

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

IRVINE VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE – 4 JUNE 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 inform Members of the Local Committee of the response by the Council to the Scottish Executive consultation document, "Working and learning together to build stronger communities: Community learning and development working draft guidance" and of the change in name of the service known as Support to Communities to Community Learning and Development.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January 2003, 'Working and learning together to build stronger communities: community learning and development working draft guidance' was issued by the Scottish Executive, following consultation with COSLA, for wider consultation and comment.

3. REPORT

- 3.1** The Guidance issued in January 2003 sought 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.
- 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"
- 3.3** The guidance identified four national priorities for community learning and development which focus on youth work, adult learning, community capacity building and on the involvement of the community in community planning and service delivery.

1. To raise standards of achievement in learning for adults, in the core skills of literacy and numeracy and in information communications technology (ICT), and through community based vocational and non-vocational lifelong learning opportunities.
2. To support the personal, social and educational development of young people.
3. To give individuals, groups and communities, including young people, the organisational skills they need to tackle issues of concern in the community.
4. To support individuals, groups and communities, including young people, to work with and influence the planning and delivery of services at local and strategic level

3.4 The response from East Ayrshire welcomed the four priorities and supported the concept of lifelong learning but asked that the needs of young people 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.

3.5 The guidance identified Community Learning and Development as playing a central role in supporting the involvement of communities in the community planning process at all levels and providing advice to Community Planning Partnerships on how strategies and plans should be developed including what information should be contained in the plans; their relationship to other plans and on community involvement in the planning process.

3.6 The response from East Ayrshire agreed that community learning and development has a critical role to play in community regeneration and that the guidance provided was compatible with the process that had been agreed and established amongst the Community Planning partners in East Ayrshire.

Community Learning is one of the six themes in East Ayrshire's Community Plan. The other themes are improving opportunity, community safety, improving health, eliminating poverty and improving the environment.

3.7 With regard to quality and evaluation, East Ayrshire's response agreed with the guidance given in relation to adopting the self-evaluation framework by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) called 'How Good is our Community Learning and Development?' and noted that the Community learning theme partners of the community plan had already agreed to adopt this framework.

4. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Since 1998 there have been moves, both nationally and locally, to draw 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** In May 2001 East Ayrshire Council's community education service and community development service came together under the service Support to Communities. As a result of this, the Council is in a strong position to take forward the new national guidance. To further support this it was agreed at the Education Committee on 1 April 2003 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 Local Committee are asked to:

- (i) note the contents of the report

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational & Social Services

9 May 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

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

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