

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE –1 APRIL 2003

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report by Director of Educational & Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to seek Education Committee approval for the response by the Council to the Scottish Executive document, "Working and learning together to build stronger communities: Community learning and development working draft guidance" and to seek agreement to change the name of the service known as Support to Communities, reflecting the recommendations of the report, to Community Learning and Development.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** In June 2002 the Scottish Executive published the policy statement 'Community Learning and Development: The Way Forward' which announced the intention to publish new guidance on community learning and development to local authorities and their community planning partners.
- 2.2** In January 2003, 'Working and learning together to build stronger communities: community learning and development working draft guidance' was issued by the Scottish Executive, following consultation with COSLA, for wider consultation and comment. A copy of the document is available in the Members Lounge.
- 2.3** Alongside the draft guidance, in February 2003 the Scottish Executive published 'Empowered to Practice - The Future of Community Learning and Development in Scotland'. This report is the Executive's response to the national report from the Community Education Training Review Group.

3. REPORT

- 3.1** The Guidance issued in January 2003 seeks responses to the Scottish Executive by 25 April 2003. A number of questions for consultation were specifically raised in the document. In shaping the Council's response consultation took place with operational staff and responses were received from Learning Partnerships and other departments. The proposed Council response is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

- 3.2** Community Learning and Development is defined by the Scottish Executive as :

"Informal Learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities. It seeks to strengthen communities through enhancing

people's confidence, knowledge and skills, organisational ability and resources"

4. Community Learning and Development Service

- 4.1** There is clear Ministerial recognition of Community Learning and Development as a discipline and profession and each document set out in Section 2 of this report seeks to establish high standards of practice across the country. This is complementary to this Council's expanding commitment and approaches to quality standards within the service.
- 4.2** Since 1998 there have been moves, both nationally and locally, to bring together community education and community development. The draft working guidance now clearly brings these together. The purpose of the guidance is set within the context of community planning, both in terms of the processes that will be used to further develop community learning and development partnerships and the development and implementation of strategies and plans.
- 4.3** Education Committee of 29 May 2001 approved recommendations to bring together the previous community education service and community development service under the service presently known as Support to Communities. As a result of this, East Ayrshire Council is in a strong position to take forward the new national guidance. To further support this it is proposed to rename the current Support To Communities service, Community Learning and Development.

5. FINANCIAL/POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Nil

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** Members of the Education Committee are asked to :
- (i) approve the response to the Draft Guidance document attached as Appendix 1;
 - (ii) remit the Director of Educational and Social Services to forward the response to the Scottish Executive, Social Justice Department.
 - (ii) agree the change of name of Support to Communities to Community Learning and Development; and
 - (iii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational & Social Services

3 March 2003

KG/AJ

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. 'Community Learning and Development: The Way Forward' - June 2002
2. 'Working and learning together to build stronger communities: community learning and development working draft guidance' - January 2003
3. 'Empowered to Practice - The Future of Community Learning and Development in Scotland' - February 2003

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Anne Jackson, Principal Officer, Communities Tel: (01563) 576126.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**RESPONSE TO WORKING AND LEARNING TOGETHER
TO BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

1. Defining Community Learning and Development.

- **The emphasis we give to prioritising support towards disadvantaged individuals, groups and communities**

East Ayrshire Response:

The emphasis on the prioritisation towards disadvantaged groups is welcomed and generally agreed.

There is a requirement for a well understood definition of disadvantage as false expectations may be raised regarding the delivery of a universal service.

Consideration should be given to establishing a baseline level of service delivery including the delivery of the whole range of services to targeted areas.

- **The four national priorities we propose**

East Ayrshire Response:

The National Priorities are a welcome concept and complement the current education national priorities.

The need to specifically identify the needs of young people is endorsed. However the needs of young people require to also be recognised in the context of the first priority to raise standards of achievement in learning and in the core skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology.

The concept of Lifelong Learning is fully supported.

2. Joining up the planning process

Please give us your comments on the following:

- **Whether the guidance provides an effective basis for making sure there is a link between Community Learning and Development Planning, Community Planning and other development plans**
- **How strategic and local partnerships are made up and sustained**
- **Whether the guidance provides an effective basis for making sure communities and users are represented on strategic and local partnerships**
- **The relationship proposed between planning and priority setting at strategic, local and thematic level**

East Ayrshire Response:

East Ayrshire's Community Plan brings together East Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire & Arran NHS, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire Brigade and other partners in both the public and voluntary sector to better plan and deliver services to meet both the needs and aspirations of those who live and work in East Ayrshire over the next 12 years.

East Ayrshire's Community Plan seeks to jointly tackle issues which affect the everyday life of people living in East Ayrshire such as transport, employment, housing, health, education and safety within communities. The Community Plan has six priority themes, namely:

- community learning
- improving opportunity
- community safety
- improving health
- eliminating poverty
- improving the environment

The community learning theme of the Community Plan is guided by the overall principles set out in the Community Plan.

- the promotion of social justice in social inclusion
- building sustainability
- succeeding in joint working and involving people
- ensuring quality and accessibility
- delivering continuous improvement and best value

Community learning and development is recognised as critical to community regeneration.

Within East Ayrshire Council area therefore, the guidance provided is very compatible with the process that has been agreed and established amongst the Community Planning partners. The importance of Community Learning is recognised and valued but it is not the sole theme and the development of the wider agenda is being actively progressed by community planning partners within the Council area.

Community involvement requires to go hand in hand with community capacity building to ensure individuals, groups and communities are adequately resourced and supported to play the part envisioned for them at all levels. This in turn means that adequate resources will be required to increase the pool of skilled practitioners in youth work, community work and community based adult learning, since the Community Planning approach and extended requirements to support community involvement across a broad range of service planning and delivery mean that their skills will be in high demand.

There is recognition of issues around co-terminous boundaries and at this time there is some duplication of agendas as the process establishes and evolves, but it is recognised and appreciated that firm links have been developed and are established through the community planning process developed within the Council area.

The formation of the Community Learning Partnership to complement the community planning process has been useful and valued, allowing the focus to be developed on community learning and development issues including the issue of literacy and numeracy.

East Ayrshire would propose that where Community Learning has been taken forward as a specific them in Community Plans, then a new Community Learning Strategy should not be required by April 2004.

3. Quality, profile-raising, professional development and management information.

Please give us your comments on the following:

- **The proposed arrangements for the quality assurance and evaluation of the work of the community learning and development partnership**
- **Continuing professional development priorities**
- **The ways in which partnerships could jointly collect management information**

East Ayrshire Response:

East Ayrshire Council and its community planning partners are committed to the delivery of quality services and the effective evaluation of the planning processes. The adoption of self evaluation using 'How Good is our Community Learning and Development' framework has been agreed by the community learning theme partners of the community plan. Joint training opportunities have already been progressed and consideration will be given to further opportunities.

Within the Department of Educational & Social Services there has been a very clear commitment to continuous improvement. A new Head of Service post for Quality Improvement was recently established. This post will have responsibility for continuous improvement across the department including community learning and development.

Continuing professional development (CPD) priorities and the commitment to develop accreditation of CPD for staff is welcomed with priority being given to the development of use of IT for community based learning, partnership development and maintenance, community planning and capacity building.

It is important that management information systems are widely understood in order that collation and transfer of information is maximised. Benchmarking and data definitions require initial investment in order to establish systems that are efficient, effective and valued.