



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: POLICY, PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND RESOURCES

Date of Meeting: 17th August 2004

Public Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan:

Yes

Outside Policy Framework

Title: LEARNING CITY CARLISLE
Report of: Strategic & Performance Services
Report reference: SP34/04

Summary:

The City Vision Partnership is minded to pursue 'Learning City' status for Carlisle, which is intended to

- support widening participation in lifelong learning
- use learning to promote social & economic regeneration

The report explains the concept of the Learning City and the attached Learning Plan sets out long-term aims and objectives. Action planning at a more operational level is about to commence.

Recommendations:

- To agree to support the pursuit of Learning City status for Carlisle and to agree the contents of the attached Learning Plan.

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

The City Vision (Carlisle City Council's Community Plan published in 2002) stated that, "Retaining Skills, knowledge and expertise in The City area is crucial if we are to also retain and encourage investment".

This community priority was reflected in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2002 – 2005, where "In partnership, develop and retain skills in the Carlisle area" was a specific corporate objective.

At recent City Vision meetings, skills development and learning in its widest sense have emerged as priority areas for action. An effective and inspirational way of co-ordinating action in these areas is to pursue, as a partnership, "Learning City" status for Carlisle.

The Learning City concept first emerged in 1992. Learning Cities promote lifelong learning widely, develop effective local partnerships between all sectors of the community and to support and motivate individuals and employers to participate in learning.

Learning Cities have two purposes:-

- to support widening participation in lifelong learning; and
- to use learning to promote social and economic regeneration

A proposal for the City Vision Partnership to pursue Learning City status was presented to the Partnership meeting in March 2004, where it received unanimous support.

At that meeting, a small writing group was formed, which produced the attached Learning Plan to cover the period 2004-2012. Its strategic aims and objectives are articulated on pages 8 & 9.

2. CONSULTATION

City Vision Partners not involved in producing the Learning Plan. The Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

3. STAFFING/RESOURCES COMMENTS

City Vision partners will form the working sub groups referred to in the Learning Plan. Apart from the convenors of the groups, membership will be fluid so the project may maximise the expertise and skills available within the partnership. This will include Carlisle City Council staff as appropriate, including the new post of Education Officer.

4. HEAD OF FINANCE'S COMMENTS

Financial implications are dependent on the next stage of the project, action planning, and will be reported as soon as they are known.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

N/A

6. CORPORATE COMMENTS

Learning City Carlisle has direct links to the City Vision and the Council's Corporate Plan, as well as regional and national strategies.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

No major risks identified at this stage.

8. EQUALITY ISSUES

Learning City Carlisle will promote equality through increasing access to learning opportunities.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL

The Learning Plan (and all City Vision correspondence) are now distributed via e-mail unless otherwise stated.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

A positive impact potentially as the project will address crime related issues such as social and economic regeneration and alternative activities for young people.

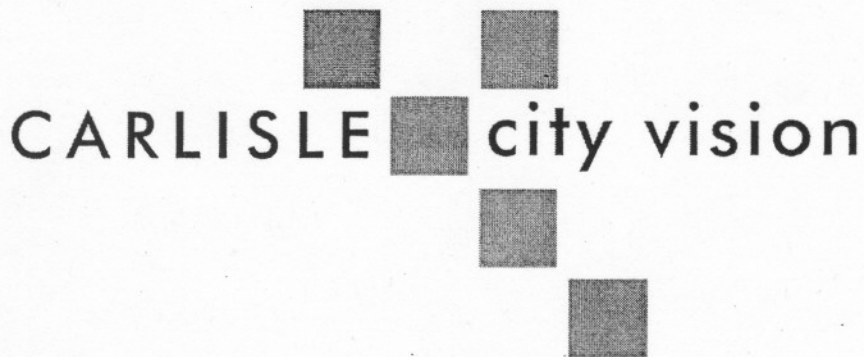
11. RECOMMENDATIONS

To agree to support the pursuit of Learning City status for Carlisle and to agree the contents of the attached Learning Plan.

12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve learning opportunities in Carlisle and enhance Carlisle's reputation as a location of choice for further and higher education opportunities.

LEARNING CITY CARLISLE



Putting the bricks in place to become a Learning City

LEARNING PLAN 2004-2012

LEARNING CITY YORK
YORK'S LIFELONG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Working Together

'Our ambition is to create a lifelong learning society in Carlisle that will benefit our citizens and future generations. We will work together to promote learning and encourage all members of our communities take pride in their city and understand its cultural value.'

*'Learning should be fulfilling and enjoyable. Through our partnership and by empowering individuals and organisations, we will improve learning opportunities for everyone and develop a positive attitude to change.'*¹

1 The City Vision Partnership and Learning City Carlisle

The City Vision partnership (the Partnership) was launched in 2002. Over 100 individuals and organisations from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors in the Carlisle area joined together to work in partnership for the benefit of the people of Carlisle. Five themes were identified as being important to the development of the city. They are:

- Communities
- Economic Prosperity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
- Celebrating Carlisle

In December 2003, the Partnership proposed that Carlisle would benefit by becoming a Learning City.

The concept of the learning city was first raised nationally in 1992 with the intention of promoting learning and lifelong learning in towns and cities throughout the UK.

The Learning City concept was explored by City Vision further and in March 2004 the Partnership committed themselves to realise Learning City status for Carlisle. With this in mind, it joined the Learning Communities Network in April 2004 with the intention of creating and developing a culture of learning and lifelong learning in Carlisle.

Learning City Carlisle will celebrate the achievements of the city and provide a means for progressing a coherent, inclusive and learning-led initiative that supports the city's ambition to be a prosperous and inclusive major regional centre. A great deal of learning – formal and informal – already takes place within the city. Learning City Carlisle does not seek to replace these activities but to add value by providing a means of co-ordination and enhancement of existing activity and the encouragement of new activity under a recognisable and valued brand. It seeks to add value to learning in Carlisle by ensuring the sum of learning activity is greater than the constituent parts.

¹ City Vision Partners, April 2004

2 The Local Dimension

The Partnership recognises that people are Carlisle's greatest resource and it will strive to meet the learning needs of individuals, organisations, communities and businesses. It sees lifelong learning at the heart of a modern and progressive 21st Century City – something that can enable personal fulfilment, social cohesion and economic growth.

The Partnership's vision of learning is a holistic one, which values and celebrates the importance of all learning – whether formal or informal - and whenever or wherever it occurs. It will work to break down perceived barriers between the 'stages' of learning and encourage all to think laterally and creatively about how, where and when learning can, and does, take place. It will work to raise aspirations, and to develop confidence in people that they can achieve and can help others achieve. It will work to encourage provision of opportunities to learn driven by the needs of learners. Learning City Carlisle quite simply believes that through learning, positive differences can be made to the lives of many.

The Partnership fully recognises that a lot of learning activity is currently taking place throughout Carlisle. It is now looking at the next stage of its development: to widen and deepen its links with other strategic groups in the city. This in turn will assist collaboration and regeneration still further.

Learning and skills development is central to the future success of the city. The Partnership believes that Carlisle has a great deal of untapped potential and it can play its part in realising the learning potential within Carlisle's communities. It also recognises the strengths that the city currently possesses:

- A modern yet historic city
- A city with national and European links
- A city of creativity and knowledge
- A city of rural and urban communities

Partners agree that learning should have strong links to these strengths and to the themes contained within the City Vision document.

Carlisle has the potential to be known internationally as a city of excellence and learning at *all* levels. The Partnership agrees that learning can and should take place from the very local and inclusive level to city wide, internationally recognised institutions.

Though this initiative is not about Further and Higher Education alone it is clear that Carlisle stands at a very important crossroads in terms of physical development of its learning institutions across the city. A student population of several thousand is a key asset in the further development – socially, culturally and economically – of the City. One aim of the Partnership will be to play a major role in Carlisle becoming a "University" City with all the benefits this can bring to the whole population.

Carlisle has witnessed much development and many initiatives within learning over the past few years by individuals and organisations across the city. The Partnership hopes to make the bigger picture clearer which will help to build on existing strengths, as well as being aware of potential areas for improvement.

3 The Regional Dimension

The North West Development Agency (NWDA) launched its new Regional Economic Strategy in March 2003 to ensure it continues to meet the changing needs of the region. Learning City Carlisle will contribute significantly to the Agency's objectives. The Agency focuses its resources on five objectives:

- Business Development
- Regeneration
- Skills and Employment
- Infrastructure
- Image

Skills and Employment

The Agency believes that training and skill development are critical to the long-term goal of creating a prosperous region. *'To remain competitive, businesses require a workforce whose skills and capabilities, attitudes and educational qualifications match market needs.'*²

The NWDA has established a regional forum - Northwest Sector Skills Forum - to enable an effective response to the Government's *Skills for Life* national strategy. This forum addresses the issues facing those individuals who have poor literacy and numeracy skills.

4 The National Dimension

Several learning initiatives and strategies have been introduced during the last ten years

In 1998 the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) produced *The Learning Age: a Renaissance for a New Britain*. In the document it was stated that *'To achieve stable and sustainable growth, we will need a well-educated, well-equipped and adaptable labour force.'*

The following year, the DFEE commissioned Sir Claus Moser to write a report on literacy and numeracy in England. His groundbreaking *A Fresh Start* identified up to seven million adults in England who could not read or write at the level expected of an 11-year-old. It further identified that more have difficulty with numbers. In order to address this problem, the Government published *Skills for Life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills* in 2000. In producing this document, the Government states that people with low literacy and numeracy skills:

- Lose out financially
- Have low self-confidence and low motivation
- Are more prone to health problems
- Suffer social exclusion
- Have children who are more likely to struggle at school

Moreover, the strategy points out that employers cannot compete in an increasingly global, knowledge-based economy without a workforce able to add real value at every level. *Skills for Life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills* is designed to ensure that every relevant organisation, at national and local level, can contribute to improving learning activity by working to a common set of objectives. Other relevant documents include the Department for Education and Skills' (DFES) *21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential: Individuals, Employers, Nation* produced in 2003.

² NDWA Regional Economic Strategy

5 Learning Communities Network

The Learning City concept became a major influence on the development of the UK's Learning City (Community) Network (LCN); a subscription funded network that has grown steadily since 1996 from a small core of supporters to around 35 affiliated members today. Its members share experiences and best practice in order to develop a learning culture in their towns, cities and communities.

The LCN is an important forum for debate on the potential of partnerships to link lifelong learning with regeneration and local economic development.

The Partnership has joined the LCN and will network with other members to utilise best practice methods of learning in appropriate areas.

6 Principles

*'The strongest partnerships evolve from mutual respect, pairing of complementary strengths, and collaborative planning and decision making.'*³

The principles underpinning the City Vision Partners commitment to Learning City Carlisle:

- Recognising the transforming effect of learning on individuals and the communities in which they live
- Developing and supporting individuals, businesses, organisations and communities in Carlisle to become lifelong learners
- Diversity, inclusion, accountability and excellence
- Promoting lifelong learning at all stages of learning, including pre-16 learning
- Transparency in the development of local strategies for post 16-education and training
- Developing mutual understanding and respecting the different roles and remits of partners
- A presumption that new initiatives should be progressed through the Partnership and wherever possible developing through the Learning City brand, a strong incentive to potential partners to come on board and also to raise the profile of learning in the city
- Learning City Carlisle will not duplicate work already taking place but seek to add value in key ways

7 Benefits

Learning City Carlisle will benefit everyone throughout the city. The Partnership will seek to support, where possible, the appropriate bodies in delivering the following benefits:

Opportunities for children and young people:

1. To maintain a record of high participation and achievement up to age 19 by making sure that provision meets the highest quality standards
2. To boost participation and achievement still further by targeting specific groups and locations
3. To make future provision more flexible, more responsive and more accessible to all, through innovation, sharing good practice and promoting collaboration between providers
4. To improve the employability of young people, starting pre-16 (through education-business link activity) and continuing through all forms of provision to age 19
5. To promote opportunities for all, regardless of the barriers they may face
6. To improve progression routes and enable a flexible approach to post-16 education, to focus on the 14-19 age group, to ensure that the most disengaged children and young people have access to education at all levels.

For adults:

7. To boost participation in learning by showing people how they can benefit from learning, whether for career reasons, for personal fulfilment, or for fun
8. To make it easier for people to get information, advice and guidance so they can make sound decisions about learning
9. To make it easier for people to learn by making sure they have access to a wide range of high-quality opportunities at times and in places which fit in with their lifestyles and interests
10. To help thousands of people improve their essential skills by breaking down the physical and psychological barriers that get in the way
11. To promote equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity
12. To promote progression into higher levels of skill and knowledge, including access to higher education
13. To support new approaches to learning, including IT-based learning
14. To extend and invigorate provision, including working with new providers where appropriate (not least, in the voluntary sector)
15. To celebrate and further develop learning for its own sake

For employers:

16. To work with employers to identify ways in which they and their organisations can benefit from workforce development, both long and short term
17. To make it easier for employers to get information and advice so that they can identify and plan investment in skills and secure the right provision for their needs
18. To support the development of skills in short supply, whether in a particular sector or vocational area, or across all employment sectors (management development, for example)
19. To promote the skills and knowledge people need to make a success of setting up their own businesses
20. To promote the uptake of qualifications which provide a framework for identifying training needs and recognising achievement

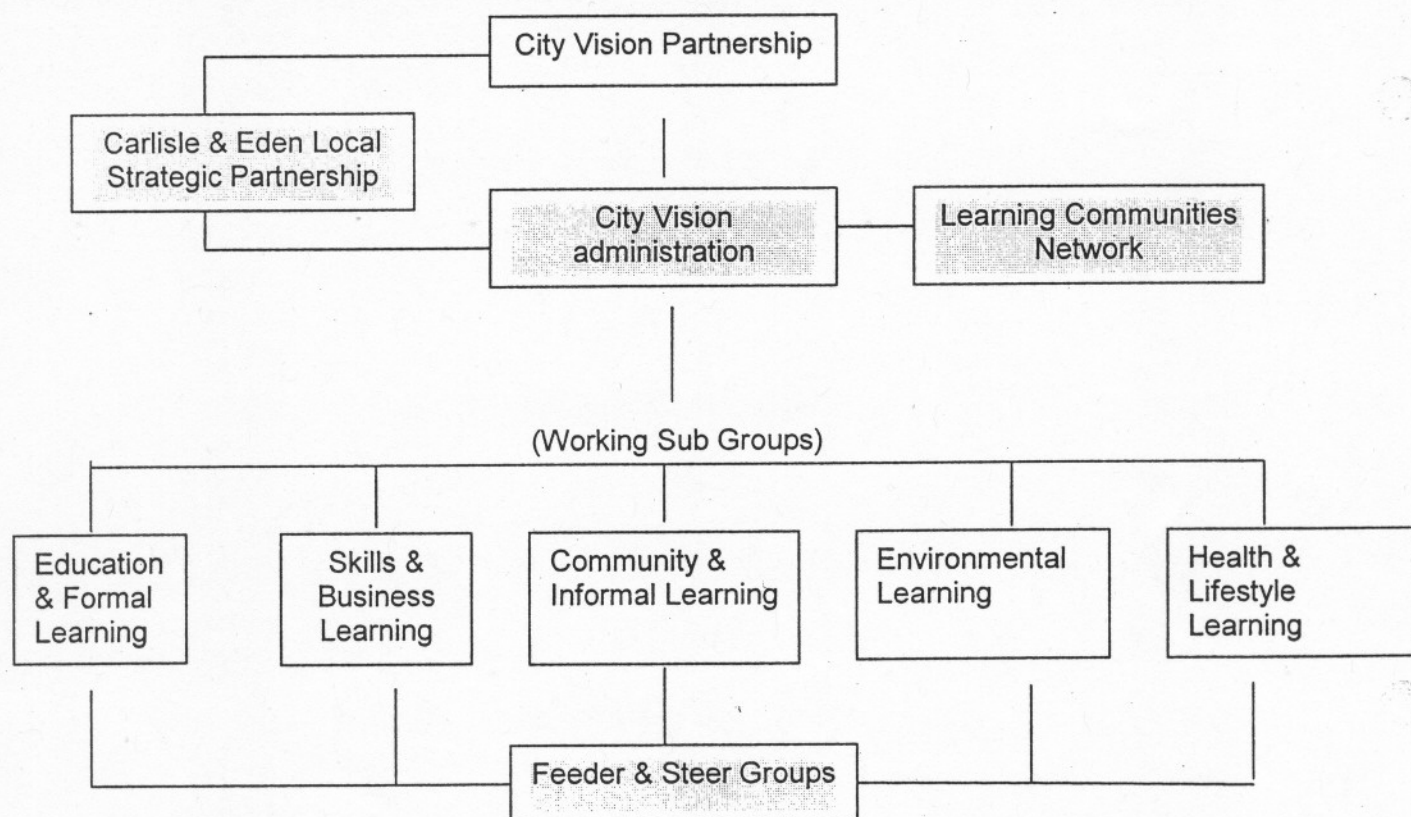
For Carlisle:

21. The city will develop into a recognised centre of business excellence

22. The perception locally of the city as a place to live, study and work will be improved
23. The city will benefit from increased social inclusion and regenerated communities
24. The profile and status of the city will be enhanced regionally, nationally and internationally through its existing heritage and its reputation for learning
25. The economy of the city will flourish as the learning and skills base is enhanced and inward investment is attracted

8 Structure of the City Vision Partnership and Learning City Working Groups

The City Vision partners meet four times per year. Working sub-groups, which focus on particular aspects of the Partnership's work and contain individuals who specialise in their particular field, will meet, set objectives and work independently – always recognising inevitably that there will be areas of common interest to the groups. They will report to the full partners on activity at the quarterly meetings.



9 Activity and Review

1. Each of the Working Groups will meet by the end of June, set objectives and commence identifying activity already underway in their field.
2. Operational plans for each Working Group will be produced by 30 September 2004, and will be presented to full partners the following month. Included will be the first assessment of existing activity, identification of gaps in activity and development of plans to ensure such gaps are closed.
3. Subsequent meetings will be held to review and update the groups' activities.
4. Remits and membership of the groups will be reviewed at the partners' meeting in October 2004, and then at the end of each financial year.
5. A review of the Learning Plan will be carried out at the end of each financial year.

10 Communication

1. All City Vision partners are encouraged to share and cascade information on Learning City Carlisle to their own organisations and staff as well as to other organisations they may have contact with
2. It is acknowledged that partners sit on a variety of bodies and this will ensure good links with other groups
3. Articles and activities promoting learning, including coverage in the local press and media, will be arranged throughout 2004/05 which may include a Summer Learning Festival and coordinated celebration for events such as Adult Learners' Week

11 Strategic Aims 2004-2012

How will the city look in 2012? The Partnership will contribute to:

1. Increasing and widening participation in learning – for individuals, families, communities and businesses
2. Improving attainment rates of young people and adults
3. Stimulating and responding to the demand for learning and highlighting and encouraging progression
4. Improving the quality and choice of provision
5. Developing workforce skills to support Carlisle's increasingly diverse economy
6. Enhancing the accessibility and quality of information, advice and guidance
7. Ensuring Carlisle becomes a "University" city with all the benefits that brings
8. Developing cultural opportunities in the city to increase its attractiveness as a place to live, work and learn
9. Developing a culture amongst young people of healthy eating and exercise
10. Creating a culture change that values the mix between entrepreneurial skills and technical flair
11. Creating a culture in which learning and skills are highly valued by individuals and businesses

12 Long Term Objectives

Learning City Carlisle will be progressed in five different areas. Partners will contribute to long term objectives that will:

Education & Formal Learning

- Achieve University Status for Carlisle
- Improve the development and application of education, learning and skills, particularly high quality vocational skills:
- Improve educational attainment and vocational skills especially amongst 16-17 year olds
- Increase the quality, flexibility and responsiveness of education, learning and skills provision
- Reduce the number of young people out of school
- Attract people from other areas and other countries to Carlisle by making it a recognised centre of formal learning

Skills & Business Learning

- Raise the skills and flexibility of the city's workforce, so it can more effectively adapt to change and respond to economic opportunities
- Create a business environment with opportunities that enable skills to be retained the city
- Establish a business learning community in key areas around the city (e.g. City Centre, Kingmoor Industrial Estate)
- Ensure that work experience placement is co-ordinated across the city

Community & Informal Learning

- Ensure accessible opportunities exist for all members of the community to participate in learning activity
- Encourage and develop family learning
- Through learning activity, promote social inclusion and contribute to a reduction in anti-social behaviour

Environmental Learning

- Raise awareness of environmental issues throughout our schools and communities
- Create environmental sustainability
- Find and pursue innovative ways to use the natural environment as a resource in the learning process

Health & Lifestyle Learning

- Recognise the value of sport
- Increase life expectancy within Carlisle
- Develop learning opportunities which promote healthy lifestyles, targeted to those communities who are unable to participate in learning programme because of financial difficulties

13 Phase 1 – Learning City Carlisle

Over the next eight months, the working sub groups will communicate with other groups in their field of activity and seek their involvement. They will also work to identify learning activity currently taking place in their particular field and feedback to the full partners. It is not the Partnership's intention to take credit for work already being undertaken; nor are the Partnership a scrutinising group. But by identifying activity, the likelihood of duplication in learning activity will be greatly reduced and use of resources available can be utilised to their maximum. Once all learning activity has been identified, an event will be held in conjunction with the LCN to highlight and celebrate the activity – it is at this event that Carlisle will be declared a Learning City. It is anticipated this will take place in early 2005.

14 Phase 2 – Learning City Carlisle

The working sub groups will detail priorities and activities that will form The Annual Operational Plan.