

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 1 FEBRUARY 2005

**HMIE FOLLOW-UP REPORT FOR COMMUNITY LEARNING AND
DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH KILMARNOCK AREA**

**SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE GUIDANCE: WORKING AND LEARNING TOGETHER
TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES**

Report by Executive Director (Educational and Social Services)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To inform Members of the Education Committee of (i) the outcome of the follow-up inspection of Community Learning and Development in North Kilmarnock area and (ii) feedback from Communities Scotland regarding East Ayrshire's Community Learning & Development Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Community Learning and Development Follow-Up Report

The report on Community Learning and Development in the North Kilmarnock area was published in September 2002. HM Inspectors visited the Council in October 2004 to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in this report.

2.2 Feedback on the Community Learning and Development Strategy

Education Committee of 11 November 2003 was informed that the Promoting Community Learning theme of the Community Plan would be submitted to Communities Scotland as the Council's Community Learning and Development Strategy.

3. FEEDBACK

The Follow-up Inspection Report overall is very positive and has highlighted key aspects of continuous improvement within the service.

3.1 Follow-up Inspection Report

The undernoted recommendations were made with regard to the Community Learning and Development Inspection of North Kilmarnock:

- **Recommendation 1**

The service should review accommodation available for Community Learning and Development activities and also accommodation for staff. It should give attention to access issues.

The follow-up report identified that good progress had been made in meeting this recommendation and in particular highlighted the best value approach to the rationalisation of community facilities, recognising that there had also been investment in centres. It was also recognised that the service had produced a Post 16 Accessibility Strategy as part of its approach to continuous improvement.

- **Recommendation 2**

The service should seek to increase the availability of ICT equipment and network connections for staff.

The follow-up inspection evaluated this aspect as making very good progress both in relation to access for staff to enhance their work but also in relation to ICT resources for individual learners.

- **Recommendation 3**

The service should ensure child protection training for all staff working directly with children, young people and families.

The report indicated that good progress had been made in relation to this and recognised that the Authority had a clear strategy and commitment to child protection training for all staff. It was noted that all service level agreements with agencies working with children and young people included an effective child protection policy. It was recognised that all Youth Workers had child protection training but suggested that there should be follow-up training.

- **Recommendation 4**

The service should develop a system to support sessional staff. This should include the identification of training needs.

This action point was evaluated as fair progress. The inspection recognised that training needs of sessional staff had been identified and training opportunities put in place. However, the roll out of EAGER to sessional staff has not yet taken place. This will be dealt with as a matter of priority.

- **Recommendation 5**

The service should improve partnership agreements between information and guidance providers to ensure better promotion of learning opportunities, and improved guidance provision.

This was assessed as good progress. It was recognised that the service had established a formal agreement with Kilmarnock College which clearly defined roles and responsibilities in relation to the provision of community based adult learning and adult guidance. There had been improved co-ordination of joint training for staff and regular opportunities to share good practice. It was further recognised that the Community Learning and Development Partnership had been successful in ensuring a co-ordinated approach to guidance. It was suggested that this could be further improved by the joint promotion of learning opportunities.

3.2 No further visits will be undertaken in connection with the inspection report of September 2002.

3.3 Feedback on East Ayrshire Community Learning and Development Strategy

Communities Scotland have provided the Council with feedback in relation to the Community Learning and Development Strategy, which in East Ayrshire is the Promoting Community Learning Theme of the Community Plan. The overall summary indicated that the Strategy was “a well produced, clearly laid out Plan, detailing action from 2003-2007. Clearly positioned in the context of community planning”.

It recognised that the national priorities for Community Learning and Development were implicit throughout the text and placed within an East Ayrshire context. In terms of targeting disadvantaged communities it was recognised that the key messages were located in the overall Community Plan but targeted specifically in the action sections of the Promoting Community Learning Theme of the Plan. It was also recognised that there are clear direct lines of accountability to the Community Planning Partnership.

The Action Plan was commended for the imaginative use of quotes from learners and participants. Partners are clearly identified linked to the ongoing contribution to joint planning and monitoring.

In terms of priorities for Community Learning and Development and outcome targets it was recognised that five main aims included Literacies goals. Actions and targets were clearly linked with a series of specific numerical targets. It was also recognised that there was a strong theme of skills development inherent in all the main actions for learners and participants.

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1** The Community Learning and Development Service has a very clear commitment to continuous improvement as evidenced by the Follow-up-Inspection Report. At a strategic level very positive comments have been made in relation to the Community Learning and Development Strategy (in East Ayrshire the Promoting Community Learning Theme of the Plan).
- 4.2** It is helpful that the Scottish Executive has accepted the Promoting Community Learning Theme of the Community Plan as the Community Learning and Development Strategy. This approach assists in the rationalisation and co-ordination of planning at a strategic level.

5. POLICY & LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Nil

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Nil

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1** It is recommended that members of the Education Committee:
- (i) note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director (Educational and Social Services)

10/1/05
KG/SR

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Community Learning and Development in the North Kilmarnock Area, East Ayrshire Council: Inspection Report 3 September 2002
2. Community Learning and Development in the North Kilmarnock Area, East Ayrshire Council Follow-up Inspection
3. Communities Scotland Correspondence East Ayrshire Partnership Community Learning and Development Strategy – December 2004

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104.

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