

D R A F T

East Ayrshire Council
**Community
Learning
Strategy
2000 - 2003**



East Ayrshire
COUNCIL

March 2000

East Ayrshire Council Community Learning Strategy Section

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Section One

Introduction



'Lifelong Learning is not a new concept. It is integral to the regeneration of our communities and everyone in the community has a part to play. Access to lifelong learning must be encouraged and supported and the best place to start for those returning to learning is in our own communities.'

*Councillor Tom Farrell
Education Committee Chair*

The Community Learning Strategy is set against the backdrop of East Ayrshire Council, a Council that is positively seeking and encouraging new initiatives which will regenerate the area but which recognises the high levels of unemployment which exist. There are identifiable examples of innovation and positive action to generate employment and opportunities for learning in order to build the capacity of communities.

The rural nature of the majority of East Ayrshire adds to the difficulties which local people face to include those of transport and associated costs, isolation and difficulty in accessing the range of services.

The development of a learning culture has been set against the declining coal industry in the South of the Area and declining manufacturing industry across the whole council area. There is a general willingness to access further learning opportunities however, traditionally, high levels of formal qualifications were not required for the workplace.

The Community Learning Strategy for East Ayrshire seeks to portray a picture of the broad spectrum of opportunities for learning in East Ayrshire and not to detail the range of learning available. This, more detailed study of information and priorities, will be included in the community learning plans for the council area. This is a Community Learning Strategy for the development of community learning. It sets the context in which the more localised community learning plans will be developed. The strategy presents the vision, which is shared by the partners involved in its development to support and sustain the learning culture of East Ayrshire. Further, the Strategy reflects the central government's commitment to social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship.

The Policy Context

The requirement for each local authority to produce a Community Learning Strategy for the whole council area is set out in the Scottish Executive Circular 4/99. This circular also details the requirement on Scottish Local Authorities to produce community learning plans. The Plans are intended to be straightforward operational document showing who offers what, in community learning, in an area or interest.

Circular 4/99 reflects the findings of two nationally accepted reports on community education and offers guidance to local authorities on future arrangements. These are

- Promoting Learning : Developing Communities - COSLA May 1998
- Communities : Change Through Learning - Scottish Office November 1998.

Each of these documents give a context to the learning agenda, however they are additional to a number of other key policy documents which have influenced the developing strategy for community learning including:

Report of the Community Planning Working Group Scottish Office and COSLA - July 1998.

New Library The People's Network
The Government Response - April 1998.

New Community Schools.
The Prospectus - November 1998.

E Opportunity Scotland.
A Paper on Lifelong Learning - September 1998

The Scottish Compact.
The Principles underpinning the relationship between Government and the voluntary sector in Scotland.
- October 1998

Towards a Healthier Scotland.
A White Paper on Health - February 1999

Social Inclusion : Opening the Door to a Better Scotland - March 1999.

Skills for Scotland.
A Skills Strategy for a Competitive Scotland - March 1999

U Opportunities for Everyone.
A Strategic framework for Scottish Further Education
- March 1999.

This is not an exhaustive list but rather seeks to illustrate the range of developments current in progressing social and economic policy. There is clear recognition that the regeneration of communities can be directly supported and encouraged by developing lifelong learning opportunities and supporting community learning. Working in partnership, the various agencies and departments which contribute and deliver learning opportunities can further benefit the communities we serve, creating a learning culture.

The Community Learning Strategy for East Ayrshire will identify approaches which support learners and recognise the learning culture, developing from a position of strength in the existing partnerships and open to innovation.

Community Learning

What is it?

Community Learning can be described as taking part in any learning activity that takes place in the community rather than in a school or college.

Its key features include:

that the participant or learner has been involved in identifying their own learning needs and in considering the best way and methods of addressing those needs;

the learning needs are seen as part of the learners whole life and not in isolation;

a variety of methods of learning are considered including unstructured, less formal methods of learning;

U consideration is given to how the skills and talents of the individual can be developed for both personal and community benefit; and

learning is an enjoyable experience and valuable in its own right.

Section Two

The Partners

The following services and organisations who offer community learning or who operate using community learning approaches in East Ayrshire have contributed to the Community Learning Strategy development.

Council Departments

The development of the Community Learning Strategy in East Ayrshire Council has been led by the Education Department specifically Community Education, other departments who have contributed to the development of the Strategy have included Community Services specifically Libraries and Leisure, Social Work, Social Inclusion and Corporate Services.

Partners agencies have included:

Enterprise Initiatives

Although not a direct deliverer of community learning, the enterprise initiatives including Enterprise Ayrshire, East Ayrshire Business Partnership and East Ayrshire Employment Initiative each have a key role to play in the promotion of Lifelong Learning through involvement in business development and training. Each is working with local partners to contribute to the wider targets of learning enterprise and economic inclusion.

Health Board

The role of the Health Board relates to the promotion of information available within communities that affect the progression of positive lifestyles and good health. The ability to care for our own health is important but it is also influenced by poverty, social exclusion, access to employment and improved environment. The Health Board is committed to a partnership approach, complemented by extensive public consultation.

Scottish Power

Scottish Power as an employer, has an historical commitment to learning and a well established open learning policy and programme. Their commitment in East Ayrshire has seen the establishment of an ICT Learning Suite in Kilmarnock, the main centre of population.

Police

Although not a direct deliverer of community learning the involvement and support of the police in a number of initiatives throughout the council area has particularly contributed to the promotion of developing safe community initiatives. These initiatives promote the building of the capacity of communities, encouraging individuals to become involved in shaping the lives of their communities.

YouthLink Ayrshire

A voluntary body supporting youth work and services to young people throughout Ayrshire. YouthLink Ayrshire is the local branch of a national organisation that operate through a network of voluntary and council organisations and groups.

Kilmarnock Football Club

This Premier Division football club has a strong community base and a convincing record of outreach to young people. In addition to the many football initiatives for young people throughout the area, their involvement with young people and schools in promoting a healthy lifestyle and an anti-drugs message is well recognised in the area.

LEAD Scotland

LEAD - Linking Education and Disability, exists to empower and enable physically disabled and/or sensory impaired adults to access education training and lifelong learning opportunities.

WEA

The Workers Education Association deliver high quality learning that is responsive and relevant to the learning needs of adults. They work with disadvantaged groups in community training and issue based adult learning developing skills, knowledge and promoting active citizenship. In East Ayrshire courses are offered through trades unions to help adults return to learning within the context of a distinctive commitment to social purpose and voluntary and demographic forms of organisation and practice.

Ayrshire Eledronic Community

Established in 1999, with European funding. The AEC supports the establishment of a programme of proactive social and economic development in parts of East Ayrshire i.e. Cumnock Area, Doon Valley Area and North Kilmarnock. The programme aims to ensure that the benefits of the information society are available in the targeted areas.

Kilmarnock College

Provides a broad spectrum of further and higher education programmes in which learners are individually supported by tutors in negotiated learning programmes. Courses are offered on campus in Kilmarnock and community based in conjunction with community education. In addition mobile access to ICT is available on the Big Bus which travels through the area.

Ayr College East

The main college is in Ayr but the annex based in Cumnock offers Lifelong Learning opportunities for everyone. Involved with New Deal initiatives, Higher Still and the National grid for Learning the college offers a range of programmes within the campus and in collaboration with Community Education a range of community based opportunities also.

Links to Local Priorities and the Community Plan

East Ayrshire Council believes that all local people should have access to the highest possible quality of service and that the Council can make a positive impact on local communities. There is recognition however that it is necessary to prioritise those areas most in need. The council's corporate plan identifies seven priorities for the years 2000-2003.

Tackling unemployment - In every community in East Ayrshire there is unemployment. Male unemployment as at 1997 Voluntary Population Survey estimates male unemployment averaging 10.7% across the whole area rising to 15.7% in one local committee area in

Kilmarnock. The focus of working to tackling unemployment includes

- Working with existing businesses to retain jobs and expand opportunities
- Attracting inward investment
- Equipping our people through training for work particularly with regard to information technology, to develop a skilled workforce.

Fighting Poverty - reducing unemployment will not automatically effect a reduction in poverty. East Ayrshire council services will tackle poverty, however caused, through

Promoting social inclusion to effect change

Recognising rural poverty. Reducing economic disadvantage due to isolation and transport access.

Better Health - Recognising the poor health records of the West of Scotland and the links between that poverty and poor health. By launching specific and targeted initiatives with our partners the improvement of health is a priority. Specifically:

Combating drug abuse in our communities

Reducing risk and effecting change to combat the worst of the areas health problems

Choice and care for the elderly. Ensuring real choices in the way the elderly live their lives in the community.

Improved Housing for All - Continuously seeking to improve housing quality and choice in partnership with other housing providers. Ensuring that the Council owned homes are of good quality with modern amenities and excellent standards

Through working in partnership with housing associations and the private sector to ensure that a range of housing of high quality is available to meet the needs of all.

Special needs options available including round the clock care or adapted provision for high amenity options.

Excellence through Education- through access to educational opportunities for the whole of people's lives through

- Improving educational achievement opportunities
- An holistic approach to education, recognising the value of life skills as well as academic achievement
- Ensuring our schools and facilities are at the heart of each community
- Developing recognition of learning as a lifelong activity.

Safe, Stimulating and Sustainable Environment - ensuring that the rich and varied environment in which we live is accessible to all by

- Safety initiatives to help people feel more safe and secure in their home, neighbourhood and throughout East Ayrshire
- Offering transport options in recognition of the rural nature of much of East Ayrshire. Ensuring that quality choices are available
- Access to a range of leisure and recreational facilities
- Working together to maintain and improve our environment

Inspiring our Young People - involving young people and encouraging them to take part in all the council '5 business through

- Focus on young people and recognising their needs in order to play a full part in council activities
- Active citizenship encouraged by adapting the service delivery to meet the needs of young people on their terms.

Each Community learning Plan will reflect these priorities. Under each priority the learner can expect opportunities which will encourage their participation in lifelong learning.

Linking the Strategy to the Partners Plans and Strategies

The plans of partners have also been studied in the process of developing East Ayrshire Community Learning Strategy:

- E Local Health Improvement Plan, 200a-2005 -Draft
- E Children's Services Plan
- E Ayr College Development Plan
- Kilmarnock College Strategic Plan
- E Education Department Strategic Plan
- E Leisure Strategy for East Ayrshire
- E Community Education Development Plan
- E Strategy for Young People - Draft
- E Social Inclusion Partnership bid
- E Community Services Departmental Action Plan
- #Library Strategy #

In the construction of the Strategy these publicly consulted documents were considered and a number of themes identifying a common strategic direction are apparent:

- encouraging the achievement of potential through accessing learning opportunities;
- Informing young people at times of change in their lives of the options available to them;
- Ensuring access to core skills development across the age ranges;
- Access to community based ICT
- Promoting a positive approach to health.

Vision for Community Learning

The Vision for Community Learning seeks to encapsulate the range of themes and priorities identified, but it also needs to be as free from jargon as possible:

'Learning to Access All Areas'

The partners share common targets and access to resources, which facilitate their achieving their goals in lifelong learning. Each are committed to, as part of their commitment to Community Learning to:

- Promoting socially inclusive approaches to learning
 - Consulting with the communities we serve
 - Working with others to ensure good partnership approaches and best practice
- U Supporting progression in learning
- Seeking investment for community based learning

Section Three

Community Profile

East Ayrshire covers an area of 490 square miles from Lugton in the North to Loch Doon in the South with a total population of 123,428. North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and East Renfrewshire Councils border East Ayrshire. Geographically diverse with a mixture of urban, rural and isolated communities, East Ayrshire has the major urban settlement of Kilmarnock with a total population of 45,725 and the remainder of the population in 31 smaller settlements ranging from a few hundred to just under 10,000 in Stewarton.

The decline of the coal mining industry in the 1980s was particularly acute in the South of the Council area but the whole area has been affected by the decline of the manufacturing industries. Today the main single employer is the local authority, supporting 14% of the labour market. Manufacturing industries support a total of 40% of employees, while clothing and textiles employ 25% of the labour market.

East Ayrshire Council is a medium sized local authority with thirty-two elected members. The work of the council is divided into seven departments to serve the 49,209 households throughout East Ayrshire. The council has decentralised its local process to seven local committees, which are full committees of the council and have representation of elected members and community groups. They meet within the council's six-week meeting cycle

Kilmarnock Central Area

This area includes the communities of Crosshouse, Knockentiber and Gatehead. Total population figures are 17,773.

Kilmarnock North Area

This area includes the communities of New Farm Loch, Altonhill, Knockinlaw and Wardneuk. Total population figures are 15,610.

Kilmarnock South Area

This area includes the communities Bellfield, Shortlees and Riccarton. Total population figures are 12,342.

Irvine Valley Area

This area includes the communities of Hurlford, Crookedholm, Moscow, Galston, Newmilns, Darvel and Priestland. Total population figures are 19,348.

Northern Area

This area includes the communities of Stewarton, Dunlop, Kilmaurs, Fenwick and Waterside with a total population of 15633.

Cumnock Area

This area includes the communities of Cumnock, Netherthird, Craigens, Logan, Lugar, New Cumnock, Auchinleck, Mauchline, Catrine, Sorn, Ochiltree and Muirkirk. Total population figures are 30,878.

Doon Valley Area

This area includes the communities of Drongan, Patna, Dalmellington, Bellsbank, Rankinston and Dalrymple. Total population figures are 11,684.

Economic Indicators

Unemployment statistics

Committee Area	Claimants	% Rate
Kilmarnock Central Area	499	5.8%
Kilmarnock North Area	696	11.2%
Kilmarnock South Area	537	11.9%
Irvine Valley Area	528	6.3%
Northern Area	294	6.0%
Cumnock Area	1013	7.7%
Doon Valley Area	377	7.9%

Employment in Ayrshire is forecast to decline with productivity to rise. There will be a continuing reduction in manufacturing employment with service employment set to rise. The rise in service employment is not expected to offset the reduction in manufacturing.

Wage levels in Ayrshire are lower than elsewhere in Scotland impacting the willingness of the labour market to train and offer itself on the market.

Community Learning Resources

There are a number of existing community resources which are presently used to deliver community based learning opportunities. There is commitment to further develop the opportunities available within the resources and many are in process of developing their provision within a community learning approach. Involvement in the community planning process will further enhance these developments.

Community Education Centres

Community Education Centres are council owned facilities that are locally managed and programmed, they play a key role in the provision of community based learning. Developed in conjunction with community workers, classes, courses and self-help, issue-based learning opportunities are accessible in community education centres throughout East Ayrshire.

Although not available in every centre, access to ICT is available having been funded in some instances through local activity and commitment. In other centres, ICT has been installed through council funded initiatives.

Libraries

Libraries offer free access to educational and cultural material to users of the 'People's Network'. In East Ayrshire a number of projects are already underway in which libraries offer information services, or are participating in addressing specific learning needs. In Drongan, a project aimed at parents and children is supported through many local groups and organisations, funded through Scoffish Library and Information Council and supported by Ayrshire Electronic Community, an ERDF Project. Adult guidance services are also available through the public network.

Public Access Terminals (PAT)

PAT was established at public sites throughout the Council area providing information on Council services and the services of our partner agencies. Information on employment etc is also available.

Ayrshire Electronic Community

Established in 1999 with European funding. The AEC supports the establishment of a programme of proactive social and economic development in parts of East Ayrshire i.e. Cumnock Area, Doon Valley Area and North Kilmarnock. The programme aims to ensure that the benefits of the information society are available in the targeted areas.

Scoffish Power Learning Suite

Established in 1999, in Kilmarnock Academy with funding from Scoffish Power. This is a fully equipped computer suite with a full range of hardware available for use by the school and the local community.

Forge Ahead

Previously an Urban aid funded adult education project which was integrated into council funding in 1999. Forge Ahead is based in Auchinleck Community Education Centre with outreach provision in Logan and Netherthird offer a wide range of formal and informal community based learning opportunities. The work of the project has recently expanded to include New Cumnock and Muirkirk.

Focal Points

Established in 1994 with funding from Europe the Focal Points are located in five community education centres across the South of the Council area supported by Community Education. Each Focal Point offers access to ICT based in the local community. Certificated and non certificated courses are available in each centre. An example of partnership working throughout their existence, the necessary upgrade work in the Focal Points is included in the work of the Ayrshire Electronic Community.

Social Inclusion Initiatives

Part of East Ayrshire has recognised Social Inclusion Partnership status and an example of one of the current funded initiatives is a Community Learning Opportunity Project which works with parents and adults on core skill development.

Leisure services Division

Delivering a broad range of learning opportunities in relation to Child Development, Sports Development, Community Health and Fitness. Specific resources for play, sport and health are available by the Rangers Service in Dean Castle, through talCs and organised events Learning Opportunities in the combined arts for young people are also available through the Palace Theatre and REACT, the outreach provision.

Community Sedor

Voluntary/Community organisations that receive grant aid funding from East Ayrshire Council to promote and develop learning opportunities within their local community for all age groups including outdoor activities and play initiatives. These organisations make a very significant contribution to the provision of community-based learning as well as the creation of a learning culture within their community. Their involvement in the developing community learning plans is crucial.

Other organisations including the uniformed voluntary organisations play a key role through the work of their members and leaders.

Support Services and Structures

Community Education Teams are managed by Community Learning Officers based in Kilmarnock and Cumnock and consist of community workers and project workers.

Adult Education Associations are voluntary groups who coordinate a full range of community based classes and courses across the council area.

Adult Guidance provides impartial advice, information and guidance on employment, training and education to people taking part in adult education in the area. Guidance workers operate in community based venues providing individual interviews and working with groups of learners.

Adult Education Forums are established in Kilmarnock and Cumnock to coordinate the work of the council, colleges and other education providers ensuring that specific needs are being addressed and gaps in provision are identified

Consultation Process

Information is available on the Community Learning Strategy and the developing Community Learning Plans through the Council Web site

Wide consultation through the existing plans of partners

Consultation of the Strategy through the existing local committee structure.

Developing consultation process with partners throughout the process of community plan development.

Community Learning Plans

Community Learning Plans will give the detail of how the community learning strategy translates into meaningful action across the council area. It will coordinate existing opportunities while identifying the needs and how these will be addressed within communities.

In the long term it is anticipated that community learning plans will grow in number across the council to reflect geographic area of learning and communities of interest in learning.

Three pilot community learning plans will be developed reflecting geographic coterminous areas with the Social Inclusion geographic boundaries.

The lead agency in the development of Community Learning Plans will be Community Education. Coordinated by a Strategy Development Officer across the whole council with responsibility for quality and standards, the overall development and management of the Plans will rest with Community Learning Officers with geographic responsibility for the area of the Plan. Specifically Community Learning officers will have responsibility to liaise with appropriate partners in the development of Community Learning Plans, production and implementation of the plans, ensure full use of available resources, monitor and evaluate the meeting of identified targets.

The development of Learning Plans for Communities of Interest will require a more specialised approach. The proposed local Community Learning Plan Group, will support the process by identifying partners and lead officers where appropriate, and will approve these plans.

Each plan will require an evaluation and review procedure.

Community Learning Strategy

Process Targets

Issue	Performance Measures	Targets
Analysis of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes delivered by partners Numbers of Participants Evidence of need Investment levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce report of existing levels of provision and investment by March 2001
Engagement with partners for development of Community Learning Strategy and Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify existing partnerships of agencies and the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of partnerships produced Seminar of partners to produce draft Community Learning Strategy 10 identified opportunities for involvement in strategy and plans consultation
Cohesion with other plans and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Corporate Plan Local Health Improvement Plan Draft 2000-2005 Children's Services Plan Ayr College Development Plan Kilmarnock College Strategic Plan Education Department Strategic Plan Leisure Strategy for East Ayrshire Community Education Development Plan Strategy for Young People - Draft Social Inclusion Partnership bid The People's Network Library Strategy # 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> production of a context statement within the Community Learning Strategy showing the links and common themes of the documents
Balance priorities with focus of community based learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified priorities of partners Identified priorities of community and voluntary sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % budget aimed at identified priorities

Targets for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify levels of involvement in issues identified in Scottish Executive Circular 4/99, paragraph 4.4 Agree improvement targets with partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree methods of establishing baseline information for Paragraph 4.4 Agree improvement targets with partners
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing quality systems EFDM information LEAP Scottish Executive quality indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 training opportunities for staff and partners in monitoring systems establish evaluation specification for community learning plans by March 2001 produce annual report by October 2001

Performance Targets

Issue	Partners and Resources	Targets
Achieving potential through accessing learning opportunities;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult Education Forums Colleges Community Education Libraries Leisure Services Health Board Community and Voluntary Sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the number of adult participants in community based learning Increase the numbers participating by 3%
Informing young people at times of change in their lives of the options available to them;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools Community Education Community and Voluntary Sector Leisure Services Social Work Social Inclusion Unit Health Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish numbers of young people participating in youth activities Increase the number of young people participating by 3% Identify the number of young people involved in decision making

Developing core skills across the age ranges;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Education • Schools • Colleges • Ayrshire Electronic Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 100 essential skills opportunities for adults in the 2000/2001 session • Establish % take up of opportunities • Establish progression routes for adult participants
Access to community based ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries; • Ayrshire Electronic Community; • Scottish Power; • Colleges; • Community Education; • Community Associations; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify number of community based ICT opportunities in the 2000/2001 session • Increase participation rate by 3%
Promoting a positive approach to health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Board • Community Education • Colleges • Community Associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the numbers of health focused opportunities available • Increase the participation by 3%

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Community Learning Strategy gives an overview of the broad spectrum of opportunities for learning in East Ayrshire. It is a Strategy for the development of community learning and sets the context for the more localised community learning plans. The Plans will audit and identify local need and establish detailed targets for learning.

The Strategy presents the vision, which is shared by the partners involved in its development to support and sustain the learning culture of East Ayrshire. Further, the Strategy reflects the central government's commitment to social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship.

Strategy Development Officer will monitor the quality and standards of Community Learning Plans, to ensure a common approach is used and to review progress.

Community Learning Officers will coordinate the work of the partners in a Community Learning Plan Group to monitor targets and to ensure targets are met.

In Conclusion

Your Comments are welcome.

The Community Learning Strategy can be viewed on the Councils Web pages on*****

Written comments can be made to Community Learning Strategy, East Ayrshire Council. Community Education Service, London Road, Kilmarnock or e-mail at *****

Copies of the Strategy are available in large print from Community Education Service at the above address or by telephoning 01563 576124



The Community Learning Strategy and community learning plans can, with support, put the people of East Ayrshire at the heart of the learning culture and process. The new government agenda promotes social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship, each borne out of social and economic imperatives targeting the regeneration of the communities we serve. The opportunities have never been greater.

*David Montgomery, Chief Executive,
East Ayrshire Council*