

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	<b>Education, Culture and Sport</b>
DATE	<b>16 September 2010</b>
DIRECTOR	<b>Annette Bruton</b>
TITLE OF REPORT	<b>Aberdeen City of Learning Strategy</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/10/034</b>

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The report provides the final version of the Aberdeen Learning Strategy.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report and approve the Strategy document which is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Note that the Aberdeen Learning Strategy consists of the document at Appendix 1, which represents the policy framework for learning, plus all the other major plans that have been (or will be) produced to implement the ten priorities for learning.
- 2.3 Note that as a consequence of Recommendation 2.2 above, major pieces of work are being developed and implemented as part of the roll out of the Strategy and that the finalisation of the Strategy document is therefore not an end in itself.
- 2.4 Note that the new structure of the Education, Culture & Sport service provides a fit-for-purpose structure to deliver the vision, aims and priorities set out in the Learning Strategy.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Implementation of the short term and medium term actions can be met within existing resources.
- 3.2 The financial implications, in outline, are set out in the Education, Culture & Sports service plan and will be consistent with the financial planning in the council's costed 5 year business plan which is currently being developed. The detailed financial implications will be set out in next and

future years' service plans and are subject to finalisation of the priority based budgeting process.

3.3 In the financial climate that currently exists (and will continue to exist for the foreseeable future) it is essential that we align our resources to meet the priorities set out in the Learning Strategy.

#### **4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT**

The Learning Strategy vision, aims and priorities fit with the vision in the Community Plan to develop Aberdeen as a 'City of Learning'. It is congruent with *Vibrant Dynamic and Forward Looking* and the Single Outcome Agreement.

#### **5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

The Strategy sets out a long term vision for learning in the City. As plans are developed from now and over the coming years to implement the priorities set out within the Strategy, the nature and shape of learning services will change. Whilst it is not possible to specify the implications of that change in specific detail at this time across all ten priorities, it is likely that services, assets and resources will change eg. the financial resources available, service delivery models, the nature and use of buildings, etc. The Learning Strategy represents a substantial change programme and it will be essential to consult with stakeholders.

#### **6. REPORT**

##### **6.1 Background**

Elected Members have received updates at previous Committee meetings on the development of the Aberdeen Learning Strategy. The last update was in February 2010 in the Members' Bulletin. In developing the Learning Strategy the focus of work has been three-fold:

- Further progression of key pieces of work such as A Curriculum for Excellence, development of our Learning Estates Strategy, development of Learning Partnerships and of Community Hubs, implementation of the Early Years Framework, finalization of our Cultural Strategy, implementation of our Sports Strategy, development of a new service structure, priority based budgeting, and so forth.
- Further drafting of the Aberdeen Learning Strategy document as a result of, and building upon, the work done previously. The final version of the Strategy document is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The development of this Strategy document and of the key pieces of work mentioned above have gone hand-in-hand with development of a new service business plan, and has been informed by the interim corporate business plan.

- In parallel with the redrafting work on the Learning Strategy, officers have held a range of discussion events. These events have been very different in nature to the events held last year in that the focus and intention was to foster a genuine dialogue with different stakeholder groups on key issues to do with learning. These dialogue sessions have been based around a set of 3/4 core questions used to stimulate debate. The dialogue is reflected in the next section of this report below.

## 6.2 Final version of the Learning Strategy (Appendix 1)

The previous drafts of the Learning Strategy set out eight priorities, which were broadly endorsed. As part of the more recent development work, the Director and senior management team held a workshop with managers to discuss the new service business plan and as a result of that we now propose a set of ten priorities as below (the additional two are highlighted):

- Curriculum for Excellence
- Helping those with different needs
- Working together
- Learning in the wider community
- Fit-for-purpose schools/learning centres
- Technology
- Skilled and trained staff
- Value for money
- **Community health and well being**
- **Community engagement in culture, arts and heritage**

The two additional priorities allow a more explicit focus on two critical areas of work and help to secure a more effective alignment with the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA)/Community Plan and with our corporate business plan priorities, which are:

- Environment
- Economic and social growth and regeneration
- Reducing poverty and inequality
- Better performing, better value

The addition of the two new priorities, along with the work being done to widen out the Strategy, requires us to think again about the vision set out in the last version of the Strategy. Furthermore, whilst the general vision that was set out previously met with support, stakeholders had difficulty in visualising how the Strategy would change or improve outcomes for learners and the city.

We now propose a broad and overarching vision for learning which is about **lifelong learning**. Therefore, within the council and outwith it amongst its stakeholders and partners, it is essential that we develop a strong lifelong learning culture in order to realise fully the positive outcomes in the **attainment, achievement and aspirations** of children, young people, adults, families and communities. The continued development and establishment of a clear and collective lifelong learning message, together with access to high quality lifelong

learning services for Aberdeen communities is key if the aims within the council and the aspirations of citizens, parents, schools and communities are to be achieved.

A culture of lifelong learning brings real benefits to society as well as to the individual, to the employer as well as those employed. We strongly believe that lifelong learning is the key to improving the social fabric of our city as well as our local economy. Learning contributes to all stages of life, and our vision for learning in Aberdeen is inclusive of all ages and all communities.

Aberdeen is committed to achieving a positive future for everyone and to ensure this, we wish to see learning and skills at the very heart of council services. This means ensuring that:

- Learning is valued in its own right, as a source of fulfilment, and as a means of building individual and community capacity and self-determination.
- Lifelong learning is integral to raising attainment in pre-school children and in schools by influencing attitudes to learning and enhancing the abilities of parents and carers to support their children's education.
- Learning supports the development of skills, to ensure that jobs of the future are sourced locally, and that the city and its communities thrive through improved opportunities for fulfilling and rewarding employment.

We believe that our Strategy and our ambition for Aberdeen to be a *City of Learning* is about achieving a number of desired outcomes, including:

- Increased recognition of the importance of learning throughout life
- Enhanced access to learning opportunities for at risk, disadvantaged and marginalised community members and groups
- Higher staying on and course completion rates for pupils/students
- Greater levels of literacy and numeracy
- Increased access to and use of learning technologies
- Increased citizen engagement and social inclusion
- Increased recognition of and support for minority ethnic communities alongside a celebration and promotion of our Scottish heritage
- Greater collaboration among educators and trainers

These desired outcomes will contribute to the social, economic and environmental well being of our city and its people:

**Socially**, more literate, educated and informed citizens will be better able to contribute to and participate in all facets of community life. They will also be more aware, respectful and tolerant of different cultures, lifestyles, races and religions. These qualities are catalysts for building healthy, inclusive and safe communities, in other words, for community cohesion.

**Economically**, more literate, educated and informed citizens will enhance employee productivity; facilitate innovation and research; and build business and workforce capacity to respond to change. These qualities will contribute to business and community competitive advantage. Individually, more literate,

educated and informed citizens will enhance employability, earning potential and independence.

**Environmentally**, more literate, educated and informed citizens will be better able to make consumer and lifestyle choices which support sustainability, while working cooperatively to develop innovative and unique solutions to address environmental challenges.

The lifelong learning approach now proposed has resulted in a different way of thinking about the Learning Strategy and, as Appendix 1 sets out, we believe that we should think of learning and learners in terms of a life stages approach. The Strategy will be delivered through five life stages:

1. Early childhood
2. Childhood and early adolescence
3. Later adolescence and early adulthood
4. Adulthood
5. Later life

### **6.3 Engagement with stakeholders**

The purposes of this phase of engagement and dialogue events was to achieve a better understanding of what learning means for everyone, to understand people's experiences of learning, to help build a compelling vision for learning for all Aberdeen learners, and to inform our planning for learning services over the coming years.

Set out below is an outline of the main engagement events:

- An event led by our Arts Education Team for primary-aged children at the Art Gallery
- A parallel event for secondary-aged pupils
- Two briefing and workshop sessions for elected Members, following on from previous briefings on the Learning Estate and on A Curriculum for Excellence
- A workshop for The Aberdeen Community Alliance (TACA)
- Discussion session with the Youth Forum
- An event with School Councils from across our schools
- Dialogue sessions with Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations
- Staff briefings and workshops
- A pupil opinion survey on their learning experiences and ideas for change
- A workshop for parent councils, following on from previous engagement
- School-based engagement, via head teachers, with teaching and support staff
- Discussion with early years providers
- Engagement with TACA's Lifelong Learning Forum, and through that with the Universities and Aberdeen College
- A workshop and discussion session with the Burgesses of Guild
- Workshop and discussion with the Civic Forum

- Briefings for head teachers
- Discussions with officials from Aberdeen City Community Health Partnership

The events for school-aged children and young people were particularly successful, with over 130 pupils from our schools and with over 50 adults (parents, teachers, and support staff) participating. A presentation was made by a few of the primary children involved to councillors who attended the first briefing in February. Some of those children were also involved in a news item for the BBC's Newsround programme.

#### **6.4 Next steps**

Once the Learning Strategy has been approved, the major pieces of work highlighted in section 6.1 above will continue to be progressed and implemented. The Learning Strategy represents a long term vision for learning in the city and as part of that it is essential that we maintain an on-going dialogue with learners of all ages and all stakeholders. Such dialogue and engagement forms part of the development work on all the priorities set out in the Learning Strategy.

The Strategy document will be widely circulated and made available, with further opportunities to comment on the whole document as priorities are implemented or on the separate pieces of work, such as A Curriculum for Excellence, etc. Further work will also be undertaken to ensure that we know how well we are achieving the outcomes set out in the Strategy.

### **7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**



Sohail Faruqi  
 Service Manager (Additional Support Needs & 5-14 Education)  
 Aberdeen City Council  
 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 St Nicholas House  
 Broad Street  
 Aberdeen  
[sfaruqi@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:sfaruqi@aberdeencity.gov.uk)  
 01224 522695

### **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Previous related reports to Committee:

- (a) 27 August, 2009: Draft Learning Strategy: Update on the Consultation and Engagement Process
- (b) 8 October, 2009: Vibrant Aberdeen: The Draft Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen City 2010-15
- (c) 8 October, 2009: Community Learning Hubs and Review of Community Centres and Community Learning & Development Activity
- (d) 8 October, 2009: Learning Strategy Update
- (e) 8 October, 2009: Draft Learning Estates Strategy 2009-2024
- (f) 15 April, 2010: Education, Culture and Sport Directorate Service Improvement Plan 2010-2013

## ABERDEEN LEARNING STRATEGY: AN OVERVIEW ACROSS THE FIVE LIFE STAGES

	Early Childhood	Childhood and Early Adolescence	Later Adolescence and Early Adulthood	Adulthood	Later Life
<b>Curriculum for Excellence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give children the best start in life ensuring <b>all</b> children have access to integrated child centred play, learning, health and care services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasize parental involvement in and responsibility for learning.</li> <li>Encourage family learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultivate a lifelong learning perspective and access to learning via community hubs and learning partnerships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultivate a lifelong learning perspective and access to learning via community hubs and learning partnerships.</li> <li>Support access to ICT and published resources eg. on healthy living choices, via a wide range of outlets in the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultivate a lifelong learning perspective and access to learning via community hubs and learning partnerships.</li> </ul>
<b>Fit-for-purpose schools/learning centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize that parents have the key role to play in their children's learning. Welcome and encourage them to be actively involved in early years settings, as well as supporting parents as educators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect children to services eg. community centres, libraries, sports and recreation opportunities..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasize individual responsibility for learning and opportunities for individual choice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance adult literacy and numeracy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support a range of leisure activities for older people.</li> <li>Helping to create and sustain social networks and to encourage participation in activities that will enable people to maintain their physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual health.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning in the wider community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure pre-school services that build on children's previous learning and provide a rich, stimulating, exciting and active learning environment where creativity and innovation flourish.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultivate a joy of learning and a sense of inquiry in all settings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strong analytical and technological skills supported through access to and use of new technologies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster civic engagement and Volunteering.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster civic engagement and volunteering</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively involve young children in planning their own learning, encouraging high aspirations and a can do attitude.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage involvement in arts, cultural, recreation and sports activities by supporting easy/affordable access to services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on skills for life.</li> <li>Foster healthy life styles and choices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support a range of adult and continuing education programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote inter-generational linkages and mentoring opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the development of high quality indoor and outdoor play opportunities that develop children's early literacy, numeracy, enquiry and creativity skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop effective social skills and independence and with a focus on emotional intelligence development.</li> <li>Work with children and young people to help them learn about what affects their health and wellbeing and to help them make informed decisions about preventing harms to health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster civic engagement and social responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase physical and sporting activity.</li> <li>Support individuals and communities to take effective self-help action to improve and maintain their.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide learning opportunities in comfortable and suitable settings.</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement in arts, culture and heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and employ staffs who are appropriately qualified, highly motivated, effective and able to work with children and families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on literacy and numeracy, ensuring a focus on practical and real life use of skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase rates of secondary school attainment, achievement and core skills for life.</li> <li>Foster achievement via homework and revision clubs, and via mentoring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage employers to create a culture which embraces lifelong learning..</li> <li>Support greater "day release" or "studying while working" opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and address barriers to learning e.g., ageism, transport, health, including mental health, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Helping those with different needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop seamless transitions between services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster civic engagement and social responsibility.</li> <li>Develop seamless transitions between services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop seamless transitions between services and enhance partnerships with colleges, universities and employers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage employers to facilitate learning on the job eg job coaching and mentoring opportunities..</li> <li>Develop seamless transitions between services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop seamless transitions between services.</li> </ul>
<b>Better performing/Value for money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage family learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and address barriers to learning eg. learning disabilities and different needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help to enhance opportunities and capacity for post-16 education and training, including apprenticeships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate re-entry into the workforce for displaced and older workers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage appropriate outdoor learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Skilled and trained staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with families/parents in family /community settings to help equip them with the knowledge, skills and resources to take actions that will improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of their children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on knowledge and skills to ensure good progression and depth of learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase FE/course completion rates.</li> <li>Increase HE positive learner destinations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase collaboration between employers, educators and trainers in the wider community.</li> </ul>	
<b>Working together</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage learning beyond the classroom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and address barriers to learning eg entry requirements, financial, etc and work to reduce these barriers.</li> <li>Encourage learning beyond the classroom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and address barriers to learning.</li> </ul>	
					



ABERDEEN  
CITY COUNCIL



# Aberdeen Learning Strategy

## City of Learning



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# Section 1

## Introduction and context

### What do we mean by learning?

Learning takes place throughout life and involves both formal and informal learning. It involves everyone - children and young people of all ages; adults, both in and out of employment; workplace training; further and higher education; learning and development - and is tailored to communities, individuals and families.

We want Aberdeen to be a City of Learning where learning is for everyone and lots of people are involved as participants and educators. While some learning is delivered by the council, this strategy covers learning activities paid for by the council and delivered by our partners, such as our early years partner providers and the Sports Trust. It also includes the role of the council in delivering learning to its own workforce.

### Why do we need an Aberdeen Learning Strategy?

A sound education opens doors, not just to positive employment opportunities, but also to the enjoyment of art and culture and the stretching of imagination and horizons. It also provides information to enable children, young people and adults to make informed choices about their life and work.

Aberdeen City Council delivers a wide range of services which enable people to take part in learning, sport and cultural activities. We want to develop a single learning strategy showing how we are going to develop and improve learning over the coming years. The Aberdeen Learning Strategy sets out our vision, our priorities and what we want to achieve. It will focus our attention on how we are going to spend our money.

The strategy builds on the wealth of experience and good practice that has been present in Aberdeen for many years. It has been developed by engaging with services across the council, our partners, parent and youth councils and members of the public (children, young people and adults).

We need a strategy so that our citizens, whether a child, young person or adult know what to expect from learning in the city.



### What did we take into account when developing this strategy?

In developing this strategy we have considered the following trends, challenges and opportunities – all of which impact on how learning is delivered within the city.

## Trends

### Reducing school rolls

Many of our schools are under-capacity resulting in increased costs and additional money needing to be spent on maintaining the buildings instead of being directed at learning.

### Ageing school estate

Some of our school buildings are in poor condition and not fit for the 21st century.

### Increasing achievement gaps

We need to tackle the gap that exists between the most advantaged and those associated with socio-economic disadvantage, including those learners for whom English is an additional language and those who are looked after children.

### Population

Overall the population continues to fluctuate and the pupil population is predicated to decline by up to 37% over the next 15 years.

### English as an additional language

The growth in the number of migrant families continues to rise year-on-year and there is a requirement to support children, young people and adults with English as an additional language.

## Challenges

### Changing employment opportunities

The gradual downturn in the oil and gas industry means that we need to ensure that young people and adults acquire the skills to be the workforce of the future.

### Closing the inequalities gap

Aberdeen is the third largest city and is perceived as a prosperous city. The view is supported by data showing low levels of unemployment, high earnings, buoyant house prices and good health. There are citizens in Aberdeen however who do not achieve good levels of health and wellbeing, educational achievement and life chances. There are significant numbers of children with additional support needs who require social work and/or learning support during their lives because of family, social and economic circumstances. The number of children in this category is projected to rise, in some instances due to drug and alcohol related issues. The costs associated with providing services to them is also projected to increase significantly.



## **Opportunities**

### **Aberdeen City Local Plan, Aberdeen City Regeneration Plan and Regional Structure Plan**

These plans set out a programme for economic growth with housing developments both within the city and shire including affordable housing.

### **3Rs Project**

Our 3Rs Project includes the development of nine new schools and one refurbished school.

### **Curriculum for Excellence**

The introduction of a new curriculum in our schools will enhance curriculum choice and flexibility.

### **Learning environments**

We need to create opportunities to allow learning to happen outwith the classroom and schools.

### **Promoting health and wellbeing**

At schools and into adulthood we need to continue to promote health and wellbeing, including mental health, to reduce the negative impact of childhood obesity and address the high levels of teenage pregnancy.

### **What does the Aberdeen Learning Strategy cover?**

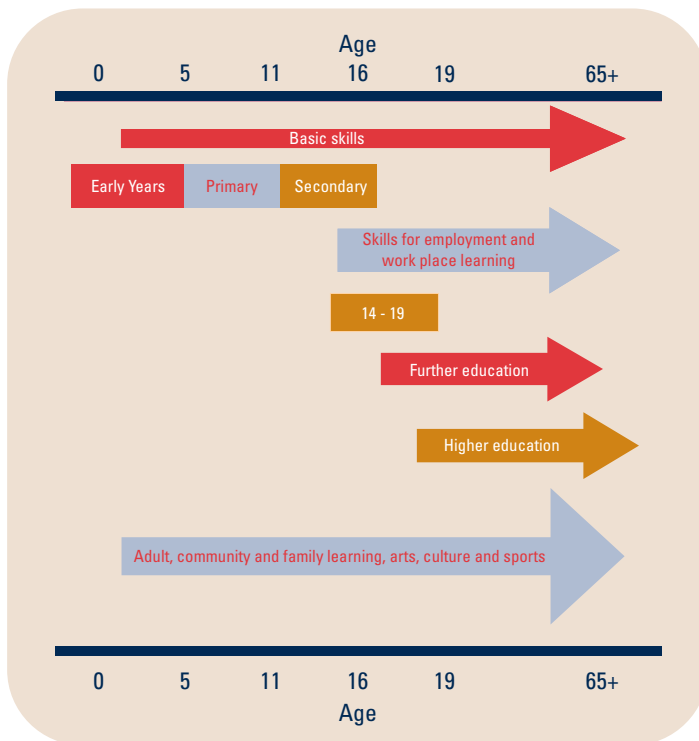
The Aberdeen Learning Strategy does not only relate to the age of learners, it relates to our ambition to use learning to help individuals, communities and organisations to contribute to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our city. The strategy also addresses the barriers and gaps which may inhibit learning from occurring. It emphasises collaboration and partnership and facilitates stronger links between formal learning (school education) and the learning that takes place at home, in communities and in the workplace.

Change is a part of life and our services need to be able to respond to change in order to improve the quality of life for children, young people, adults, families and communities. Aberdeen's Learning Strategy is a strategy for how learning will be delivered in the city, the opportunities for everyone and the benefits that improved learning will bring.

## Five life stages

The strategy will be delivered through five life stages:

1. Early childhood.
2. Childhood and early adolescence.
3. Later adolescence and early adulthood.
4. Adulthood.
5. Later life.



Developing a strong lifelong learning culture is integral to realising positive outcomes in the attainment, achievement and aspirations of children, young people, adults, families and communities.

The continual development of and access to lifelong learning for Aberdeen communities will help us achieve an important aim of the council and of the city's Single Outcome Agreement\* and Community Plan.

\* Each council in Scotland has a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) which is an agreement between the Scottish Government and council, setting out how each will work towards achieving the national priorities.

# Section 2

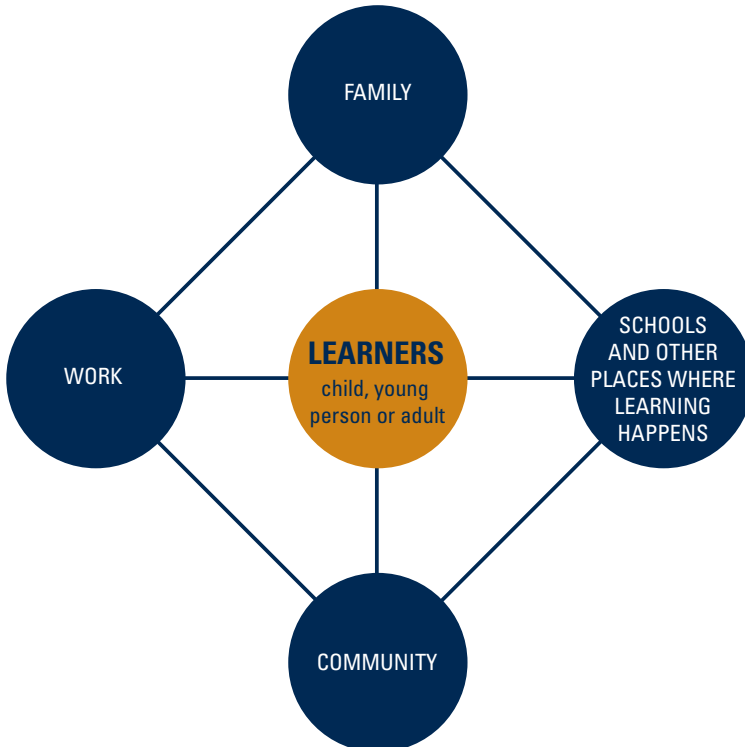
## Our vision for a City of Learning

### What is our vision?

*Aberdeen is a place which recognises, values and celebrates learning; a place where all sectors work together to ensure access to learning; a place where citizens accept learning as an essential and integral part of their lives; and a place where citizens take responsibility for learning throughout their lives.*

### What does this vision mean for Aberdeen?

This strategy brings together in a single document the principle of lifelong learning – while it builds on what you learn at school, it is more than that. Learning happens everywhere – at home, at school, at work and in the community. We learn from everyone and we educate others. The strategy is intended to provide the framework through which we can achieve this vision and our learning aspirations for everyone in Aberdeen.



**Learning will start at birth.** Every child will have a caring, nurturing, safe and stimulating environment in which to develop and grow. Parents will play a critical role in their child's development, building early literacy skills and cultivating a joy of learning, especially through play and a sense of inquiry. Families will be supported by a range of community services from health to quality childcare, which will build upon family and individual capacities and identify and address potential barriers to learning.

At the age of five, every child will not only be ready for school (cognitively, emotionally, physically and socially), they will be equipped to progress. **Children, whether at home, in the community or at school, will be exposed to new experiences and ideas and will be encouraged to pursue individual interests.** They will develop effective social skills and will be proficient in literacy and numeracy. Parents will play a pivotal role, providing assistance, encouragement and support. Children will be encouraged to explore their artistic and creative sides through community and school-based activities, as well as contribute to their community through volunteering.

**Young people will be prepared for the world of work and will have developed a lifelong learning perspective, taking responsibility for their own learning,** as well as a sense of social responsibility. Those at risk or vulnerable in some way, will be supported by the community and school services to help them move into adulthood.

Young adults will be ready and equipped for employment or post-16 education and training. Barriers to access, such as finance or transport, will be addressed, ensuring that those who want to learn can. Post-16 learning will be supplemented by a range of adult and **continuing education programmes catering for different aptitudes, ages, cultures and interests.** These programmes will include basic literacy and other courses, which will equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary for further learning, while facilitating civic engagement and social inclusion.

**Adults will be encouraged to continue learning throughout their lives,** whether for employment or personal reasons. They will also be encouraged to explore artistic, creative and spiritual interests, and leisure and recreational pursuits, enabling them to live fuller, richer lives, while preparing them for later life, when they will likely have more leisure time.

**Learning will not be confined to the classroom** but will occur in a multitude of settings, including at home, in community facilities, informally with friends, through participation in cultural activities and events, as a result of volunteering and in the workplace.

Employees will be empowered to take responsibility for their own learning, capitalising on the options available to them, while creating their own learning opportunities. Business and industry will create a culture of learning which embraces competency development and continuous improvement. **Education and training will be seen as an investment;** a way of enhancing productivity and competitive advantage, while building internal capacity, local knowledge and employee loyalty. As such, employees will be able to respond and adapt to change, including employment and technological shifts, which may necessitate new work situations or career paths.

**Later life will open up an array of new learning opportunities.** Older people will seek out volunteer work, acting as coaches and mentors to younger people; or they will participate in the workforce on a casual or part-time basis.

## **What does a City of Learning mean?**

Raising the levels of attainment, achievement and aspiration among children, young people and adults throughout the city is essential. Raising attainment and achievement in schools cannot be achieved in isolation from raising attainment, achievement and aspiration among adults. Aberdeen parents, carers and families need to have the confidence and skills to support their children in school; to become involved in their children's learning, and play their part in supporting and challenging our schools to deliver the high standards that a prosperous learning community demands. The development of communities as learning hubs is, in part, dependent upon building knowledge and skills, together with developing intellectual, professional and social capital throughout our communities.

A culture of lifelong learning brings real benefits to society as well as to the individual and similarly to the employer as well as those employed. We strongly believe that lifelong learning is the key to improving our city socially as well as economically. Learning contributes to all stages of life, and our vision for learning in Aberdeen is inclusive of all ages and all communities.

**Aberdeen is committed to achieving a positive future for everyone and to ensure this, we want learning to be at the very heart of council services.**

**This means ensuring that:**

- Learning is valued in its own right, as a source of fulfilment, and as a means of building individual and community capacity and self-determination.
- Lifelong learning is integral to raising attainment in pre-school children and in schools by influencing attitudes to learning and enhancing the abilities of parents and carers to support their children's education.
- Learning supports the development of skills, to ensure that the jobs of the future are sourced locally, and that the city and its communities thrive through improved opportunities and fulfilling and rewarding employment.

**As a City of Learning we want an Aberdeen where:**

- People have the basic skills to enable them to participate in economic, social and civic life.
- Opportunities and participation in learning within the community are increased, and aspiration is raised.
- People have the skills they need for sustained employment.
- Progression to further and higher education is a shared aspiration and is accessible to all areas of the community.
- The council takes the lead in developing its own workforce and becomes an example of good practice.



## What difference will the Aberdeen Learning Strategy make?

By implementing this strategy and the idea that learning happens everywhere, we will achieve our vision for Aberdeen to be a City of Learning. This will be shown by:

- Increased recognition of the importance of learning throughout life.
- Enhanced access to learning opportunities for everyone.
- Higher staying on and course completion rates for pupils/students.
- Greater levels of literacy and numeracy.
- Increased access to and use of learning technologies.
- Increased citizen engagement and social inclusion.
- Increased recognition of and support for minority ethnic communities alongside a celebration and promotion of our Scottish heritage.
- Greater collaboration among educators and trainers.

This will also contribute to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our city and its residents.

### **Social**

More literate, educated and informed citizens will be better able to contribute to and participate in community life. They will be more aware, respectful and tolerant of different cultures, lifestyles, races and religions. These qualities will help build healthy, inclusive and safe communities.

### **Economic**

More literate, educated and informed citizens will enhance employee productivity; facilitate innovation and research; and build business and workforce capacity so it can respond to change. These qualities will contribute to business and community competitive advantage. Individually, more literate, educated and informed citizens will be more attractive to employers, therefore enhancing an individual's earning potential and independence.

### **Environmental**

More literate, educated and informed citizens will be better able to make consumer and lifestyle choices which support sustainability, while working cooperatively to develop innovative and unique solutions to address environmental challenges.

## What does this mean for learners?



### For children and young people

- Have the best possible start to learning through a high quality play-based curriculum.
- Be treated as a partner in your learning.
- Be able to learn about things that interest and affect you.
- Be equipped with the basic skills which open doors to a full life and promote your inclusion in the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Aberdeen society.
- Have positive and inspiring learning environments.
- Have enjoyable and motivating learning experiences.
- Experience education, training and work place learning that is tailored to your needs.
- Access a wide and varied range of opportunities to participate in volunteering and active citizenship.
- Be able to access high quality, responsive and accessible services and facilities.
- Receive personal support and advice - where and when it is needed.
- Be able to participate in recreational and social opportunities in a safe and accessible environment.
- Gain sporting, artistic, musical and outdoor experiences to develop your talents, broaden horizons and promote your lifelong learning.
- Have the right to be consulted, to participate in decision making, and to be heard, on all matters which concern your learning or that have an impact on your lives.

## For adults

- Be able to access a wide range of learning opportunities, either in your local community or elsewhere in the city.
- Have the opportunity to participate in volunteering and community activities.
- Have the opportunity to improve your basic skills.
- Have opportunities to gain more formal qualifications through out your working life and beyond.
- Be able to participate in a wide range of physical, recreational and musical activities.
- Be able to fully engage in the learning of your child if you are a parent/carer.
- Be supported to develop your skills in order to enhance your personal prosperity.



# Section 3

## Our priorities

### What are our priorities?

The Education, Culture and Sport directorate has 10 priorities which will focus our work on achieving our vision of lifelong learning.

#### **Curriculum for Excellence**

Implementing the new curriculum for schools.

#### **Fit-for-purpose schools/learning centres**

Making sure that we have the right facilities in the right place.

#### **Learning in the wider community**

Lifelong learning for everyone.

#### **Technology**

Using technology for learning.

#### **Health and wellbeing**

Helping people to make the right lifestyle choices from an early age and throughout their lives.

#### **Engagement in arts, culture and heritage**

Improving the quality of and impact of arts, culture and heritage provisions across the city

#### **Helping those with different needs**

Helping everyone reach their potential.

#### **Better performing/Value for money**

Demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement

#### **Skilled and trained staff**

Continually developing our staff through training opportunities.

#### **Working together**

Making sure services work together in the interests of the learner