Community-based ESOL' model would be taught by college-recruited staff (please refer to Edinburgh College ESOL model of *Community-based Learning*).

Moray Council UHI ESOL continuation

- 4.7 If the decision is taken for some community ESOL classes to continue under Moray Council, this has the potential to be done more efficiently and at lower cost, if undertaken on a vastly reduced scale.
- 4.8 Classes could be amalgamated and the number of classes reduced to a total of 3-4 classes for greater efficiency. These classes would be held in community venues and offered from beginners' to Levels 2/3. (In 2018/19 the Council ran 12 classes with 54 regular learners approximately (from 120 enrolled). Several classes were offered at each level, but with low numbers of students attending regularly).

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The indicative decision taken by Moray Council in February 2019 was to delete ESOL budget.
- 5.2. Deletion of budget together with removal of actual monies from Moray College UHI to deliver community-based ESOL will wipe out this provision.
- 5.3. Moray College UHI is prepared to deliver lower level ESOL classes (accredited or non-accredited) to the Moray community, however class sizes must be viable which is difficult to achieve in community based classes.
- 5.4. Moray Council have a statutory obligation to deliver entry level ESOL provision for the Syrian Refugee community.
- 5.5. Moray College UHI could deliver on this statutory obligation if commissioned by Moray Council to do so. Through economies of scale, it may be possible with additional funding to support additional provision.
- 5.6. The community based classes will be supported by funding drawn down from the Home Office by Moray Council and commissioned to be delivered by Moray College UHI.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Moray College UHI will develop entry level provision classes which will satisfy the statutory obligation towards the Syrian Refugee community.

Author of Report:

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Background Papers:

Ref: