

REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 18 APRIL 2005
REPORT ON: HMle INSPECTION OF KIRKTON AND DUNDEE CENTRAL
REPORT BY: HEAD OF COMMUNITIES
REPORT NO: 215-2005

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides a summary of the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education who inspected Communities Department management systems and delivery of community learning and development (CLD) in Dundee Central and Kirkton areas over the first two weeks in December 2004.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

2.1 notes the positive feedback from HMle on the delivery of community learning and development by Dundee City Council's Communities Department. Since the introduction of the current inspection framework for community learning and development work in Scotland, no other authority has had a report with all indication scoring either good or very good. (Appendix 1).

2.2 notes the HMle identified a number of areas for continuous improvement, the most significant relating to community provision in the Hilltown (para 6.8).

2.3 notes that there are no formal requirements which will be subject of a follow-up inspection.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There is a close relationship between Local Agenda 21 targets and the focus of community learning and development work.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Community learning and development is targeted at those individuals and groups in society who are more likely to experience disadvantage.

5.2 As part of the inspection, HMle looked specifically at the department's delivery in respect of equality and diversity and have made favourable comment on this.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 The main findings of the HMle (below) are quoted from the inspection report. Full copies of the report have been circulated to staff, partners and elected members.

Community learning and development refers to informal learning and social development work with individuals and groups within their communities. The aim of this work is to strengthen communities through enhancing people's knowledge, skills and confidence, organisational capacity and resources. Community learning and development makes an important contribution towards promoting lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship.

Scottish Executive policy regarding community learning and development was outlined in May 2002 in *Community Learning and Development: The Way Forward*. Its contribution to community regeneration was further developed in June 2002 in *Better Communities in Scotland: Closing The Gap*. Scottish Executive guidance on CLD was issued in February 2004 as *Working and learning together to build stronger communities*. This guidance sets out how the Scottish Ministers have placed CLD at the heart of work on community planning. HMle is empowered under the *Education (Scotland) Act 1980* to inspect the provision of local authorities. Under the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act (2000)* HMle also inspects the education functions of local authorities.

6.2 The Inspection

The inspection of community learning and development in Kirkton and Central Dundee, Dundee City Council, took place in December 2004. HM Inspectors observed sessions of work on 46 occasions and carried out 71 interviews with staff, members of relevant organisations and participants in activities.

6.3 The area inspected

The area inspected, referred to as Area 4 by the authority, encompassed central Dundee and the peripheral housing estate of Kirkton. The area incorporated two *Better Neighbourhood Services Fund* (BNSF) priority areas and a geographic social inclusion partnership (SIP). The Communities Department had lead responsibility for the development of local community plans, three of which were in the area of inspection.

6.4 Personal development with young people

Community learning and development with young people complements Scotland's national priorities in school education. It aims to build self-confidence and self-esteem; develop core skills such as communication and working with others; promote inclusion and equality; and encourage active citizenship.

There are six Quality Indicators in this Key Area. All six were rated Very Good.

Engagement and support for young people was very good. Staff employed a range of very effective methods for engaging with excluded young people.

The department used high-quality information and promotional materials. Learning opportunities for young people were very good, and well matched to local circumstances.

The Communities Department had prioritised resources to develop work with older young people. Consequently, there were fewer CLD opportunities for children. Many young people progressed through group work and self-evaluation, to *Youth Achievement Awards*. Several young people had progressed to employment following input from *Dundee Action For Jobs*. Almost all programmes were well designed and relevant to participant need. The delivery of learning opportunities was very good, with almost all activities planned and delivered effectively by staff.

The learning experience for young people was very good. The learning environment at *The Shore* was of a high standard. Creative use of available space for small-group work helped motivate participants. Staff negotiated ground rules and the content of programmes with participants, through group and individual learning plans.

Assessment as part of learning for young people was very good. Methods of assessment were well matched to the goals of young people. The *Young Suits* had recently produced individual learning plans to assist them reflect on their progress. There were very good records of progression in *S Crew 5*. All members had participated in accredited training through the *Baden Powell Award*, *Natural Connections* or *Step it Up* programme. Staff recorded individual and group work very effectively at *The Corner*. A variety of methods, including individual evaluation forms,

were used and a daily recording book collated information from drop-in sessions. Staff then involved young people in creating action plans. Participant achievement was very good.

Overall, provision for young people in Kirkton and Central Dundee was very effective. Young people could access a wide range of high-quality learning opportunities capitalising on their interests. Local projects were supported by very effective city-centre provision which was highly regarded by young people, and well used.

6.5 Personal development with adults

Community learning and development with adults is a key element of Scotland's approach to lifelong learning. It provides opportunities for adults to return to learning in a familiar and supportive community context. In many cases it supports the development of the skills and knowledge adults need in their everyday lives. In particular, it plays a key role in improving levels of literacy and numeracy among adults. Engagement and support were good overall. Staff had carried out audits of need which had identified the main socially excluded groups.

There are six Quality Indicators in this Key Area. Two were rated Very Good, and four, Good.

These audits were complemented by a high-quality city-wide promotional campaign on adult literacy and numeracy, which had increased both the number of learners and the range of venues providing adult learning. Staff provided effective literacies programmes to people with disabilities, former drug users and people with special educational needs. There was comprehensive guidance provision in programmes to support adult literacy and numeracy. Staff had developed effective and wide-ranging provision for individuals and groups from the black and minority ethnic communities.

Learning Opportunities were good overall. The range of adult literacy provision was comprehensive and met local needs. Staff had also worked effectively with partners in the local further education college to design innovative approaches to learning.

Delivery of learning opportunities was good overall. Tutors providing adult literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) used a range of high-quality materials and resources to effectively support and engage learners.

The learning experience was very good. Staff worked very effectively to create high quality learning environments in the Mitchell Street and Kirkton centres. These provided learners with a range of challenging and stimulating programmes that addressed local needs such as childcare and literacy. Staff made very effective use of individual learning plans.

Assessment as part of learning was good overall. Staff used a range of appropriate assessment methods, including meeting requirements for Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) qualifications. In addition, they had recently been trained to carry out assessments of dyslexia. Arrangements for recording progress were comprehensive across all adult learning provision. In adult literacy provision, all learners had regular reviews to assess progress.

Participant achievement was very good. The majority of participants achieved a variety of highly relevant learning outcomes.

Overall, the Communities Department provided a good service to adult learners, and a high quality service in adult literacy. There was a good focus on work with people with disabilities and people from the black and minority ethnic communities. Guidance for learners was particularly strong in this area of work. The service had also substantially increased the range of learning opportunities for adults of all ages. There were particularly strong examples of work using the arts and with the over-fifty age group. Many learners were progressing to further learning opportunities. However, staff needed to extend the comprehensive approaches to promotion, guidance, assessment,

progression and learner support from their adult literacy and numeracy provision to all adult provision.

6.6 Building community capacity

Community learning and development plays an important role in Scotland's community regeneration strategy. It aims to engage local people in tackling the issues and problems in their communities and in developing local solutions. It plays a key role in ensuring that communities of place and interest are positively engaged in community planning and in the development of local community plans.

There are six Quality Indicators in this Key Area. Three were rated Very Good, and three, Good.

Work with communities to identify their needs was very good. Staff used a very good range of information including surveys, questionnaires, focus group meetings, community events and statistical data to analyse need. The Better Neighbourhood Services Team (BNSF) were using household survey information prepared by external consultants. Staff had used *Planning For Real*, open meetings and other participative methods to gather the views of local residents.

Developing skills and confidence was good overall. Local community representatives were very positive about the support they received from staff and were confident in their roles. Staff had provided very good training and development opportunities to the participants.

Promoting participation in community affairs was good. Staff were providing effective support for the development of forums and groups at a neighbourhood level. The *Stobswell Forum*, *Hindmarsh Action Group* and the *City Centre Community Council* were receiving good support to develop their roles in the community.

Assisting communities to exercise power and influence was very good. Staff were providing high quality advice, information and support, as part of the *Dundee Partnership's* approach to the regeneration of the city. Community groups and organisations were well informed and were making an influential contribution to addressing priority issues at neighbourhood level. Community organisations were regularly briefed by staff on policy issues.

Formal representation of young people in local forums and neighbourhood representative structures was limited. However, youth workers were working effectively to support and develop the engagement of young people in local community planning. Monitoring and evaluation as part of building community capacity was good overall.

Staff throughout the area, and youth work staff in particular, kept very good records of their work including minutes, photographs of group activities and evaluations of events and conferences. The majority of community groups were positive about the support they had received to monitor and evaluate their progress.

Community achievement was very good. The *Stobswell Forum* had made a measurable impact on the quality of life in the area. The *Landlords' Forum* had secured the support of Council officials and partner agencies to a shared vision of housing and planning. Youth workers had engaged with young people and a group of sheltered housing residents in an inter-generational mediation initiative.

The authority's contribution to building community capacity was good overall. Staff held very good information about the nature of the communities in which they worked, and they used this very effectively to target priority groups.

6.7 Ethos and values

There are three Quality Indicators in this Key Area. All three were rated Very Good.

Climate and relationships were very good. Each learning venue had a distinct identity, and all were well used and liked by local residents.

The majority of participants were very positive about their relationship with staff and the service. Staff morale has high, and all staff described their work enthusiastically. They were making considerable efforts to work with excluded and vulnerable groups, including people with learning difficulties, vulnerable families and excluded young people.

Expectations and promoting achievement were very good. Staff worked effectively to ensure that young people's achievement was recognised and celebrated through high quality publicity and the local media. Staff in the Ancrum Centre had developed high quality paper-based and online material that outlined the range of outdoor education experiences available and what participants could aspire to achieve.

Values were very good. Staff in youth work settings such as *Kirkton Drama Group*, *Young Suits* and *The Corner* actively empowered participants. Staff effectively used peer education methods to address issues such as drug and alcohol abuse and sexual health, and ensured that there was a consistent focus on empowerment in their work.

Overall, the ethos and values of the service were very good. There was a strong and effective link between the values of the staff and the programmes on offer. As a result, work to address equality and diversity was very effective and purposeful. Staff had developed a good range of programmes and partnerships to meet the needs of local residents. Staff morale was high and the various teams identified strongly with both the local areas and neighbourhood centres they worked in.

6.8 Resources

There are six Quality Indicators in this Key Area. Four were rated Very Good, and two, Good.

Accommodation and facilities were good overall. Staff had ensured that most venues were very well equipped to support their work with adults and young people. *The Shore* and *The Corner* were accessible and well used by young people. Although both the Highwayman and Grey Lodge centres were well liked by local people, learning spaces were often too small and of poor quality. The authority needed to evaluate the proximity and quality of venues in Hilltown to ensure attractive learning environments. There were comprehensive and systematic approaches to health and safety throughout the service. Staff applied helpful guidance and procedures with diligence. Provision of resources was very good.

Staffing was good. There were good levels of professional staff to provide effective provision for community learning and development in Kirkton and central Dundee. However, the long-term vacancy of a senior staff post had impacted on some service delivery.

Effectiveness and deployment of staff was very good. The department had recently undertaken a comprehensive review of professional and administrative staff deployment. As a result, staff were transparently deployed to address local and national priorities. The restructuring into thematic, from geographic teams, had impacted positively on teamwork.

Staff review and development was very good. Clear remits had been provided for all staff. Managers had fully implemented a recently reviewed support and supervision policy to ensure that all staff were supported to achieve their objectives. A comprehensive and systematic approach to induction of new staff ensured that they fully contributed to the work of the department as soon as possible.

Organisation and use of resources were very good. Use of ICT was high and improving, and staff supported local groups to use ICT effectively. The department had developed very clear and effective mechanisms for budget monitoring. Staff were clear about their responsibilities and received regular and helpful support from departmental finance officers. The department had also attracted a very significant level of external investment, both for its own use and for local and community groups. These additional resources were making a major contribution to both the quantity and quality of services available in Kirkton and central Dundee.

Overall, the resourcing of community learning and development in Kirkton and Central Dundee was very good. Staff in particular were a major asset, demonstrating high levels of competence and commitment. The department's core budget was under pressure, and the high level of resources in this priority area were mainly due to the success of staff in attracting significant levels of external investment.

6.9 Management, planning and quality assurance

There are five Quality Indicators in this Key Area. Four were rated Very Good, and one, Good.

Leadership was very good. All senior staff in the department were providing effective direction and support to staff. Staff enjoyed working in the department, and were committed to its aims and objectives. The culture of openness and mutual respect had a very positive impact on staff morale. Senior staff had developed very good relationships both within the authority and with key partners.

Community learning planning was very good. The Communities Department had been given the lead role in the development of local community plans, and was influential in the development of community planning through the *Dundee Partnership*. Planning for community learning and development was fully integrated into the community planning process.

Self-evaluation was good. The department was developing self-evaluation using *How Good Is Our Community Learning And Development?*

Planning for improvement was very good. Planning was clear and unambiguous, systematic and helpful to staff. Planning at all levels was clearly linked to the community plan and other relevant priorities. All plans used a consistent format which ensured that the links between individual staff targets and the authority's overall objectives were clear. The departmental service plan contained challenging improvement targets, which were monitored during staff supervision, team meetings and by the management team on a regular basis.

Partnership working was very good. Staff were engaged with a very good range of partners at all levels. They had particularly strong links with the Police and local NHS. Staff were undertaking influential and effective roles in partnership work.

Overall, management, planning and quality assurance were very good. The department enjoyed strong and clear leadership which impacted positively on all aspects of the service. The department's key role in community planning was an important factor in its influence and effectiveness, building credibility and effective partnerships both within and outwith the authority. Commendable progress was being made in self-evaluation, with staff being committed to its effective implementation.

6.10 Main Conclusions

Provision for community learning and development in Kirkton and Central Dundee was very good with some exceptional elements. The authority had significant strengths in all aspects of its work. The range and diversity of high quality youth provision and staff support for the development of adult literacy was particularly effective. The department had recently undergone a restructuring, which had resulted in considerable changes to staff roles, responsibilities and deployment. The clear and effective leadership

demonstrated by senior staff during this time had ensured that communities received a high quality learning experience, and that staff had remained focused on key objectives and priorities. Almost all staffs contribution to community learning and development in Dundee was very effective.

6.11 Key Strengths

- The range and diversity of high quality learning opportunities for young people.
- The very effective delivery of literacy programmes.
- The significant achievements made by community and voluntary organisations supported by the department.
- The highly effective ethos and values in the department at all levels.
- The leadership provided by senior staff, accompanied by a clear vision for the department, which ensured that all staff were clearly focused on priorities.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executives (Finance) and (Support Services) have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 The HMIe Report was relied upon in the preparation of this Report.

**Signed: Stewart Murdoch
Head of Communities**

Date: 8 April 2005

Indicators of quality

HM Inspectors use quality indicators when making judgements in their inspections of community learning and development. The quality indicators used in this inspection were published in May 2002 in the HM Inspectorate of Education publication *How good is our community learning and development?* This publication is available on the website www.hmle.gov.uk.

In the report and in this appendix we make clear the judgements made by using these word scale categories:

VG	Very good (major strengths)
G	Good (strengths outweigh weaknesses)
F	Fair (some important weaknesses)
U	Unsatisfactory (major weaknesses)

The categories awarded for the indicators of quality are set out in the table below. Categories for the quality of provision for young people and for adults are shown in the first table. Categories for the overall contribution of the authority's relevant services are shown in the second table.

Personal development	Young People	Adults
Engagement and support	VG	G
Learning opportunities	VG	G
Delivery	VG	G
Learning experience	VG	VG
Assessment as part of learning	VG	G
Participant achievement	VG	VG
Building community capacity		
Work with communities to identify their needs		VG
Developing skills and confidence		G
Promoting participation in community affairs		G
Assisting communities to exercise power and influence		VG
Monitoring and evaluation as part of building community capacity		G
Community achievement		VG
Ethos and values		
Climate and relationships		VG
Expectations and promoting achieve		VG
Values		VG
Resources		
Accommodation and facilities		G
Provision of resources		VG
Staffing		G
Effectiveness and deployment of staff		VG
Staff review and development		VG
Organisation and use of resources		VG
Management, planning and quality assurance		
Leadership		VG
Community learning planning		VG
Self-evaluation		G
Planning for improvement		VG
Partnership working		VG