

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE	22 November 2012
ACTING DIRECTOR	Patricia Cassidy
TITLE OF REPORT	Audit of Community Learning and Development and Library Provision
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/12/049

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on the ongoing work to audit the provision of community learning and development within Aberdeen, a requirement placed on Aberdeen's Community Planning Partnership by the Scottish Government through the recently published "Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: CLD."

The report notes that this piece of work will incorporate the consultation and ongoing review of library and information services.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a. Note the progress of this project and request an update on the outcomes of the consultation and other related streams of work in April/ May 2013.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At the current time there are no financial implications in relation to this report.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Legal Implications

The recently published Scottish Government Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships, Community Learning and Development, places a number of obligations of Community Planning Partnerships and Local Authorities in respect of Community Learning and Development. It is anticipated that some aspects of this guidance may be included in forthcoming legislation.

The local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994 incorporates the existing legislation relating to public libraries. It sets out the powers of the new authorities as having all the powers of the Council(s) operating in the area of the new Council before 1 April 1996.

The legislation referred to is:

Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1887, the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act 1955 and the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The 1887 Act defined “a library authority” (Section 2), and gave it powers to acquire and maintain land, buildings, and furniture and fittings for public libraries (section 10). It gave powers to manage, regulate and control libraries, including acquiring and disposing of books and other materials, to lend books, to provide reading rooms and to prepare and sell catalogues of the collection (Section 21). Authorities may make byelaws to regulate business and impose penalties for breaches (Section 22). New libraries can be established (Section 31) and it is stipulated that all public libraries are to be open to the public free of charge, and that no charges be made for the use of books or magazines issued for home reading (Section 32).

The 1955 Act makes provision for library authorities’ co-operation in delivering services (Section 2) and extended the powers in Section 21 of the 1887 Act to any other library material which library managers think appropriate.

In the 1973 Act local authorities had a duty imposed to secure the provision of adequate library facilities for all persons resident in their areas (Section 163, sub-section (2)).

4.2 Consultation

A key part of the overall project will involve consultation with individuals and organisations in communities to determine their community learning, library and information needs. During phase 1 (November/December 2012) members of the public will be invited to complete a survey. This will be available online and by hardcopy. In phase 2 (January/February 2013) targeted groups, community organisations and learning partnerships will be asked to take part in further consultation including focus groups and meetings.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 At the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 24 March 2011, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport was instructed to “carry out a detailed analysis of all funded activity (both externally and internally delivered), taking into consideration a social and economic impact analysis of each activity”. At the same committee, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport was further instructed to “review the provision of community facilities within Aberdeen City, as part of the wider Service Asset Management Plan for Education, Culture and Sport.”

As reported to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 20 September 2012, the Scottish Government, through its recently published document: “Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and

Development”, places a responsibility on Local Authorities to audit the need for Community Learning and Development.

At the same meeting, the Education, Culture and Sport Committee also considered a report on Library and Information Service: New ways of working, and instructed officers to consult on current and future delivery of library services including proposals for opening hours and services at community libraries to ensure that these meet the needs of the communities they serve.

Recognising that all the above requirements are inter-connected, officers have put in place a governance structure which would see all of these strands managed as part of one overall project. The overall project will consider the issues under three main headings: Investment in external provision; Community and Learning Assets; and Audit of Community and Lifelong Learning Needs and Provision.

5.2 Investment in external provision

5.2.1 As part of the Council’s budget decision to reduce the Community Learning and Development budget in February 2011, the Council decided that the budget reductions should not affect “effective funded projects”. Although all of the externally provided projects were “effective” in terms of delivering the outputs as agreed by the Council at that time, the significant budget reductions at that time mean that there is a risk that that support for community, learning and development is not being delivered equitably across the city.

5.2.2 The services being provided through funded projects include childcare, youth work, adult learning and capacity building.

5.2.3 One strand of the Audit of Lifelong Learning Project, is considering whether the investment currently provided in relation to the external provision of services meets the needs that are identified as being required across the city in an equitable way.

5.3 Community and Learning Assets

5.3.1 As considered within Education, Culture and Sport Asset reports, there is a significant number of buildings, owned by the Council, which enable the delivery of a range of community & lifelong learning activities. These include community libraries, learning centres, community centres etc.

5.3.2 These buildings are of differing qualities and are used to differing extents.

5.3.3 The Community and Learning Assets strand of this project will consider each asset from four perspectives:

- Its physical condition
- Its fitness for purpose (suitability)
- The cost of operating the site
- The context of the community the asset is in

5.4 Audit of Community and Lifelong Learning needs and provision

- 5.4.1 This strand of the project will provide an audit of the current provision of community learning activities. This will include activities delivered by the Council and delivered through other partners and independent organisations.
- 5.4.2 In light of the scale of this piece of work, at the current time it is planned that a high-level audit will be carried out across the city, and more detail will be provided within the following three associated school boundaries: St Machar, Torry and Northfield. Other geographical areas will be considered in future phases of the project.
- 5.4.3 Along side the analysis of activities provided within communities, a two stage consultation will take place to ascertain what the needs of individuals within communities are. The first stage of this consultation will take place during November/December and will consider what services people use or not within their community, whether they consider that these services are adequate and what services they use in other areas of the city. The second stage of the consultation will take place during January and February 2013, will be informed from the outcomes of the first stage, and would address such issues as best use of Council buildings, closer partnership working across services, alternative models of delivery.
- 5.4.4 It is hoped that thereafter, a comparison of the provision against the needs will identify potential areas of over or under provision (gap analysis), and opportunities for different ways of working. This analysis will inform, and be informed by the other strands of the overall project, and the outcomes of this analysis will be reported to this committee in Summer 2013.

5.5 Key Milestones in Project Plan

Collate profiles of each ASG area to inform review	31-Dec-2012
Undertake consultation with service users and wider community of Aberdeen in two phases; Nov/Dec 2012 and Jan/Feb 2013.	01-Mar-2013
Review community and learning assets and report using traffic light system on costs, condition, suitability, utilisation, place in wider ASG area	31-Mar-2013
Undertake review external investment including 6 independent projects, who receive ACC funding through Communities Team budgets.	30-Apr-2013
Complete analysis of CLD outcomes, including social and economic impact, across the city in line with Strategic guidance for CPP	16-Aug-2013
Produce full analysis and reports pulling together the three strands	01-Sep-2013

6. IMPACT

This report relates to the Combined Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement as follows:

- Protecting children and vulnerable adults
- People of all ages take an active part in their own learning to achieve their full potential Learning and training is appropriate and accessible to learner's needs
- Children and young people access positive learning environments and develop their skills, confidence and self esteem to the fullest potential
- Children, young people and their families/carers are involved in decisions that affect them. Their voices heard and they play an active and responsible role in their communities
- Educational attainment in Aberdeen is continuously sustained and improved
- School leavers enter positive destination of employment, training or further and higher education with a focus on and support for young people who require More Choices and More Chances
- Children and young people actively participate in their communities and have optimum involvement in decision making
- All children, young people and their families have access to high quality services when required and services provide timely, proportionate and appropriate response that meeting the needs of children and young people within Getting it Right for Every Child, (GIRFEC) requirements
- Improve the quality of life in our most deprived areas
- Citizens are increasingly more active in their communities regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, where they live, disability or faith/religion/belief and contribute to 'active citizenship'
- Develop pathways to participation which enhance the diversity of local representation at and engagement with regional, national and international arts, heritage and sporting events
- Our public services are consistently high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

Public – This report will be of interest to the public, as the recommendations will impact on services delivered throughout the city.

An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment will be completed as the project progresses.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

20/9/12 Education, Culture and Sport Committee: Scottish Government: Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships, CLD

20/9/12 Education, Culture and Sport Committee: Library and Information Service: New Ways of Working

6/7/12 Education, Culture and Sport Committee Information Bulletin: Library and Information Service Update

10/9/11 Education, Culture and Sport Committee: Library and Information Services New Ways of Working

24/3/11 Education, Culture and Sport Committee: Implementation of Budget Decision – Reduce Communities Team

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