

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

### EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 13 SEPTEMBER 2005

#### RESPONSE TO STRATEGY AND GUIDE “LIFELONG PARTNERS: SCOTLAND’S SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF A LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY – A Strategy for Partnership” and “A Guide for Schools, Colleges and Local Authorities”

##### Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Education Committee of the Authority’s response to the Strategy and Guide ‘Lifelong Partners: Scotland’s Schools And Colleges Building The Foundations Of A Lifelong Learning Society – A Strategy for Partnership’ and “A Guide for Schools, Colleges and Local Authorities” (Scottish Executive: 12 May 2005).

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Scottish Executive launched a review on collaboration between schools and further education colleges in Scotland on 20 October 2003 at a conference that brought together all interested parties and Executive officials.
- 2.2 An Interim Report was published by the Scottish Executive’s Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department on 10 December 2004, for consultation until 28 February 2005. Ministers aimed to publish their partnership strategy for schools and further education colleges, including an implementation plan, in April 2005, for implementation from academic year 2005/06 onwards.
- 2.3 The authority’s response to the above consultation papers were approved on 25 May 2004 and 22 March 2005.

#### 3 SUMMARY OF LIFELONG PARTNERS – A Strategy for Partnership

- 3.1 **Authority Response:** The authority’s response to this strategy and guide is wholly positive, and has been informed through its National Qualifications strategy group, a representative group of headteachers, senior managers, professional associations, college representatives, students and pupils. It has further been endorsed by the authority’s and Kilmarnock College’s partnership management group. While specific details and procedures require further refinement, the longstanding and successful partnership arrangements have enabled increasing numbers of pupils to access appropriate college courses in an innovative and flexible way. Formal agreements and protocols to support these arrangements are in place and subject to regular oversight and evaluation. Many of the strategies suggested or identified as good practice are already in place in the authority’s working practices with Kilmarnock College and participating schools, including early identification of courses,

selection and induction processes, and enhanced support and communications between schools and college. The key sections of the report are outlined below:

**3.2 Section One: Executive Summary:** The strategy explains how the Scottish Executive plans to increase and enhance school/college partnerships to extend opportunities for pupils to access high quality experiences and gain full recognition for their learning with Scotland's colleges. *We welcome this approach.*

**3.3 Section Three: Purpose and Nature of School/College Partnership:** The overall rationale for collaboration has four main purposes:

- To **widen** pupils' opportunities for progression and prepare them for further study;
- To **ease** pupils' transition from school to further learning, training and employment;
- To **broaden** pupils' curriculum choices; and
- To **enrich** pupils' educational experiences.

The strategy recognises increased demand, and promises to make available extra funding until 2008. It supports the new "Skills for Work" courses, and expects colleges and authorities to monitor and improve school/college partnerships. *We fully support the allocation of additional funding; the 'Skills for Work' courses require further development.*

**3.4 Section Four: Roles and Responsibilities:** Education authorities are, and will remain, responsible for the whole package of school age pupils' learning and welfare. The statutory responsibilities of education authorities and schools will not be amended. School/college activity is additional to school education, and will be financed separately. *We welcome this approach.*

**3.5 Section Five: Funding Arrangements:** The strategy recommends long term, clear and stable funding arrangements. It explains fee waiver, funding mechanisms, responsibilities and transport issues. Local authorities are responsible for arranging and funding transport, meals, materials, and additional pastoral support. *We agree with the allocation of responsibilities. Long term funding is essential to ensure coherent and sustained expansion.*

**3.6 Section Six: Local Partnership Arrangements:** Forward planning is identified as a key issue to facilitate effective delivery of partnership activity. Other important matters include clarity of respective responsibilities, timetable for management, and methods of presentation to pupils of college options. *We have already developed a local partnership with Kilmarnock College.*

**3.7 Section Seven: Pupil Welfare and Support:** The Scottish Executive expects schools and further education colleges to ensure their procedures and actions are in line with the framework for standards for child protection (Charter for Protecting Children and Young People) published in March 2004. *Our partnership arrangement applies.*

**3.8 Section Eight: Quality Assurance:** School/College collaboration is independently reviewed by HM Inspectors in their inspections of schools, education authorities and colleges. Internal elements of joint quality assurance arrangements should similarly be agreed by the three in partnership. Other agents of quality assurance include the Scottish Quality Management System, SQA and the HSE. *This requires clarification and development by partners.*

**3.9 Section Seven: Professional Training and Development:** The strategy supports further provision for college lecturers to teach school pupils, and will further examine the issues surrounding the qualifications of college staff to teach pupils. Initial teacher education will also be reviewed for examining whether its current guidelines and requirements remain appropriate. Interim arrangements will be agreed with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Further training will be provided for college staff in pupil welfare and support. *We fully support these proposals.*

**3.10 Section Nine: Implementation Timetable:** This timetable identifies milestones from May 2005 (launch of Skills for Work courses) until 2009 (evaluation of the strategy's effectiveness).

#### **4 SUMMARY OF LIFELONG PARTNERS: A guide for Schools, Colleges and Local Authorities**

**4.1** This handbook provides practical examples of good practice in the following areas:

- Nature of partnership activity;
- Roles and responsibilities of partners;
- Planning and management;
- Selection and induction;
- Pupil welfare and support;
- Recognising and recording achievement;
- Quality assurance; and
- Staffing and adult students.

**4.2 Eight annexes:** These detail, inter alia, membership and remits of working groups, circumstances where pupils below S5 could exceptionally attend college full time, and model partnership agreements.

#### **5 LEGAL/POLICY/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** There may be financial implications once the full force of partnership expenditure is explored and agreed. There may also be a need to consider further any legal and/or financial implications during the implementation period of the strategy.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) approve the response to consultation;
- (ii) note the contents of this report; and
- (iii) be kept informed of further developments.

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

DF/MR  
25 August 2005

### LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Building the Foundations of A LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY. A Review of Collaboration between schools and Further Education Colleges in Scotland. Report of School/College Conference Monday 20 October 2003 (Scottish Executive February 2004).
- 2 Building the Foundations of A LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY. A Review of Collaboration between schools and Further Education Colleges in Scotland. Summary of Consultation Paper (Scottish Executive, February 2004).
- 3 Education Committee Paper – 25 May 2004 - Response To “Building The Foundations Of A Lifelong Learning Society”
- 4 Education Committee Paper - 22 March 2005 - Response To Interim Report Regarding “Building The Foundations Of A Lifelong Learning Society: A Review Of Collaboration Between Schools And Further Education Colleges In Scotland.”
- 5 Building the Foundations of a LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY. A Review of Collaboration between Schools and Further Education Colleges in Scotland: Interim Report (Scottish Executive, December 2004)
- 6 “LIFELONG PARTNERS: SCOTLAND’S SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF A LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY – A Strategy for Partnership” and “A Guide for Schools, Colleges and Local Authorities” (May 2005)

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