

**REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
- 13 August 2001**

REPORT ON: IMPLEMENTATION OF DUNDEE'S COMMUNITY LEARNING STRATEGY

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 486-2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Committee with a report of progress on the implementation of the Strategy which was approved on 17 April 2000.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- 2.1 notes and approves progress made in the implementation of the Community Learning Strategy for Dundee City, and the development of Community Learning Plans;
- 2.2 welcomes the allocation of additional resources to enable the City Council and its partners to address adult literacy needs;
- 2.3 notes the production of the first geographic Community Learning Plans for the areas of Ardler/Kirkton/Mid Craigie-Linlathen and Hilltown (copies of which have been given to local members, Convener and Depute Convener);
- 2.4 instructs the Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development to bring forward a further report in twelve months time on progress with the implementation of the Strategy.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Strategy itself contains no direct expenditure proposals. However, in approving the Strategy, Dundee City Council and its partners made a clear commitment to supporting community-based adult learning and lifelong learning opportunities generally.
- 3.2 In July 2001, the Scottish Executive announced that additional funding would be made available to Community Learning Partnerships in order that they could address essential skills needs. The City Council and its partners have been allocated £655,944 over the period 2001-04.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Meeting local needs is the central focus of the Community Learning Strategy and, as such, the measures contained in the Community Learning Strategy will impact on numerous Agenda 21 targets.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Community Learning Strategy focuses on addressing the barriers which affect the uptake of community learning in Dundee.
- 5.2 The Community Learning Partnership has committed itself to promoting opportunities for all, but will target its efforts on supporting initiatives designed to have the effect of equalling opportunities.
- 5.3 Over the past twelve months, the development of plans focused on priority regeneration areas combined with the development of plans looking at young adults with specific needs, indicates that the Partnership is prioritising its efforts in a way which is designed to promote greater equality of opportunity.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The Community Learning Strategy which was approved by Dundee City Council at its meeting on 17 April 2000 (Report No 281/2000), is a Strategy developed in response to the Scottish Executive's circular SO4/1999 which required all local authorities in Scotland to co-ordinate the production of Community Learning Strategies as an integral aspect of their Community Plans.
- 6.2 The Strategy was produced by a Partnership Group supported by the Council's Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department. Implementation of the Strategy has again been led by the same group which comprises some 14 organisations who have, as part of their mission, the promotion of education and lifelong learning.
- 6.3 The vision adopted by the Partnership and approved by the Council is that:

“Dundee is a vibrant city where every citizen contributes to community life and community learning in order to dream, to discover and to develop”

- 6.4 With the advent of Community Planning, the Community Learning Partnership has provided a strong foundation for the lifelong learning theme. The objectives set out in the Community Learning Strategy have been incorporated into Dundee's first Community Plan.

7.0 SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE EVALUATION

- 7.1 Following submission of Community Learning Strategies, the HMI undertook a detailed evaluation of these and wrote to the Chief Executive providing feedback.

- 7.2 The evaluations were carried out on the basis of a set of 7 criteria developed and approved by a joint Scottish Executive/COSLA Task Group.

- 7.3 These criteria are as follows:-

Are the Strategy's aims properly founded on policy?
Is the Strategy well integrated with relevant planning processes?
Is the Strategy a partnership document?
Does the Strategy lead effectively to Community Plans?
Does the Strategy promote the necessary organisation to deliver its aims?
Does the Strategy establish a sound base for the development of community learning?
Is the Strategy well presented for the public?

- 7.4 Dundee's Strategy received a positive evaluation against each of these criteria. Dundee City Council's plan was selected as an example of best practice "one of less than half a dozen". Officers involved in its production have been asked to make presentations to both the Annual Conference of Further Education Principals, and at conferences organised by Community Learning Scotland and the Scottish Association of Community Education staff.

- 7.5 Dundee's Community Learning Strategy and issues arising from it were also presented at a conference for those appointed to manage New Community Schools in Scotland.

- 7.6 The HMI will continue to monitor progress with the implementation of the Strategies and will next visit Dundee at the end of August for a two-day investigation into progress.

8.0 COMMUNITY LEARNING PLANS

- 8.1 The Government guidance for the production of Community Learning Strategies suggested that, concurrent with the development of the Strategy itself, Partnerships should develop Community Learning Plans.

8.2 Three different approaches have been adopted by the Community Learning Partnership for Dundee. These are:

- Geographic Learning Plans
- Community of Interest Learning Plan
- Community of Need Learning Plan

9.0 GEOGRAPHIC COMMUNITY LEARNING PLANS

9.1 • Geographic Community Learning Plans - these plans will focus on the learning needs of those living in the Social Inclusion Priority Areas of Ardlar, Kirkton, Mid Craigie/Linlathen and Hilltown

9.2 Progress in the production of the geographic Community Learning Plans has been straightforward. These areas benefited from the extensive investment and development carried out as a result of their Social Inclusion Partnership status. Within each of the localities, a task group was formed and this group has taken responsibility for local needs assessment and consultation on the emerging priorities.

9.3 The geographic plans follow the same themes as Dundee's Community Plan. In effect, they are a step towards localising the plan.

9.4 Copies of the Community Learning Plans have been placed in the Councillors' Lounge and sent to local members whose Wards are affected. Further copies are publicly available on request.

10.0 COMMUNITY LEARNING NEEDS OF VOLUNTEERS

10.1 • Community of Interest – this plan will focus specifically on the community learning needs of those engaged in voluntary work

10.2 It was originally agreed that the development of this plan would be led by the voluntary sector, with support from the local authority and other partners. Over the past 12 months, it has proven more difficult to secure the priority necessary to progress this plan.

10.3 In April 2001, the Scottish Executive released additional resources to Dundee Voluntary Action which has enabled the appointment of two Development Officers. One of these officers will have, as part of their remit, responsibility for taking forward this area of work in partnership with Dundee's Volunteer Information Point.

10.4 A lot of work has been done to identify the learning and support needs of voluntary organisations. Putting in place targeted programmes of training and support remains the key challenge facing the voluntary sector and its partners. The importance of this area of development is not missed on anyone, particularly given the increasing prominence of the voluntary sector as a service provider.

11.0 YOUNG ADULTS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

11.1 • Community of Need – this plan will focus on the community learning needs of young adults with specific needs

11.2 The timetable for the production of this plan originally envisaged completion by March 2001. However, the Planning Group has wished to consult further with young people themselves, and the period for the production of the plan has been extended to December 2001.

11.3 There has been good engagement in this planning process and those involved in the preparation of the plan are enthusiastic about its potential to clarify needs and opportunities.

12.0 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

12.1 With each of these plans, there is as much importance attached to the process of partnership-building and joint working as there is to the production of a document itself.

12.2 A characteristic of the work involved in Dundee's Community Learning Partnership and the Plan Teams has been the very positive inter-agency collaboration which, in itself, has led to a number of specific service improvements.

12.3 These developments include:

- Multi-agency collaboration in a partnership bid submitted to the Lottery New Opportunities Fund for funding to develop Community Access to Lifelong Learning
- Additional resources being made available from the Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department to support Dundee University's Summer School
- Assistance from the local authority and Scottish Enterprise Tayside to enable Dundee College to develop an extension programme for a group of young adults with special needs
- Collaboration in the development of the Inclusiveness bid submitted by Tayside Careers which has resulted in additional staff whose role it will be to support implementation of the recommendations contained in the Beattie report
- Collaboration between Dundee Voluntary Action and Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department in the submission of a bid for European funding to develop capacity building for voluntary organisations in the city

13.0 CONSULTATION

13.1 The Community Learning Partnership involves -

- Dundee City Council
- Dundee College
- Dundee Voluntary Action
- LEAD Scotland
- The Network for Adult Guidance, Tayside
- Northern College
- Tayside Careers
- Tayside Health Board
- Scottish Enterprise Tayside
- University of Abertay
- University of Dundee
- Volunteer Information Point
- Dundee & Tayside Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Community & Voluntary Alliance

13.2 All have been party to the development, implementation and evaluation of Dundee's Community Learning Strategy.

13.3 Other organisations involved in the development of, and consultation on Community Learning Plans include -

- Partners in Advocacy
- The Corner (Young Person's Health & Information Project)
- The HELM Employment and Training Group
- Advocating Together
- Dundee Youth Work Alliance
- NCH Action for Children
- The Inclusion Group
- Dundee Rep Advocacy Project
- Dundee Independent Advocacy Service
- The White Top Centre

13.4 The range of individuals and organisations consulted and involved in geographic plans and the plan, which will focus on community learning needs of volunteers, is too extensive to quote within this report, and has been detailed within each of the individual plans.

13.5 Within the City Council, consultation has taken place with the Chief Executive and the Directors of Finance, Support Services, Education, Social Work, Housing, Leisure and Parks, Arts & Heritage and Corporate Planning.

14.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development

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