

# **LEARNING TOWNS LEARNING CITIES**

**September 1998**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Learning should be valued and practiced as part of everyday life - not just by a few people, but by each and everyone of us. Learning should not end when we leave school, college or university. It should continue throughout our lives. It should form the basis of our society in which everyone has the opportunity to succeed and prosper. These are the aims behind the Government's approach to lifelong learning.

The Green Paper on Lifelong Learning, *The Learning Age* invited us to work in partnership to build a new learning society - a society in which everyone's potential is realised through education and the development of their talents and skills. As this report shows, the partnerships formed by the many individuals and organisations already involved in Learning Cities and Learning Towns are bringing learning to whole communities, to young and old alike. Their example provides a firm basis on which other towns and cities can build.

The concept of the "Learning" or "Educating" city dates back to the early 1970s. It was further developed in the report of the First International Congress on Educating Cities organised by the Barcelona City Council in 1990.

This report identified some of the principles that should be adopted by the learning city: a need for integrated planning; a relationship between education and cultural development; the need to deal with inequality and demands for education throughout life.

In 1992 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report by Donald Hirsch of the Second Congress on Educating Cities held in Gothenburg. This has been most influential in developing ideas about the learning city in Britain. The report focused on seven cities and their strategies for encouraging their citizens to continue learning throughout their lives. Thus, it illustrated the very real role that the city can play in promoting such a culture.

The European Lifelong Learning Initiative (ELLI) has also promoted the concept of the learning community, following an international conference in Rome which brought together leading industrialists and educators. At least one learning city in Britain owes its origins to the ELLI.

ELLI organised a second conference in Ottawa at the end of March 1997 on the theme of "Investing in Human Potential: Making Strategic Choices". Literacy in Canada, the "Kent Learning Strategy" from England and the "Learning Country" idea being developed in Slovenia were examples of learning communities presented at this conference.

It is hardly surprising that the self-styled learning towns and cities which have grown up in the UK have developed differently and have different focuses for action. (Inevitably, information about these developments is incomplete but it is, growing and changing all the time.)

This report outlines the findings from a short project investigating the development of a number of learning town and learning city initiatives in the UK. It was commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment from NIACE, the National Organisation for Adult Learning.

The survey began in the Autumn of 1996 and covers in some detail the activities of three learning communities: Thetford, Norwich and Sheffield.

It also involves a desk study of all the other known examples of learning cities and learning towns. Their number is increasing and interest in the idea of the learning community is intense. Thus, this report exists on shifting ground. Part of the challenge involved in its preparation has been keeping up with changes in the field.

The objective of the study were to look at the initiatives in Thetford, Norwich and Sheffield in terms of:

- How the initiative began
- The partnerships involved
- Issues relating to target setting and action planning
- Problems encountered
- Progress achieved
- Funding and funding sources

Every effort has been made to obtain similar information for the other initiatives but this is not always complete.

## **Developments so far**

This section identifies the common trends and issues arising from learning cities and towns in Britain. Many of the initiatives have only existed for a short time and are constantly developing and changing. Even so, patterns are already emerging. These are summarised here.

### **Community characteristics and size**

The examples discussed in this report cover many different kinds of communities, ranging from a provincial capital, large industrial conurbations and a new city to relatively small towns.

Size obviously governs a community's approach to the learning city. Towns such as Retford and Thetford interpret the concept very differently from Sheffield, Nottingham or Derby. Much depends on the ability of communities to make national policies their own and on how people identify with their community. The degree to which city-based learning can be a focus for community action and development is also important. Smaller communities may deliver better in all these areas. They are more easily managed and thus better placed to plan effectively and instigate action in the fragmented post-school sector.

As this report demonstrates, towns with populations as small as 20,000 are viable as learning communities. There is no reason then why we shouldn't see the development of the learning village, the learning hamlet or the learning suburb. Learning communities need to be self-sufficient. This may not be easy to achieve in a dormitory village or a suburb. Different strategies may need to be developed for communities, which are very small and scattered, or the idea of the learning community may need to be expanded in some way to include them. The same applies to larger and more diverse areas like counties.

### **Aims and intentions**

The aims and intentions of the cities and towns in this sample vary. Liverpool, for example, aimed to sell the city to outsiders and investors and emphasised the strength of its educational economy and its interest in global Information Technology. Sheffield meanwhile has focused on urban renewal.

The aims of most initiatives centre on the connection between learning and:

- economic growth
- social cohesion, and
- personal fulfillment.

These three aims are seen to be supportive of each other in bringing about the change in culture needed for cities to be economically and socially successful.

## **Strategy and action**

The examples in this report tend to fall into two groups. Some, such as Nottingham and Hull, are developing a strategic framework within which providers work and set their own objectives. The emphasis is on promotion of learning, fund raising and acting as a catalyst and broker between providers.

Others are more actively engaged in projects to increase learning and in developing joint action. Southampton and Sheffield are examples of this approach as are Retford, Newark and Stockton, which focus almost entirely on individual projects.

In a few cases, there are elements of both. The Learning City in Norwich is built into the city's economic planning but is also involved in joint projects. Swansea has a strategic planning side as well as an active provider partnership.

## **Baseline data and target setting**

While all the learning communities examined in this report are aware that they must demonstrate the effectiveness of their initiatives, they have no control over providers and cannot easily set targets for them.

In some cities, among them Norwich, Derby and Milton Keynes, the issue of baseline data and the development of priority targets are both seen as important. These tend to be places where there is a close relationship with the TEC or where the initiative is tied into economic development. In other cities, the promotion and planning of frameworks for action are considered more important than target setting.

In the absence of good local data some communities wishing to develop targets are using basic measures, such as take-up of courses, as a first step. Where access to local data is better, or where data has been collected specifically on skills, target setting is more sophisticated, as in Derby for example.

## **Partners and partnerships**

Although the initiatives have a number of starting points and different lead partners, the bodies involved are similar. Their organisational structures, however, vary. Usually an interest group, with representatives from the TEC, local government and sometimes the private sector and schools, initiates the project. This group may be high level or more operational. It makes decisions jointly and runs the Learning City. Some cities have appointed staff and, in several cases, a registered charity or company limited by guarantee has been set up to run the initiatives operations.

In both Nottingham and Milton Keynes the companies limited by guarantee, already existed and the initiative is their brainchild. Other organisations contribute either by being invited onto the steering group of the project or as Board members.

In Retford, the Learning Town has been set up largely through the efforts of one individual with the support of the local TEC.

The initiatives examined here have not developed the idea of the Learning City as a membership Organisation. Although Liverpool, Edinburgh and Sheffield have all recruited members from organisations and individuals, it is not clear how many “members” have joined.

It is still too early to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of partnership arrangements in Learning Cities. Many have had to concentrate on their internal Organisation rather than on developing action plans. Where providers are involved in partnerships, they have often found this a challenging experience.

### **Problem areas**

Some initiatives have experienced severe problems. Some of the issues causing concern to a number of initiatives include:

- Lack of employer involvement a Lack of involvement of schools
- Funding for an infrastructure
- Lack of interest on the part of a particular partner
- Initiative too closely associated with one partner
- Difficulties in devising strategies to involve the whole community.

In some cities, particular problems have arisen in the relationship between the local TEC or LEC and the Learning City initiative. TECs aim to improve skill levels and education and training in their area and have strategic forums to take forward the National Education and Training Targets. Where the Learning City initiative is inspired by the TEC, there is no problem, and no visible conflict has arisen where the TEC covers a greater area than the learning community. Where the City and TEC boundaries are more or less the same, however, the relationship between the Learning City, its targets and actions and the TEC's role is sometimes confused.

### **Funding**

Learning City initiatives receive little specific funding, partly because they are at an early stage of development. In most cases, resources, often in-kind, are supplied by TECS, educational providers and local government. Some initiatives employ staff.

Almost all the initiatives are aware they must raise additional funding to increase the resources available for lifelong learning. Bids have been made to the single Regeneration Budget, the EU and for other funds to increase the budget for learning.

The biggest resource available to develop learning within the local communities, however, comes from the organisations involved in learning cities themselves. The initiatives offer the opportunity for added value that joint working can bring.

## **Learning City Network**

A Network of Learning Cities, towns and communities was established in 1995. The Learning City Network promotes the use of lifelong learning for urban regeneration through an exchange of best practice between cities, towns and smaller communities. It was set up to influence policy and representatives include businesses, voluntary groups, educational specialists, training organisations, Training and Enterprise Councils, Chambers of Commerce, local authorities, trade unions and individuals committed to learning.

## **Thetford**

### **Thetford climbs the Learning Curve**

Thetford launched the Learning Curve initiative in June 1996 and the town's Mayor immediately set the example for others to follow by embarking on an NVQ. The initiative has already attracted a number of exciting proposals which could enhance learning facilities for everyone in the town. These include:

- An approach from Education Extra - a charity concerned with after school activities for the 11-14 age group;
- An approach from a consultant running a DfEE-funded research pilot into Employee Development Schemes in primary health care;
- A possible pilot on Labour Market Information for young people;
- An initiative involving Tesco and Microsoft in setting up a computer facility in the local store for hands-on experience for customers and for basic tuition which may lead to access to other, more formal, opportunities in the town.

The Learning Curve has also spread across the Channel to Thetford's French twin, Le Puy.

Skill levels in Thetford are generally low and there are significant pockets of deprivation in the town. Prior to the development of the Learning Curve, various organisations had been involved in planning a bid to attract funds from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). The bid involved a significant number of education and training initiatives and this led to the idea of an initiative to foster lifelong learning in Thetford.

Following the launch of the Learning Curve, a Planning Group was formed to take the initiative forward. It established four focus groups to develop the initiative in their respective sectors, namely:

- Schools
- Post 16 Providers
- Community and Voluntary Sector
- Employers

Their main task was to develop a set of ideas and priorities. These were reported to a consultative seminar in October 1996 attended by schools, the voluntary sector and some employers. The seminar also considered the results of research into skills, take-up and skill requirements in Thetford. A follow-up report identified areas for immediate action, such as the production of a marketing plan, the positioning of the initiative within overall plans for Thetford and target setting for the Further Education sector.

In December 1996, Thetford's SRB bid was successful, providing:£2.5 million to meet the town's various aims. The first year's funding of £90,000 would support a number of activities reflecting the Learning Curves priorities, including basic skills provisions, a crèche and an educational development worker whose work could encompass activities for the Learning Curve.

One of the main priorities was for a project worker in the field to sustain momentum, to provide a real link with those living in Thetford and to work with the partners.

Equally important was a campaign to raise awareness of the opportunities available through the Learning Curve initiative. Various marketing activities have included a window display in the Careers Centre, an Information Card, a pamphlet for the local newspaper as well as “badging” materials which all post-16 providers use to publicise activities in Thetford.

## **The Partners**

Major partners in the Learning Curve:

- Breckland District Council
- Norfolk Local Education Authority
- Norfolk and Waveney TEC.

Healthy Thetford 2000 is represented by the coordinator of the SRB bid.

The Planning Group also has representatives from:

- Careers Service
- Employment Service
- Government Office Eastern Region
- NIACE.

Some members of the Planning Group provide key links with the focus groups. The LEA representative liaises with schools, the coordinator of the SRB bid with the FE and Community Groups and the Business Development Officer of Breckland with Thetford's Employer Forum.

Representation on the Planning Group is at a relatively senior level. There is a second tier officer from the LEA and the Lifelong Learning Manager for the TEC. A variety of staff at an operational level are involved on the focus groups. The Employer Forum consists of a mixed group of employers.

The Thetford Partnership provides an overall steering group for the full range of initiatives taking place in the town, including SRB, Learning Curve and Healthy Thetford 2000. This enables it to have an overview of developments and ensure coherence between them. Representatives on the Partnership are from the senior levels of Organisation involved.

## **Target setting and action planning**

The Learning Curve aims to develop targets for action based on information concerning current skill and participating levels, and those skills needed in Thetford in the future.

In practice, lack of sufficiently localised data or skill levels and a lack of exact knowledge about skills needed have proved an obstacle to target setting. This makes sophisticated matching of training to needs a challenging task.

Sufficient information is, however, available about lack of core skills, including basic IT skills, to make this a key area for development. Meanwhile, education and training providers can provide accurate information about participation rates since Thetford is a small place.

The focus groups are responsible for target setting while the Planning Group encourages their development. The post-16 providers group has been the first to develop benchmarks and targets for further activities.

The schools group has progressed more slowly. An initiative developed by Norfolk LEA, "Advancing Norfolk Education", which involves development of targets in partnership with schools, as well as national requirements for statistics, could provide a basis of action for schools. The Compact Scheme provides a model for the development of initiatives between schools and other members of the community.

Target setting is more problematic for the voluntary sector and the business community. Achievement of Investors in People is one possible measure for business. These sectors' contribution to the Learning Curve has been considered by the focus groups, but it may take time for specific targets to be set.

## **Problems encountered**

One of the major problems facing those developing the Learning Curve has been how to consult and involve the wider community in Thetford without the initiative losing impact. There are real fears that the people of Thetford might regard the Learning Curve as another imposition from outside, especially as the Planning Group is made up of agencies either based in Norwich or having a wider remit than Thetford alone. It is hoped that the community, schools and business focus groups which are Thetford-based will help ease this problem.

In the initial stages of the project, there were concerns that Thetford's aspirations as a Learning Community might be diluted by Norwich's intention to become a Learning City. As both Norwich and Thetford look to the same TEC and the same Government Office for support, it was feared that one initiative might go ahead at the expense of the other. This problem was resolved and now the initiatives are seen as supportive of one another.

With a number of initiatives underway in Thetford, it is important that the Learning Curve is not perceived as "just another initiative". All initiatives should complement each other with the help of the Thetford Partnership.

It has not been easy for schools to get involved in the initiative. Thetford's secondary schools are low in the Government's league tables for Norfolk and primary schools are struggling with large class sizes. In this context, although individuals have shown for specific projects, it is difficult to ask for additional action with no resources to offer. SRB funding may go some way to alleviate this.

## **Progress so far**

Since the start of the initiative, there has been much activity and a number of key actions have been taken to establish the foundations for the Learning Curve. In the first six months these included:

- Commitment from key institutions, business, schools and the voluntary sector
- A successful consultative seminar
- Setting up of focus groups to set targets
- Commitment of post-16 focus group to setting and publishing targets
- Positioning of the initiative within the Thetford Partnership
- Preparation of Planning Group Action Plan.

There have also been some developments in education and training provision connected with the Learning Curve:

- Expansion of IT opportunities within Thetford
- Development of courses for parents in collaboration with Thetford schools with substantial enrolment
- Publicity for learning initiatives within the Thetford Partnership - for example, newsletters have been delivered to all houses

The marketing strategy is now being finalised and put into operation. Further work will be taking place with schools and businesses.

As employment opportunities have expanded in Thetford, some employers are having difficulty in recruiting adequately trained staff. A joint project between the TEC, Breckland District Council and providers is being discussed with the firms involved so that local people can be targeted and trained for such vacancies. This collaborative project would not have been possible before the Learning Curve brought the players together to pursue the lifelong learning agenda.

## **Funding**

The Learning Curve has received no outside funding to date. Breckland District Council has met the costs of hosting two large events and the meetings of the Planning Group. The TEC has met research costs and the time and work of its employees. This has also been given freely by the LEA and all the other organisations involved. The action plan addresses the question of resources and future commitments, while the SRB funding should provide a great boost to the Learning Curve.

**The Learning Curve's  
Mission Statement is:**

*To make Lifelong Learning attractive and accessible to Employers, employees and the people of Thetford in order to create an environment conducive to economic and Personal development and growth.*

**Key Facts - Thetford**

Situation:	Market town on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk
Population:	20,000 (approx.) 38% of whom are under 24 years of age. Influx of population in 1950s and 1960s due to relocation of London overspill
Schools And Colleges:	Two secondary schools and Sixth Form Centre. Nearest Colleges of Further Education – Bury St Edmunds (14 miles); Kings Lynn (30 miles); Norwich (30 Miles).
Adult Education:	About 1,000 students attend courses. Dedicated premises in the town centre recently extended to provide more IT facilities

## **Norwich**

### **Norwich learns for life**

“Learning for Life” is what they're up to in Norwich. Spurred on by the Economic Development Committee of the City Council, a small group of partners began developing the idea of the Learning City back in 1995.

One source of inspiration for this group was the DfEE's “Learning Pays” toolkit which ties lifelong learning to economic development. The partners also drew on the experience of similar initiatives in Edinburgh and Liverpool. A number of meetings and discussions took place to develop the concept further and report the results to the Economic Development Committee. The partners stressed the key role of the City Council as broker and coordinator in the competitive arena of education and training and recommended that the links between lifelong learning and competitiveness should be explored.

The concept of a Learning City was built into the first draft of the Economic Strategy for Norwich which was launched for consultation in 1996. This draft strategy is coordinated by the City Council but is owned by a wide range of local partners.

The next stage was to involve other groups, such as employers and others with community interests to share commitment for the learning city and plan future action. A consultative conference was held in September 1996, attended by 150 people. The Norwich group also joined the embryo network of Learning Cities. Following publication of the TEC National Development Agenda, a bid was submitted for funding. The partners also contributed to a leaflet produced by the Norwich Area Development Agency (NADA) to market local learning provision to potential inward investors. NADA is a local private/public sector partnership which acts as a catalyst for economic development including encouraging inward investment and promoting the city. A “Bargaining for Skills” Trade Union education programme was also developed by the TEC with trades unions locally.

### **The Partners**

#### **Partners in the initial phase:**

- Norwich City Council Economic Development Unit
- Norfolk County Council LEA Adult Education Service o The Further Education College  
Norwich City College
- The University of East Anglia
- Norfolk and Waveney Training and Enterprise Council.

All representatives were senior managers. The group was aware that certain sectors were missing, notably schools and employers, but felt that plans needed to be more advanced before seeking serious involvement from these sectors.

After the September conference the group expanded to include:

- Employers (Chamber of Commerce/Business Link and Norwich Area Development Agency)
- Voluntary Sector (Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services)
- Schools ( LEA representation )
- Media (Eastern Counties Newspapers)
- Careers Service
- Employment Service

NIACE and the Government Office for the Eastern Region are also involved.

## **Target setting and action planning**

The Norwich partners published an action plan for the Learning City for the financial year 1997 / 98. It provides an agenda for action developed from the conference and the comments received during the consultation which followed it. A further consultation exercise conducted in early 1998 resulted in the second annual action plan for 1998 / 99 being launched in May 1998 as part of the updated Economic Strategy for Norwich.

The Learning City is one of six key strategic objectives in the Norwich Economic Strategy, reflecting the need to place the concept in the wider context of social and economic policy. Consultation about the Learning City has also been included in the public consultation on Local Agenda 21 and developing Norwich as a Learning City is an important element of Norwich 21.

It is important that the link between economic development and learning should be underpinned by sound understanding of local skills levels and needs. As a result, the development of Performance Indicators have been discussed throughout the project. Baseline's and targets were set within the Norwich Economic Strategy. Subsequently target setting was addressed in detail for 5 wards of the City to meet the requirements for a (successful) SRB bid.

Norwich contributed to the development of the National Learning City Network/DFEE Commissioned good practice guide on assessing learning communities and delayed further detailed work on benchmarking and target setting until it's recommendations were released in May 1998.

Outstanding issues include target setting for providers within the group and how far this is their responsibility; if so, how is progress as a whole and for particular groups to be measured?

## **Problems encountered**

Initial problems relating to the development of a shared understanding of the Learning City concept have been resolved. A continuing challenge is to extend this understanding to influential community members to ensure backing for the initiative from all sides and to encourage community ownership and local involvement in the initiative.

There were difficulties in establishing baseline data on skills shortages and training needs. Information from a mid-term census, however, and a developing strategy on baseline data and targets has improved this situation.

There have been problems concerning involving schools and employers which are now being tackled proactively. Many Learning City initiatives are taking place within the remit of a Unitary Authority, but in Norwich both the City and the County have to operate in partnership and this produces an additional set of negotiations.

As the initiative developed, competitive relationships between some of the partners have increasingly been tempered. However, the banner of the Learning City may not be enough in some instances to turn competition into collaboration. There can be little control and only voluntary co-operation when providers who are part of the learning city group are spending their own money and wish to assert their individual identity.

There were problems relating to a lack of core funding for the initiative. However partners have provided funding for a range of specific initiatives and have given generously in terms of office resources. Even small amounts of external funding have produced joint projects and helped develop infrastructure for the initiative as a whole.

Norwich attracted National Development Agenda funding of 25,000 pounds. The Challenge was to see whether this money could be used to take the whole initiative forward and for all partners to feel they were benefiting from it.

This was achieved by part funding three flagship initiatives - the initial consultative conference, with associated publicity material, the first Learning Festival and a city centre based Learning Shop. These initiatives helped to cement commitment by:-

- demonstrating widespread interest and support for the initiative
- raising the profile of local learning opportunities and registrations and
- demonstrating the payback value of collaborative working.

The need for dedicated staff for the initiative remained a problem, however a recently successful Learning City SRB bid will now address this issue.

The main challenge now is to extend community involvement in the initiative, which remains "institution led". This will be the focus of the SRB bid, which is linked to a democracy initiative called Community Power.

## **Progress so far**

In Norwich there has been considerable progress in setting an agenda for action for the Learning City and obtaining commitment locally. Some of the key achievements for the first year are:

- Commitment from key institutions to work together to make Norwich a Learning City.
- 25,000 pounds funding to pump prime the operation.

- Joint marketing of educational providers through NADA.
- Learning City Conference in September 1996.
- Learning City initiative part of City's economic development strategy.
- Coverage in local media, including local Evening News adoption of the Learning City as a campaign issue.
- Local interest network established from conference delegates and other sources.

Within the following six months, further outputs included:

- Learning shop
- Action plan
- Learning festival during Adult Learners' Week.

Efforts are being made to build awareness and influence for the initiative through NADA and the media.

During the last year achievements include :-

- 20,000 callers to the Learning Shop in its first year.
- DFEE National Demonstration project to make learning guidance accessible to hard to reach communities.
- Formation of NELF . an employers forum, where businesses help each other to improve industry/education links
- Development of Learning Communities adopted as a delivery mechanism for lifelong learning as part of the economic strategy for Norfolk and Waveney
- Learning City Single Regeneration Budget Bid "Empowering Deprived Communities through Learning" secured 1.188 million pounds over 7 years, 3 million pounds local matching.
- Achievement of year 1 Learning City Annual Action Plan, consultation and subsequent launch of year 2 Action Plan.
- "Jobs for the Future" public education initiative with the Evening News media coverage and information packs about the type of jobs and skills which local employers will need over the next 3 to 5 years.
- Second Norwich Learning Festival

## **Funding**

Coordination of the initiative continues to be resourced by Norwich City Councils Economic Development Unit.

Partners and various local employers have provided significant staff and cash resources for specific projects. DFEE funding has been obtained for some key aspects .

The successful SRB bid will fund the first dedicated Learning City Worker post from 1999.

Greater collaboration in Norwich and throughout Norfolk and Waveney is now paying off in a range of successful bids related to areas such as Widening Participation and the University for Industry.

### **Key Facts : Norwich**

Situation: East Anglia, 43 miles north of Ipswich

Population: 126,000 (local authority area)  
194,000 Norwich built up area

Schools in the Norwich LA area 6 State Secondary Schools all LEA one is Roman Catholic Voluntary aided. Total roll (September 1997) 6,300 includes 1,800 in sixth forms

#### Adults

- HE/FE student enrolments 1996/97. 26,000 (UEA, Norwich City College, Norwich School of Art and Design)
- Adult Education enrolments: 15,000 (9,058 LEA, 521 FEFC, 260 IT Centre) (1996/97)

#### Employment trends:

- Service sector makes up 4 of every 5 jobs.
- More than ¼ of all employees in the Norwich area work in public administration, education and health.
- Nearly 1 in every 3 jobs is part-time.
- Continuing decline in manufacturing employment.
- Growth in call centres and IT based industries.
- More woman employees than male employees.
- Forecast significant increase in construction employment over the next 5 years.

## **Sheffield**

### **Introduction**

This account of Sheffield the Learning City initiative covers the six years from its formation in 1992 to mid 1998. It outlines:

- the main local achievements
- projects currently being developed
- the local contribution to the development of the Learning City Network

Finally, it attempts an assessment of the impact of the initiative in terms of three categories which form the basis of the Learning City Network's Value Added Project:

- partnership
- participation
- performance

### **Background**

Following the publication of his report, *Learning Cities* (CERI/OECD,1992), Donald Hirsch was invited to open a series of seminars which ran during the winter/spring of 1992-93. The initiative to arrange the seminars came from an informal grouping of mainly adult educationalists drawn from the local authority, the universities, Sheffield College, the Northern College and the WEA. The series promoted a lively debate about the relevance of the Learning City concept to:

- economic development
- community development
- cultural and creative industries
- opening up access to education and training.

The outcome was a number of new initiatives (see below) plus a commitment to create a Learning City initiative in Sheffield. This was formally launched at a public meeting at the college in the following year following a period of preparation.

### **Structure**

The constitution drawn up for the Learning City began with a number of objectives and then set out a structure which comprised affiliates - both individuals and organisations - electing an executive. The majority of the executive seats were reserved for the founder agencies: the City Council, College, TEC, WEA, Universities and Northern College. More than 20 local organisations have affiliated to the Learning City.

## **Partnerships**

The Learning City has helped to establish a strong network of lifelong learning agencies in the city. It has used these to develop a number of off-shoot initiatives and to gain funding for them. It has also been able to influence and shape the climate of thinking about learning and regeneration in the city. For example, the advertisement for a new director of education in late 1996 referred to the Learning City as does the City Achievement Strategy, which sets out a route to raising achievement in the city's schools.

But its adult education base has also been a weakness. There has been no substantial and consistent engagement with employers and the private sector even though qualification and participation levels amongst the majority of the local workforce who work in smaller enterprises is worrying low. Related to this weakness, is the failure to engage with the TEC and the chief executives of the major education and training agencies in Sheffield. At the same time as the Learning City began to develop in 1992-93, the Strategic Education Forum (SEF) was set up by the TEC, the local authority and the Universities to promote and monitor the National Education and Training Targets. With it came funding and recognition by the government. The Forum was given the task by Sheffield's senior partnership, the City Liaison Group, of leading the education and training elements of the city's regeneration strategy.

The result, probably uniquely, is that Sheffield has had two parallel structures where other cities have developed one integrated body. This has weakened both, limiting their effective contribution. It has also limited the Learning City's access to stable funding, forcing it to depend on specific grants from local agencies where as the Strategic Education Forum has been able to count on a properly funded secretariat. In practice, there has been a great deal of overlap between the two bodies through common membership which has stimulated the search for a more unified approach. For the past year, a discussion has been under way aimed at integrating the two and re-defining a common set of objectives.

## **Contribution to Learning City Network**

Since the beginning, the Network has been firmly supported by the Sheffield initiative which is one of the founding affiliates. Sheffield members have provided a Chair of the Network (Martin Yamit, 1997-98) and the convenor of the Conference organising committee (Keith Hayman) The Network is supported because of its practical value to local activity - this is certainly the case with the Value Added Project - and because it is seen as legitimising the Learning City concept on the national stage which is helpful locally. But the chief value of the Network is that it provides ready access to best practice in other cities and to cutting edge debate about the value of learning for regeneration.

## **LOCAL ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Parents as Partners**

A discussion in a Learning City seminar has led to collaboration between the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Education Department on a project to support parents' involvement in their children's early years learning. The REAL project, led by Dr Peter Hannon, has won a £90,000 research grant to investigate parental support for early years literacy. Dr Hannon has been appointed the Strategic Education Forum's literacy priority 'Champion'

A later spin-off has been the creation of the Parents as Partners project by the Education Department, Sheffield College and Sheffield Hallam University to promote parental involvement in their children's learning through primary and secondary schools.

### **Multilingual City**

The third annual conference of the Multilingual City signals the establishment of an initiative which arose from discussions during the first series of Learning City seminars. Ahmed Gurnah has presented the project at the Council of Europe and at an international conference in Turin. The Multilingual City aims to promote language learning throughout the school system and beyond. It has a twin focus on community and European languages. Sources of support include the European Commission and the Italian government which supports a programme of language acquisition in Sheffield nursery and primary schools.

### **European Years of Lifelong Learning**

The Learning City took the initiative to create local coordinating groups for the European Year of Lifelong Learning. Highlights of the Year of Lifelong Learning include:

- a city centre poster campaign in January 1996 to promote the benefits of lifelong learning followed by a similar campaign inside Mainline buses in October
- a national conference on lifelong learning addressed by Nick Stuart, Director- General for Employment and Lifelong Learning at DFEE, Jimmy Jamar (by video), Head of the European Commission's office for the year, Sir John Banham, ex-Director General of the CBI
- a European week of learning and culture, with events at a wide range of local venues and involving schools including several primary schools

### **Cicero**

Cicero, a project to train unemployed people as European community animateurs, was piloted with funding from the European Year of Lifelong Learning. Now funded by the European Commission and the DFEE, Cicero is training 50 unemployed men and women with significant numbers from ethnic minority communities. Most participants are from Yorkshire and the Humber but they are also drawn from throughout the country. One group includes women from both communities in Belfast.

A highlight of the programme is a study visit to Brussels to gain first hand understanding of the workings of the European Union. When qualified, Cicero graduates will be able to pass on their understanding of the Union's policy making and grant giving processes to community-based groups in disadvantaged areas. Arrangements are in hand to develop Cicero as a transnational initiative.

## **SRB Bid**

The Learning City's contribution to the single Regeneration Budget's round 4 bid in Sheffield reflects its long-standing commitment to community-based learning. Two well-attended local seminars on capacity building organised by the Learning City helped to establish as a key element of the bid local learning centres as a basis for capacity building for community economic development.

## **Citinet**

The impact of the Learning City's thinking also lies behind Citinet, a plan to create a city-wide network of information and learning centres, which is backed by a wide range of local organisations led by the City Council, the College and the TEC. Citinet has quickly won backing from the government through its SHIs Challenge Fund.

## **Campaign for Learning**

The Learning City leads the initiative to create a city-wide Campaign for Learning building on the experience of the European Year. As well as gaining the support of a wide range of local organisations, the campaign has the endorsement of the national Campaign for Learning. The campaign will link to a number of key government initiatives including the University for Industry and Individual Learning Accounts. It is forming a partnership with a community-based Organisation, North East Sheffield Trust, to mount a campaign to widen participation in the Parson Cross area of the city where achievement levels are low.

## **Value Added Project (VAP) Pilot**

Sheffield, the Learning City, has keenly supported the development of the Value Added framework commissioned by the Network on behalf of DFEE. It has put itself forward to pilot the framework which has particular relevance to the Campaign for Learning. More generally, the framework offers the Sheffield lifelong learning partnership as a whole a practical approach to evaluation which complements the National Targets and other measures in local use.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Partnership**

Despite the negative impact of the existence of two learning partnerships in Sheffield, together the Learning City and the Strategic Education Forum provide a broad coverage of local interests. It is becoming relatively easy to assemble specific partnerships to mount new proposals and projects as Citinet has demonstrated. A re-launched body combining both approaches will have great strengths, especially if it can remedy the gaps in their representation i.e. community-based organisations, employers, ethnic minority communities and trade unions.

### **Participation**

The election of a new government on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1997 has changed the tone of local debate and given a new priority to public participation and capacity building as an integral part of the regeneration process. Formal links between community-based organisations and lifelong learning have been slow to develop but will be critical to the success of area regeneration strategies.

### **Performance**

Evaluation and assessment processes are common in some settings. Performance data are central to the management of TEC and SRB projects but less common in community-based learning. To demonstrate the value added by the Learning City's Campaign for Learning locally a unique evaluation process is being designed which places the measuring devices in the hands of local people to promote self-review and target setting.

## **CONCLUSION**

Sheffield the Learning City has established the contribution of lifelong learning to urban regeneration as a vital part of local thinking. It has generated a number of spin-offs which have established themselves as independent entities. But its development to date has been hampered by the existence of a parallel body, the Strategic Education Forum. There is, however, a process of convergence of the two bodies which is likely to result eventually in integration. Increasingly, they share a common concern for widening participation and for ensuring that economic regeneration is underpinned by a programme of capacity building.

## **Key Facts - Sheffield**

Situation: South Yorkshire

Population: 529,000 (approx.) – fourth largest English city

Schools and Colleges:

All state secondary schools are LEA maintained or voluntary aided (including two grant maintained). A level point scores above the national average; 5 A-C GCSE percentage below the national average. There is a seven-fold difference in GCSE attainment rates between the wards with the highest and the lowest percentages.

Sheffield has one of the lowest percentages of 16/17 years olds in full time education and training in the country. Two-thirds of New Deal 18-24 clients lack formal educational qualifications.

Key post 16 education institutions are the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield College.

Adult Education:

Enrolments are 19.96 per 1000 of the adult population, with spending £1.23 per head of the adult population (Audit Commission, 1996-97).

Employment trends:

Unemployment is about 27% higher than the UK norm. Until the sharp contraction of steel and manufacturing in 1981, unemployment in Sheffield was usually below the national average. 35,000 fewer employees in 1993 than in 1981. 42% of the unemployed have been out of work for more than a year. Unemployment amongst Pakistanis and Bangladeshis about 39% compared to about 12% for whites. Unemployment concentrated geographically: nine wards account for the half unemployed.

# Hull

## Introduction

The launch of the Children's University in 1998, is yet another milestone in the success story of the CityLearning initiative in Kingston Upon Hull. Funded by private sector and coordinated by Business in the Community and the University of Hull the Children's University is committed to raising the status of learning and improving literacy standards. This initiative will enable companies, teachers and other members of the community to work together to improve educational performance in the City's primary schools.

In 1994 the Single Regeneration Partnership within the City produced its first City Regeneration Strategy (CRS). Since the production of the CRS, the partnership has assumed the name of CityVision - a company limited by guarantee, responsible for the co-ordination and subsequent project management of SRB funding.

CityVision takes advice from various Issue Groups, one of which is City Learning - a partnership of statutory, voluntary, commercial private and academic organisations which have an interest in, or responsibility for training and in its broadest sense, learning within the City.

At its launch Conference 'Raising Standards and Achievements' held in September 1996 attended by over 400 delegates, the draft Learning Chapter was issued for consultation. The Learning Chapter - a stand alone publication, sets the framework within which individuals, groups and organisations can situate their current and future activities, and it is hoped, be spurred to feel part of a larger City-wide drive to promote lifelong learning. Over 90 responses were received to the draft Learning Chapter which was subsequently revised, published and distributed.

The Learning Chapter has been a significant driver in informing the City's decision to make learning the bases of its SRB4 bid, which in April 1998, received confirmation that it had been awarded six million pounds to be further match funded from both public and private sector agencies.

During 1998 the Learning Chapter will be revised in line with developments and achievements to date.

## The Partners

- The University of Hull
- Kingston Upon Hull Education Services
- Hull CityVision Ltd
- Primary Schools
- Kingston Upon Hull City Council
- Hull College
- Humberside TEC
- Secondary Schools

- Business in the Community
- Humberside Partnership
- Hull Council for Voluntary Service
- University of Lincolnshire & Humberside
- Kingston upon Hull City Council
- Hull Daily Mail (Newspapers in Education)
- Education Business Partnership
- Northern Foods Plc
- Kingston upon Hull Social Services

## **Target Setting and Action Planning**

The 'Learning Chapter' contains strategic aims and priorities for action for providers to turn into practical projects. It does not set out to give numerical targets for achievement or develop baseline data.

## **Problems Encountered**

If there has been a problem it has centred on an absence of funding to maintain the day to day momentum of CityLearning - a responsibility which to date has fallen on the City Learning Steering Group.

The success of the SRB4 bid coupled with a growing interest in activities associated with CityLearning, led to the creation in 1998, of a new constitution which will allow for the engagement of wider interest. A subscription model has been proposed and accepted by the Partnership which will see later in 1998, the appointment of a full-time CityLearning Manager.

## **Progress So Far**

A great deal has been achieved in a relatively short period of time. Notable achievements to date include:

- Ongoing commitment of a wide partnership
- Founder member of National Learning City Network
- Two major Conferences
- Publication of the Learning Chapter
- Launch of the Hull Parenting Forum
- Launch of the Children's University with significant private sector input
- CityLearning Forums
- CityLearning Project - Gipsyville Estate - publication of report
- Development of a new CityLearning constitution

## **Funding**

As the CityLearning initiative continues to develop, although all the organisations involved have committed time, no outside resources have to date been used to support day to day funding. It is hoped however, that the move towards a subscription model will provide funding to take the initiative forward.

### **Key Facts – Kingston upon Hull**

Situation: East Riding of Yorkshire

Population: 300,000 (approx.)

Schools: All state secondary schools are LEA maintained or voluntary aided. Higher and Further Education institutions include two Universities and numerous colleges.

## **Nottingham**

### **Introduction**

The debate as to how Greater Nottingham should best take up lifelong learning began in 1995. During 1996 a local advisory group developed the concept and held a major conference in January 1997. This showed there was widespread support for a Community for Learning campaign. During 1997 the advisory group formed the Greater Nottingham Learning Partnership, with Greater Nottingham TEC joining as well and accessing funding for Executive staff. The Executive facilitated a further public consultation in October 1997 which identified priorities for a 1998 Business Plan.

The aim of the Partnership is to develop Greater Nottingham into a learning community which involves and brings out the best in all its members to ensure success in the 21st century. This will be achieved by creating a coherent approach through which education and training contribute most effectively to the community's economic prosperity, social development and the individual's quality of life. This involves a collaborative partnership between educators, employers, government, business and the community focused into the effective development and delivery of world class lifelong learning activities.

The Greater Nottingham Learning Partnership, is an ever growing alliance of voluntary and influential individuals and organisations. Nottingham the Community for Learning campaign is coordinated and managed by this Partnership.

### **The Partners**

Anyone in Greater Nottingham can influence the learning debate by joining the Greater Nottingham Learning Partnership Forum. This group meets 3 times a year and will hold an annual conference. To date the range of Forum members includes private and public employers, education institutions, training providers, community groups, individuals, associations, local and regional government representatives, unions and national and international organisations.

Forum members also form Working Groups to achieve business plan targets and to inform the community on learning issues in relevant arenas. Local specialists are also nominated by Forum members to support this work and inform the Board of Directors on specific learning issues.

The Board has 13 Directors, operating on a voluntary basis, each with a commitment to lifelong learning and aspects of its application in Greater Nottingham. They are supported by the Executive - a part time Project Leader, full time Manager and full time administrator.

### **Target Setting and Action Planning**

The overall goals of Nottingham The Community for Learning are:

To support strategic developments within learning to create a culture of change which will:

- Promote an inclusive lifelong learning culture

- Engage and empower communities
- Harness learning and creativity to sustain and enhance the economic and social fabric of our community

These Nottingham The Community for Learning goals will be achieved through the delivery body of the Greater Nottingham Learning Partnership, which has the following functions:

- promote and celebrate the wealth of learning opportunities
- act as a think tank and policy forum to improve standards, participation, achievements and value for money in learning
- act as a Forum for the review of targets, plans, reports and to share information about learning

The following strategic objectives were identified by the wider community during the January 1997 conference.

- Increase employers committed to reskilling
- Engage more of the disaffected
- Raising aspirations/develop learning culture
- Raise standards of attainments
- Improve transitions from school to work
- Retain more graduates/develop knowledge base and improve technology transfer
- Lever additional funds

The objectives were then used as a basis for the October 1997 consultation when three were prioritised through the 1998 / 9 business plan - Raise aspirations, raise standards of attainment and lever funding. These priorities will be achieved through three working groups: Marketing, Information and Guidance and Literacy.

## **Progress So Far**

- European funding - Parenting Initiative (£100,000) and Lifelong Success (£5.2 million)
- New Deal Unemployment Strategy 18 - 24 year olds
- Labour Market Strategy Forum
- Co-ordination of Adult Learners Week
- Strategic broker - funding, education targets, other partnerships
- Increasing Forum membership
- Active member of Learning City Network

## **Funding**

Core initial funding to support the development phase of the project (2 years) came from the key education and training providers, with subsequent funding to support the Executive from the central government and the Greater Nottingham Training and Enterprise Council. Substantial resources have been committed from members of the partnership in terms of human resources, time, utilizing in-house existing expertise, direct support to working groups, venues, office

infrastructure, press coverage, cash and public endorsement of the aims of the partnership through in house avenues.

### **Key Facts – Greater Nottingham**

Situation: Nottinghamshire, 16 miles east of Derby

Population: 636,000 population with 292,000 economically active

Schools and Colleges: 3 Universities, 6 Further Education Colleges, 2 Tertiary college

#### **Community Contrasts**

Inward investment	Lack of development land
Economic and Social diversity	Men and ethnic population not accessing opportunities
New jobs and different skills	1:3 child in poverty
High quality of life	300 homeless on street
Attractive to young and mobile	Lack of employability skills
Strong FE/HE	

## **Liverpool**

### **Introduction**

The idea of Liverpool City of Learning emerged in 1992, from two activities contemporaneously. Research by Liverpool John Moores University (JMU) revealed that the education and training sector directly contributed in excess of one billion pounds to the Merseyside economy in that year; the city hosted the annual Conference of Local Education Authorities and Liverpool as a City of Learning was highlighted by the city.

Formally launched in the House of Lords in 1993, the key local education and training organisations gave a commitment to the initiative both through representation on the shadow Board (principals, CEO vice chancellor) and financial, through core funding for a small dedicated office.

Significant help in kind, was secured including secondments of the Assistant Director of Education and later the Director of Liverpool School, JMU. In the latest phase a non-sector specific person, with a "neutral" networking background has been appointed to head up the initiative.

One of the various initial reasons for establishing the Liverpool City of Learning partnership was to develop a coordinating body for large scale Objective 1 projects, particularly IT/education projects as an aid to regeneration. The partners drew up a strategic framework, which specifically sought:

- to promote and market Liverpool and its region as a centre of excellence, internationally renowned for its learning-related activities
- develop the concept of the "wired" or "Electronic" City and its associated infrastructure to improve education and training products and practices, but also for the benefit of businesses and wider community.

Activities were high profile, and tended to be aimed at direct provision. In the more recent phase of Liverpool City of Learning, development has been of a facilitative networking nature.

Liverpool City of Learning became incorporated in 1996 as a company limited by guarantee, and a registered charity, making it independent of the institutions involved. This coupled with the 'neutral coordinator' gave the initiative impartiality and credibility.

### **The partners**

Liverpool City of Learning was chaired for the first 5 years by the Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council, and recently the Director of Education has taken over; the universities and university colleges are represented at vice-chancellor level, and the TEC and business are represented at Chief Executive level. Other members comprise representatives of primary and secondary schools and the voluntary sector.

At the operational level, an Executive Committee of senior managers from the partner organisations take forward activities/strategies internally within their Organisation. Individual projects have their own steering group. In the early phase, such steering groups were project focused; latterly, they are concerned with securing added-value through links between the sectors.

## **Funding**

The partners contribute core funding to support a small office. Whilst in the early phase fund-raising was undertaken to supplement this to further high profile marketing campaigns and specific projects. The current activity demands relatively little in terms of resources.

Initially one of the universities and now one of the university colleges, provides office space. This is currently in prestigious offices at Albert Dock, where Liverpool Hope University College have their Hope on the Waterfront Cafe and exhibition area, including City of Learning displays, open to the general public. Tourism figures indicate that Albert Dock is the second most visited tourist attraction in the UK.

## **Progress so far**

A thorough review of the initiative and its future direction took place at the end of 1996. Direct provision is now not undertaken, rather much more a facilitating role, particular between sectors, creating and sustaining “glue” between the partners particularly in the areas of their core businesses which generate added value, through the undertaking of some of these activities jointly together.

## **Joint Work**

As indicated earlier, these include de joint staff development, joint marketing, joint research, and ground work for joint planning. Specific examples include a joint staff development seminar on “Higher Education Fees and Widening Participation”, marketing - joint press releases on The Learning Age - reflecting a regional promotion of lifelong learning.

Strategically, the Regeneration Agenda for Liverpool, led by the City Council with key agencies, has a variety of objectives, including the promotion of lifelong learning. The ready-made partnership of Liverpool City of Learning, enabled a response and action plans to take the agenda forward to be developed at a considerable pace, faster and probably in a more sustainable way, than the other elements.

From this, the ground work for joint planning is starting, and it is envisaged that targets will emerge from this.

In this city, where there has been substantial injection of European funding in areas of extreme disadvantage, there is substantial experience of working in regeneration partnerships. This is reflected in communities which may not term themselves “learning communities”, but which are learning to work with new forms of participation. The partnership structure is ensuring local

people have a strong voice in determining allocations of funds for the development and learning in their areas; this model is in the vanguard of Europe's community development.

With the emergence of The Learning Age, the City of Learning Partnership produced a collaborative response. Moreover, this followed on from a consultation event.

A consultation event for the sub- region, Merseyside was planned. However, at an early stage, they were approached by the Government Office for the region inviting them to hold the event jointly with their office. The joint approach had considerable potential to both parties, and the teaming city would use the event to initiate action to take the proposals in the document forward. It is understood that this is unique as the first such joint consultation event. The event was truly joint - invitation letters bore both logos and were co-signed, the planning and delivery of the event was undertaken jointly. A joint report of the event is being prepared together and follow-up is currently under discussion with both parties.

Two key issues emerged from the working meeting following the main morning presentation. Firstly, it was recommended that barriers to agencies working together, should be addressed; secondly relating to this, the assumption that we all knew how partnerships should operate was questioned. It was recommended that this should be addressed, including the proposal that a code of conduct be drawn up.

## **Representation**

Recently, the City of Learning provided a platform for representation of the four HEI's in Merseyside, at the newly formed north west region's HEFCE Widening Participation Group.

HEFCE requested each of the sub-regions making up the north west region to nominate a single representative to represent their sub-region. In the north west, Merseyside was the only sub-region that met this, through the City of Learning's neutral coordinator. A collaborative bid by the four HEI's is presently being worked up.

## **Recognition and Reward**

The partners were keen to recognise and reward the wide range of innovative practice in schools in the areas of maths, science and technology. In particular, the more informal, imaginative practical projects designed to raise achievement in schools where the school is working in partnership with another organisation, such as a community group, parents group, local college, company.

Private sector sponsors were secured, and four cash awards of 2,000 pounds each made to four different schools to continue their partnership work to raise achievement.

## **Problems Encountered**

The Liverpool initiative has had its share of problems, but it has addressed the issues, learned from its experience, and over the past year, adopted a radically different approach from when it began.

Whilst support at the top remains strong, the top down approach initially adopted has been superseded by active engagement at the senior management levels. Liverpool City of Learning is increasingly being seen as a neutral credible vehicle by a wide range of agencies.

Founding members of the partnership: Liverpool Community College, Edge Hill University College, Liverpool City Council (Education and Central Policy Unit, and schools), Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Liverpool Hope University College, Liverpool John Moores University, Merseyside TEC, North West Business Leadership Team, The University of Liverpool.

Other organisations active in the partnership include: Women's Technology and Training Centre, Merseyside Open College Network, WEA.

### **Liverpool's City of Learning Mission**

*“To ensure that Liverpool and Merseyside are recognised nationally and internationally as a city and region of learning whose education and training provision and local economy are uniquely geared towards dynamic, business-related education enhancing initiatives and developments.”*

### **Key Facts - Liverpool**

Situation: Merseyside, 36 miles west of Manchester

Population: 550,000 (approx.)

Schools and Colleges:

All state secondary schools are LEA maintained or voluntary aided. Higher and Further Education institutions include the Liverpool University, Numerous Colleges.

Adult Education:

About 20,000 adults are enrolled on courses.

## **Southampton**

### **Even better learning for all**

By the year 2000, 15% of the working population of Southampton should have an RSA Information Technology qualification - thanks to "Computing for All" one of the Learning City initiatives.

The impetus for the development of Southampton as a Learning City came with the 1995 European Year of Lifelong Learning (ELLI). The city held a conference on lifelong learning and, since then, the initiative has been led by a steering group comprising representatives from a wide range of agencies across the city.

Southampton has a long history of collaboration with education providers and other partners which the Learning City initiative has inherited. Some of these early partnerships involved:

- IT centres on housing estates involving co-operation between the City College and the City Council
- Drop-in centres in local communities
- Partnerships between colleges and schools
- Cruise ship crew training involving colleges and the private sector.

During the European Year of Lifelong Learning the various partners met to consider strategic ways forward. A conference was held in November 1996 to exchange experiences with other cities in Britain and Europe. Delegates explored the condition necessary for becoming a Learning City. Subsequently, the new unitary authority declared its support for the concept of "The Learning City". A study visit was organised to Derby to explore the experience of another learning city. Southampton is now the British representative on the European Learning Cities steering group and held a major international Learning Cities conference in June 1998. "Building a City Agenda for Learning" targeted the "Top 100 Learning Cities in Europe".

In October 1997, the University opened New College, a college committed to lifelong learning with a particular emphasis on local access. Professor Bob Fryer has recently been appointed as Director of the College and of Lifelong Learning at the University, bringing a powerful national advocate of lifelong learning to the city. Representatives of the different partners involved meet regularly as a Steering Group. The Steering Group has been developing projects on learning shops, the learning Organisation, an Investors in Learning accreditation, the learning card, parents as learners and, most recently, the Learning Net. The initiative is now supported strategically by the Southampton Lifelong Learning Alliance, comprising of the partners shown next. Some of the first initiatives that will be supported by the Alliance will be the development of employability, Action for Skills and National Year of Reading.

## **Draft Terms of Reference**

### **Mission**

Working together the private and public sectors recognise the critical importance of education and training in influencing local economic prosperity. The Alliance will pursue Southampton's aim to be The City of Learning. This will promote and develop Lifelong Learning to enhance both its economic prosperity and the potential of the people, making it a better place in which to live and work.

### **Terms of Reference**

To provide a strategic framework for the co-ordination, promotion and delivery of Lifelong Learning and employability initiatives in the Southampton area, by:

1. Fostering, developing, maintaining and 'broadening' the range of joint initiatives for Lifelong Learning;
2. Providing a forum for the exchange of strategic information on needs and opportunities for the provision of Lifelong Learning;
3. Increasing the awareness of employers and the potential workforce of relevant opportunities;
4. Acting as a focus for attracting resources to the area to support Lifelong Learning and employability initiatives; and
5. Sharing best practice.

LIFELONG LEARNING is defined as a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments.

### **The partners**

- Five of Southampton's leading and largest employers
- Southampton City Council
- The City's three FE colleges: City College, Itchen College, Taunton's College
- Southampton Institute
- University of Southampton and New College
- Hampshire TEC.
- Action for Skills
- Open College Network
- Diocesan authorities
- Major employers
- Chamber of Commerce
- Schools
- Southampton Voluntary Services
- Trade Unions

## **Target-setting and action planning**

- The Partners aim to:
- increase the amount of formal and
- informal learning at all ages
- raise awareness of, and celebrate the amount of learning already taking place
- enhance the learning experience for all
- help Southampton become The City of Learning.

The Steering Group's initial strategies have been:

- to understand learning needs
- review provision against learning needs
- develop programmes to support learning needs \* promote early learning
- develop learning skills
- provide support for Lifelong Learning
- promote longer-term activities.

In 1996, the Steering Group developed the "Computing for All" project with the objective that 15% of the working population would hold an RSA Computer Literacy and Access to Information Technology Level One qualification by the year 2000. The City Council and eight educational institutions are all working to achieve this target.

## **Problems encountered**

The business of establishing a new unitary authority in Southampton inevitably slowed the development of the Learning City initiative - although this restructuring created a positive ethos and also provided the opportunity to cement new partnerships, look at situations afresh and set challenging targets for the City.

The initiative has been focused more on providers rather than employers until recently and, thus far, further and higher education providers have been more involved than schools. However, the partnership between providers is particularly strong and the recent formation of the Learning Alliance has brought employers centre-stage. The momentum of the City Council's Strategic Education Plan is encouraging schools and pre-school providers from the voluntary, private and maintained sectors to join the initiative.

Effective consultation with all of the different communities in the city is still the main challenge for the initiative.

## **Progress so far**

- The main outputs of the initiative to date have been:
- the 1946 conference
- the establishment of Southampton on the steering group of European Learning Cities

- the opening of New College - with a core commitment to lifelong learning
- the appointment of Professor Bob Fryer as Director of New College
- projects on learning shops, the learning Organisation, an Investor in Learning accreditation, the learning card
- the involvement of the Basic Skills Agency in a consultancy on parental involvement in learning
- the Learning Net established in the city's libraries
- the establishment of the Learning Alliance, comprising the FE colleges, the University, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the City's five leading employers
- the development of the 'Computing for All' project
- the development of a Charter for Learning Cities with ELLI which will be launched at the European Conference

## **Funding**

Increasingly, the Partners are building the initiative into their budget planning. However, the main support comes from the time and effort of the people involved. A bid has been made to UFI/Adapt to support the work of the Alliance.

### **Key Facts - Southampton**

Situation: South coast, 13 miles south of Winchester, Hampshire

Population: 220,000 (approx.)

#### Schools and Colleges:

There are 12 LEA maintained secondary schools and 2 grant maintained Roman Catholic secondary schools. Higher and Further Education institutions include the University of Southampton and New College, the Southampton Institute, City College and Taunton's College.

#### Employment trends:

Total employment is 100,000

- An increasing proportion of jobs are in the service sectors (now 84 percent)
- Important sectors of the local economy include the port (handling 7 percent of the UK's seaborne trade), financial services, education and related research and high technology activities and retailing and leisure.
- A number of employment-creating major developments are underway.

## **Edinburgh**

### **Edinburgh City of Learning**

Edinburgh's District Council first decided to develop Scotland's capital as a Learning City in 1993 after a member of its Economic Development Section attended the Gothenburg OECD Conference on Educating Cities. He also made contact with the Edinburgh University Centre of Continuing Education. Interest in the idea grew and a group was formed to promote Lifelong Learning in the city.

This group produced a Development Plan for 1994 / 95 and commissioned two consultants to run a consultative exercise involving key players in the city. The aim was to find out:

**“How can Edinburgh best create a culture which maximises each person's motivation and opportunities for learning in a city which could be seen to be more democratic, more prosperous and more cohesive?”**

As a result of the positive response to this exercise, the District Council and the University of Edinburgh provided funding and the Learning City initiative was launched at a conference in November 1994. The 100 or so delegates - mainly from the world of education and training, but including some employers - were urged to promote lifelong learning within their organisations.

A coordinator was appointed to follow up and develop the action initiated by the conference but in reality little progress was made. In July 1995 'Edinburgh City of Learning' was set up as a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. This meant it was not owned by any one of the partners, allowing it to act as an “honest broker”.

Although working with the many education providers in the city was no easy matter, the Learning City initiative successfully set up a monthly programme of events and published a quarterly newsletter. A 'Shop and Learn' project at an out-of-town centre brought providers together and gave shoppers information about learning opportunities.

A great deal was done to raise funds for specific projects. One, aimed at enlisting the help of Small and Medium Enterprises, was to have culminated in a conference but this was cancelled due to lack of interest.

By now Edinburgh's Regional and District Councils were being replaced by a Unitary Authority. Because of financial constraints, the new authority was unwilling to fund the Learning City and the university was unable to find additional funding. Although the initiative was shelved the new Unitary Authority has built the concept of lifelong learning into its development strategy and Edinburgh's Lifelong Learning Partnership was formally launched on 10th December 1997 with the signing of a Partnership agreement.

### **The partners**

Edinburgh's Lifelong Learning Partnership was launched formally on 10 December 1997, with all partners signing the Partnership Statement. The partners are the University of Edinburgh, Napier University, Heriot Watt University, Queen Margaret College, Stevenson College, Edinburgh's Telford College, Jewel and Esk Valley College, Lothian and Edinburgh Enterprise Ltd, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, Worker's Educational Association, Career Development Edinburgh and Lothians and the City of Edinburgh Council.

## **Strategy**

The partnership statement represents the first stage in the development of a strategy and an action plan for Lifelong Learning in the City of Edinburgh.

The Partnership will build on the existing strengths and achievements of education and training provision in Edinburgh. Its purpose is to develop the social, economic, civic and cultural effectiveness of all sections of the community. Partners are committed to strategies that maximise education and training opportunities for all, with the Education Department taking the lead role initially in these developments. The Partnership will have a key role to play in the implementation of recent Government policies which will affect lifelong learning, including New Deal, the University for Industry, the creation of Individual Learning Accounts and the proposals for the National Grid for Learning. In particular, there is a commitment to inclusion that means enhancing opportunities for those whose access to learning is often restricted. The Partnership is building a strategic alliance which aspires to:

- provide a coherent framework for the development of lifelong learning strategies
- create a learning culture within the City
- develop collaborative work between sectors and organisations
- improve and increase access to existing learning opportunities in and out of the workplace
- identify and disseminate good practice and thus improve the quality of learning for all
- promote lifelong learning within individual organisations and sectors
- attract new resources for the promotion and development of lifelong learning activities in Edinburgh

Lifelong learning provides an approach to achieving the objectives set out in the Council's City Strategy, the regeneration strategy published in *Closing the Gap* and the partnership document produced jointly by Lothian and Edinburgh Enterprise Limited and the City of Edinburgh Council on Edinburgh's Economic Future.

In particular, the strategic objectives addressed by the Partnership from these documents are:

- reduction of poverty and disadvantage
- enabling people to raise educational achievement develop the economy
- development of organisations and their staff

## **Action plan**

In the short term the Partners are undertaking or planning the following tasks. An action plan will result from further consultation and the expansion of the group of partners

- Regular, targeted information to the public about education and training opportunities in and out of the work place.
- Development of networks to improve quality of information and guidance. \* Identification of collaborative arrangements to ensure access for all.
- Identification and development of the role and place of information technology in a learning city.
- Involvement of local people in regeneration initiatives
- improvement of links between Small to Medium Enterprises and education and training providers.
- Strengthening the links between business and the community.
- Participation in European projects to extend knowledge and understanding of lifelong learning policies and practice.
- Strategies to enable the National Education and Training Targets to be achieved.
- Promote community based flexible approaches which overcome barriers experienced by disadvantaged groups.

Since its launch, the Partnership has been progressing to the formation of a Company Limited by Guarantee, with a Board of Directors consisting of the founding partners. Currently the Shadow Board is considering the draft Business Plan for the Company, and has set up a Steering Group to take forward the work of the Company.

The new commitment to establish a lifelong learning partnership was made at a high level, with Chief Executives and Vice Principals becoming directors of a Shadow Board

## **Funding**

Partners have made significant financial commitment to support the development of Edinburgh's Lifelong Learning Partnership. Contributions in kind have also supported that development. Additional, external funding will now be sought for specific projects.

## **Key Facts - Edinburgh**

Situation: South East Scotland

Population: 448,000

Schools and Colleges:

All state secondary schools are maintained by the City of Edinburgh Council. Four Higher Education Institutions, 3 Further Education Colleges.

Adult Education:

Approx. 17,000 adults per annum enrolled in City of Edinburgh Council funded courses. (Other information on student numbers unavailable from voluntary sector organisations and HE/FE institutions).

Economic/Employment trends:

- Edinburgh remains one of the UK's most prosperous cities.
- Edinburgh's population is at its highest level since 1980 and will increase further.
- The combination of capital city status with Edinburgh as the base of the Scottish Parliament enable the promotion of inward investment.
- Edinburgh's strong economic performance in the 1990s can be attributed largely to the service sector activities, which between them account for something in the order of 80% of GDP.
- Service sector output is concentrated in financial, business and other, mainly public sector, services. The financial and business service sector will continue to be a vital source of employment growth.
- Education and health, finance and business services and retailing and tourism are the largest employers and will dominate the economy into the millennium.
- Unemployment is below the Scottish and UK averages and will continue to fall. However, in some areas the unemployment rate is up to three times the City average.
- Unemployed people tend to have lower educational qualifications and fewer skills than those who are employed.
- In the labour market a dichotomy is emerging between the large numbers of highly skilled graduate level residents and an increasing number of school leavers whom employers believe will lack the core skills necessary for modern business.

## **Milton Keynes**

### **A Learning Culture in Milton Keynes**

#### **Strategic Initiatives**

As the only city in the UK with a built-in cable network and with its young and rapidly growing population, there is tremendous potential in Milton Keynes and North Buckinghamshire for developing lifelong learning throughout the community.

In order to facilitate this development, the Milton Keynes and North Buckinghamshire Lifelong Learning Partnership was formed in April 1998. This body is the Strategic Forum for Education and Training for the area, and works closely with the Milton Keynes Economic Partnership. Membership of the Lifelong Learning Partnership is comprised of representatives from education, business, Milton Keynes Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council local Universities, Schools, Milton Keynes College and the Milton Keynes and North Buckinghamshire Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise. These representatives form the executive board of the Partnership, and they meet on regular basis to steer the work of the Partnership in developing lifelong learning in Milton Keynes.

As the whole community has a part to play in the development of a learning culture and the promotion of lifelong learning, the Partnership recognises that representation should be drawn from a wide cross section of the community. So, to complement the work of the Executive Board of the Partnership, a larger stakeholder forum has been established comprising of representatives from a wide range of agencies who have an important part to play in the development of lifelong learning in the area. This forum will meet 2-3 times a year.

The primary task of the Lifelong Learning Partnership is to develop, after consultation, a Lifelong Learning Strategy for the area, which will provide a focus for all members of the community on the part they can play in developing a lifelong learning culture through a targeted action plan.

#### **Lifelong Learning in Action!!**

A whole range of activities have taken place to further the development of a lifelong learning culture within Milton Keynes and North Buckinghamshire. These have included:

- Milton Keynes hosted the First National Conference of the Learning Cities Network in May 1998. This event generated local publicity, which in turn helped to raise awareness locally about lifelong learning and learning cities.
- Regular features in the local newspaper and other media coverage, along with the adoption of “Milton Keynes - the Learning City” branding for publicity materials
- The development of a local community IT network, which links schools, into a community intranet to facilitate learning.

- Work with local schools on developing key skills accreditation gained through work in National Curriculum subjects. The aim of this was to raise students' motivation and sense of achievement.
- Further development of adult guidance through offering an enhanced service which would include personality profiling, CV presentation and interview techniques.
- Work to develop literacy and numeracy skill in unemployed adults.
- The setting up of a training centre for use by local companies to provide training for their employees.

These activities were organised by a Steering Group set up to develop the Learning City. The key challenge has been and continues to be, to obtain the commitment of providers, individuals and employers to realising the concept of developing a Learning City.

### **Target setting and action planning**

An integral part of any lifelong learning strategy is the measurement of its impact. Another of the key roles of the Lifelong Partnership is to promote and support Local and National Targets for Education and Training, which measure the skills levels in the local area. The monitoring of the achievement of the goals of a learning city is more difficult to quantify. However, work is underway to consider ways that this could be done, which could embrace both economic indicators such as employment levels, business growth rates and unemployment rates and social indicators such as levels of income support claimants and crime rates.

### **Progress so far**

Prior to the advent of the Lifelong Learning Partnership in April 1998, responsibility for promoting and developing the Learning City in Milton Keynes rested with COUNTEC, an Organisation owned by the Chamber of Commerce, Milton Keynes Council and Buckinghamshire County Council. COUNTEC was highly successful in promoting lifelong learning and bringing partners together to develop innovative ideas to encourage learning. The Lifelong Learning Partnership will build on and develop this work.

## **Key Facts – Milton Keynes**

Situation: Buckinghamshire, 15 miles south east of Northhamptonshire.

Population: 220,000 (approx.)

Schools and Colleges:

There are 85 Primary schools in Milton Keynes, 10 Secondary schools, 4 Universities and one college of Further Education.

Adult Education:

In 1997-98, there were 5454 students enrolled on adult education courses.

Employment trends:

- Employment is overwhelmingly in the service sector, with 77% of employment in this sector. Trends indicate that this sector will continue to expand
- Unemployment is consistently below the national average.
- 50.7% of the workforce is female.
- Milton Keynes and North buckinghamshire has over 5,250 employing establishments in April 1996

## **Swansea**

### **Swansea on the learning net**

The very latest Information Technology has provided the people of Swansea with an exciting new learning resource. Housed in its own building, the Learning Network, as it is known, links to the Internet. There are plans to make this the hub of a network which will spread the learning concept out to the city's disadvantaged communities. The University of Wales Swansea is also developing facilities for networking between organisations in the community.

The Learning Network, which was set up with European Social Fund (ESF) money, has been masterminded by the new Unitary Authority, the City and County of Swansea. Following the reorganisation of local government in Wales, the new Chief Executive was keen to develop an integrated approach to service delivery. A group was set up to look at economic and social development in the new authority and their connection with education and training.

The group turned its attention to the Learning City idea and considered two papers - the first on the Learning Network and the second on the concept of the City and County of Learning.

This second paper looked at the sort of actions the local authority could take to develop the Learning City. These could embrace a range of options from school improvement and adult participation in learning to the development of tourism and economic regeneration. It was felt that there were connections between all the authority's functions and the lifelong learning agenda.

The next stage was to hold meetings of the main players in education and training to consider how they could co-operate and use available resources most effectively. As a result, policy documents on the City and County of Learning are being produced and interest in the idea has been generated throughout the local authority.

The local authority is now developing its strategic role in adult education. Education providers are working together to produce an integrated prospectus which will cover all learning opportunities open to the public within the City and County of Swansea.

### **The partners**

The main partners in the Swansea initiative are:

- The Local Authority - all departments
- The West Wales Training and Enterprise Council
- Educational providers.

## **Target setting and action planning**

Baseline data on the social and economic profile of the new local authority includes information on educational attainment. Four wards are near the bottom of the table of social indices for Wales.

The new authority has a service plan which sets targets for all departments. An action plan for the City and County of Learning expects partners to set targets for their own institutions. The plan has been drawn up according to sector groups such as 14-19 education, school improvement and family learning. To date, the targets set relate mainly to local authority activity.

## **Problems encountered**

Local government reorganisation can cause problems in that there is an inevitable period of uncertainty and readjustment. The fresh perspective brought by a new authority can, however, as here, provide a new vision.

Collaboration and the founding of partnerships is never easy, especially in the competitive environment of Further Education. Swansea, in common with other Learning City initiatives, has found this to be the case.

## **Progress so far**

Swansea's City and, County of Learning initiative is:

- producing a strategic plan
- developing a shared understanding of the concept.

Another major initiative in the city has helped to foster creative partnership. The East Side Initiative is in its second year of operation and involves:

- Swansea College
- The Community Education Service
- University of Wales Swansea
- Six secondary schools

It is targeted at recruiting non-traditional students and is funded by the Welsh Further Education Funding Council and the local authority. The success of this project (O -3,500 students in one year) has fostered belief in the usefulness of partnership activity.

## **Funding**

The partners have provided funding for developing and planning the City and County of Learning. External funding has been sought and obtained for projects, largely from EU funds.

## **Key Facts - Swansea**

Situation: West Glamorgan

Population: 231,000 (approx.)

Schools and Colleges:

- All state secondary schools are LEA maintained or voluntary aided. Higher and Further Education institutions include Numerous Colleges.
- The University of Wales Swansea
- Swansea Institute of Higher Education
- Gorseinon College
- Swansea College.

Adult Education:

4500 students are enrolled on adult education courses.

Employment trends:

- Please refer to Government Statistical Service for Employment Trends.

## **Retford**

### **Retford becomes a Learning Town**

Japanese lessons and First Aid training are on the timetable for adults in Retford, while the youngsters are out improving their footballing skills. These are just some of the diverse activities on offer now that Retford has become a Learning Town.

The Retford initiative has been very much driven by the zeal and enthusiasm of one man, Richard Arrowsmith, formerly Head Teacher of the King Edward VI School. As his plans developed, they attracted the interest of a number of partnerships. His inspiration for this project apparently came from speeches and publications by Sir Christopher Ball.

The Education Business Partnership with North Nottinghamshire TEC provided ideas and inspiration, as well as support. Activities really got underway with the opening of a suite of rooms at the King Edward VI School in 1995, facilitated by the TEC partnership room programme. One of the aims of the suite was to encourage adults to join students in learning.

The project has focused on practical activities and the forming of partnerships, both with other education providers and with other organisations in Retford.

### **The partners**

The Retford initiative is essentially a series of working partnerships. The project's founder, Richard Arrowsmith established these with:

- Guideline Careers Service
- North Nottinghamshire College \* Employment Service
- Bassetlaw Community Voluntary Services
- Bassetlaw District Council
- Nottingham Trent University
- Nottingham County Council Partnership Schools programme.
- It also has support from North Nottinghamshire TEC and the governing body of the school.

The partnership with the university involves the running of lectures, while that with North Nottinghamshire College concerns the possibility of using the Learning Town as an umbrella term to promote the work of all providers in Retford. Under the Partnership schools programme the college also provides adult learning in the school

The partners involved in the Bassetlaw Education Group agreed in February 1997 to establish a steering group to take the initiative forward. This took over in September 1997 by which time Richard Arrowsmith had moved to the headship of a school out of Retford. A part-time Development Officer (2 days per week) has been appointed to work under the Steering Group.

## **Target setting and action planning**

This project has an action plan, albeit a flexible one, and targets for the future.

The targets are for individual actions which will contribute towards increasing learning approaches. More generalised targets aim to raise awareness of the concept and encourage co-operative working. It is unclear how these targets were devised.

The project has not concentrated on baseline data nor on links with economic regeneration in the formal sense. A survey of 2000 households on attitudes to learning has recently been undertaken, however.

## **Problems encountered**

There have been some problems with the activities, such as difficulties in securing good speakers and audiences for a 'Celebrity Speakers' programme. There have also been difficulties between providers, but discussions have now alleviated fears of competition.

The new Steering Group have had some difficulties in outlining their role. This has now been resolved.

There has been little or no involvement of employers in these early stages.

## **Progress so far**

The Retford initiatives achievements are described in its Annual Report. These should be measured against the project's aims which are to:

- Explore what might be involved in the Learning Town
- Contemplate activities affecting as many potential learning groups as possible from all ages and levels of learning
- Promote lifelong learning in Retford
- Support existing activities and promote further possibilities of improved progression rates for children in secondary schools
- Provide an umbrella framework for existing provision for adult learning
- Promote Retford as one of a number of regeneration activities taking place in North Nottinghamshire.
- These aims are in the process of being re-evaluated to set against attainable objectives

## **Achievements include:**

- A football training event for 150 children
- The development of National Targets Certificates for foundation targets I and 3 in two schools in the first year and five schools in the second year
- Courses for adults in Japanese, Italian and First Aid followed by an expanded programme in conjunction with North Nottinghamshire College and a Community Education programme with the LEA's financial support

- Lecturers providing a taste of HE in partnership with Nottingham Trent University
- Much greater involvement in Adult Learner's Week in 1998. \* Presentation to the Town Centre Regeneration Group
- Approaches to community groups within the town

Planned actions include:

- Evaluation of HE programme
- Further consultation on understanding and response to the initiative to assess effectiveness and determine future direction
- Extension of National Targets certification
- Regular coverage in local press and one national press feature
- Design of a logo and development of the Learning Town as an umbrella term for other providers
- One-stop shop premises
- Longer Term HE based courses
- Greater involvement of Employers
- Production of a marketing strategy.

There are a number of other creative plans for action which may be developed during the year, including one with primary schools, companies and libraries.

## **Funding**

The work of the project director is supported, in part, by North Nottinghamshire TEC.

### **Key Facts - Retford**

Situation: North Nottinghamshire

Population: 21,000 (approx.)

Schools and colleges:

3 state secondary schools are LEA maintained or voluntary aided. Nearest College Workshop (8 miles) but with centre in Retford.

Adult Education: About 500 students are enrolled on courses (including 6<sup>th</sup> form)

Employment trends:

- Local mine closures have increased unemployment
- Few large employers in the town

## **Stockton-on-Tees**

### **SRB projects for lifelong learning**

Projects funded by Stockton and Thornaby Task Force and Stockton City Challenge with lifelong learning activities at their heart were successful in:

- Developing a Network of Local Learning Centres with help to strengthen the voluntary sector in Stockton-on-Tees
- Initiatives in primary and secondary schools, including the development of literacy projects in primary schools and the promotion of family learning
- Developing meaningful partnerships which utilised available funding to enhance initiatives.

The pump priming provided by the Government has enabled many successful projects to be further developed with SRB and Lottery funding and this has strengthened the Network in Stockton.

However, it was confirmed at a conference held in June 1997, that further work was needed to pull all of the strands of lifelong learning together and the TEC and LEA Task Group, decided to implement Stockton's Learning Towns.

After many years of working in Partnership together, it was felt that the links between economic regeneration and education/ training strategies and collaboration between sectors would be a way forward.

The founder members of Stockton's Learning Towns are:

- \*Archon 2000 Ltd
- \*\*Five Lamps Organisation
- \*\*\*Future Steps Ltd
- \*\*Mill Lane Community Partnership
- \*NETA Training Group
- \*\*\*\*Samsung Electronics
- Stockton and Billingham College
- Stockton Borough Council
- \*\*\*\*\*Stockton Community Advice and Training Consortia Stockton Sixth Form College
- Tees Valley Training and Enterprise Council
- \*\* Thornaby Reading Town
- University College Stockton
- Workers' Educational Association
- Co-opted Members to the Board
- Evening Gazette
- Secondary Heads representative
- Primary Heads representative

Stockton's Learning Towns is funded by the Founder Members with a grant from Cleveland Community Foundation. A bid has been submitted to the European Social Fund.

#### Key to founder members

\*TEC contracted mainstream training provider

\*\*SRB Funded

\*\*\*Careers Service

\*\*\*\*Private Sector

\*\*\*\*\*Local Learning Centres (SRB/Lottery funded)

A launch event for Stockton's Learning Towns took place on 11.5.98. Over 200 people took part. TRANSCO sponsored the event, supported by the local paper, the Evening Gazette. An Olympian Bowl was lit and torches of learning taken all over the Borough, involving thousands of people.

This was followed by many learning events to promote lifelong learning and support Adult Learners Week. The Regional Adult Learners Award Ceremony also took place in Stockton-on-Tees on 22nd May 1998. A marquee housed an exhibition of learning opportunities on 21st and 22nd May 1998, organised by the Evening Gazette in conjunction with David Bilton Associates and Stockton's Learning Towns.

All founder members and many others participated in 2 weeks of learning celebrations, proving that Stockton-on-Tees was a real Learning Town.

#### **Key Facts – Stockton-on-Tees**

Situation:	Cleveland
Population:	170,000 (approx)
Schools and Colleges:	All state secondary schools are LEA

## **Sunderland**

### **Telematics take off in Sunderland**

In future, Sunderland could become a national and international centre for telematics. This is the aim of a strategy produced by the City of Sunderland Partnership, a consortium of local government, businesses and education providers.

Sunderland has been a member of the Learning City Network since the summer of 1996 but has not been represented at meetings. The telematics strategy appears to be the focus for learning initiatives and covers community projects, the establishment of electronic village halls and unemployment projects. It relates telematics to the agendas of education and training providers and to the enhancement of educational facilities by linking University, City and College libraries. It explores the advantages for businesses of expanding the City of Sunderland Teleport and looks at ways of encouraging and increasing SME activity in telematics.

The City of Sunderland Partnership performs other roles in respect of regeneration, economic and social development in the City.

Sunderland is the pilot area for the University for Industry initiative (UFI), which promotes access to learning for all, via IT/ Call Centre operations.

A partnership approach to the 'New Deal' programme has put IT and Training at the heart of the City's programme for assisting people into work.

The City of Sunderland Partnership is currently developing the next phase of its Telematics Strategy for 1999-2004, with access to lifelong learning opportunities for all at its heart

### **The Partners**

The City of Sunderland Partnership includes :-

- The Local Authority
- City of Sunderland College
- University of Sunderland
- Health Services
- Business Organisations
- Sunderland Voluntary Sector Partnership

Activities Include:-

- Teleport development as part of a Teleport Consortium
- Electronic Village Halls - 4 Physical sites plus one 'Virtual site' which networks a number of Community Organisations .

- University for Industry - Pilot has been a success. Due to be launched nationally.
- Ladder of IT Training - Plans to develop an electronic based database of IT training within the City, to allow for on-line registration.
- Seamless City Library - The local authority, City College and the University are in the process of integrating their libraries. Single membership is already in place - join one library, join them all. On-line access to all three library catalogues should be available by the end of 1998, with full library integration during 1999.
- EBSCO Host - Have recently purchased an on-line database which allows access to 15000 full text journals ( over 1 million articles ).
- Learning Resource Centres - Four developed and opened by the City College, providing a network of over 600 multimedia PC's across the City.
- Smartcards - Participating in regional smartcard development.
- Minster Cyber-cafe - Church Minster includes a cyber -cafe
- School Internet access - All schools will have internet access by September as part of National Grid for Learning standards funding.

### **Key Facts - Sunderland**

Situation: Tyne and Wear, North East England

Population: 295,000

Schools and colleges:

All state secondary schools are LEA maintained or voluntary aided. Higher and Further Education institutions include the University, and City of Sunderland College.

Adult Education: About 15,000 students are currently enrolled on courses.

Employment trends:

- Over the period 1986-96 the number of manufacturing jobs in Sunderland increased from 24,500 to 29,100 and increase of 19%. This contrasts with the national situation, where the number of such jobs fell by 18%.
- Manufacturing employment gains have come from expansion among existing firms particularly the larger ones, rather than from new companies.
- Around 72% of the City's manufacturing employment is now accounted for by the largest five industrial sectors, namely Motor vehicles, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Paper and Printing and Clothing and Textiles.
- Both the Number and proportion of manufacturing jobs provided by indigenous and other UK – owned establishments has fallen between 1986-96, with the share of foreign-owned plants increasing from 22% to 40% over the same period.
- The Service sector embraces about two-thirds of total employment in the City, compared to about three-quarters nationally.
- Locally, a much smaller percentage of service sector jobs are in business services and a much larger proportion in Other services than nationally. However, business Services-together with transport and Communication – had the highest services sector growth rate in the city over the decade to 1996.
- Since 1996 there has been considerable local growth in employment in 'call-centre' operations.

## **Peterborough**

### **Peterborough's Learning Link**

Individuals and businesses in Peterborough can easily find out where they need to go for help with training thanks to the Learning Link.

This project has been developed by a TEC-led steering group and provides a one-stop-shop with access to a network of advice and thence to training organisations. Services offered include a computer-based information bank, a network of suppliers of careers guidance, and NVQ services. Following the success of the Learning Link, the steering group decided to explore the idea of the Learning Community and this was included in Greater Peterborough TEC's business plan for 1997.

#### **The partners**

The partners involved in Learning Link and the possible Learning Community initiative are:

- Greater Peterborough TEC
- All FE Colleges
- Training providers
- Local firms.

#### **Key Facts - Peterborough**

Situation: Cambridgeshire

Population: 100,000 (approx)

Schools and colleges:

All state secondary schools are LEA maintained or voluntary aided. Higher and Further Education institutions include Numerous Colleges.

Adult Education: About 1500 students are enrolled on courses.

Employment trends:

- Growing gap between local job creation and local labour force. Gap increasing from 19000 to 24000 by 2006.

## **Newark**

### **Widening access to education**

A wide-ranging household survey in Newark provided the starting point for a project to widen access to education and training in the town.

North Nottinghamshire TEC then applied for funding from the TEC Discretionary Fund for a Learning Town project, featuring a strong IT element. A town profile and baseline survey of learning activity have since been carried out and a three-themed approach to improving levels of learning is now being developed.

- Theme 1 - Learning Organisations - involves the development of a learning network to exchange best practice. A baseline survey of business competitiveness has been carried out,
- Theme 2 - Enterprise and Entrepreneurship for young people in full-time education/ training. A local engineering company has created an interactive science resource for use by Newark schools.
- Theme 3 - Local Learning Communities - involves a learning programme to be delivered at local primary schools by the FE college.

All 3 themes are driven by the pursuit of the “Connected Learning Community” concept in which a networked learning resource is being created.

### **The partners**

Partners in the Newark Learning Town initiative are:

- North Nottinghamshire TEC
- Newark and Sherwood College
- The District Council
- County Council
- Schools
- Careers Service.

Some work has been carried out in one community and five local employers have signed partnership agreements with the FE college.

### **Proposed outcomes**

These are the proposed outcomes for each of the three themes.

Learning Organisations:

- increased partnerships between employers and learning providers
- increased number of businesses involved
- number of personal learning plans

- number of individuals involved
- number of training/ learning hours
- range of training programmes.

The baseline against which these outputs will be judged is five current partnerships among 1,138 businesses. Forty one of these have more than 50 employees.

**Entrepreneurship:**

- changed attitudes -assessed by questionnaires/ evaluations
- improved work-readiness skills - subjective assessments/ observations
- enhanced National Record of Achievement recordings
- curriculum materials.

**Learning Communities - main features will include:**

- parental involvement in schools
- adult education provision
- range of learning providers engaged with local communities
- homework clubs
- increased school/ home interface
- increased use of IT.

**Key Facts - Newark**

Situation: Nottinghamshire

Population: 25,000 (approx.)

Schools and colleges:

All state secondary schools are LEA maintained or voluntary aided. Higher and Further Education institutions include college.

Adult Further Education:

About 5000 students are enrolled on learning programmes through Newark & Sherwood College.

Employment trends:

- Reduction in local engineering employment
- Increase in the food industry's locally
- Dominance of SME activity
- Lower than average unemployment levels

## **Birmingham**

### **Raising achievement in Birmingham**

Although Birmingham is not officially a Learning City, it is a prime example of how education can be placed at the heart of a city's ambitions and how standards can be raised.

Unlike other initiatives described in this report, Birmingham has, until fairly recently, focused on schools. Projects have been driven by the Education Department of the City Council with little emphasis on external partners.

During the 1970s and 1980s Birmingham developed into a modern city, but this regeneration only served to highlight the poor skill levels among the population and the lack of investment in education. In 1993 Birmingham took the unique step of setting up an Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Professor Ted Wragg to review the present and future needs of its education service.

The Commission revealed widespread dissatisfaction with education policy in the city and a disturbing level of under-achievement. There was also evidence of lack of resourcing and the school building stock was in a poor state. The Commission recommended a number of specific measures to be taken by the Education Department to raise achievement.

Under Chief Education Officer, Tim Brighouse, a number of initiatives were taken which have led to remarkable improvements in some schools, particularly in literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 1. GCSE results are closing on the national average and showing less pupils gaining no passes.

These initiatives include:

- A programme of school improvement based on professional networks
- Improvement of 0-5 years services through collaboration between education, libraries, health and social services and parents.
- The Year of Reading - to be followed by the Year of IT, and other Years of
- Development of baseline assessment and improvement of achievement at 7, 11 and 12 in reading and maths
- A variety of out-of-school initiatives such as the University of the First Age, and a Children's University to extend children's interest and experience of learning.

The City Council has always had a commitment to post-16 education and training, which has had a high profile with a very successful Adult Education Service, wide-ranging training initiatives initiated by the Economic Development Department and support to adult learners from the library service. Since 1996, the focus has shifted to Lifelong Learning, rather than post 16 education and training, which has led to a large number of innovative initiatives and examples of good practice. The City Council's keen interest in developing partnerships has created these opportunities which are part of a corporate Lifelong Learning Strategy. Co-operation with other organisations in the city forms a key part of this strategy. Its objectives are to:

- sustain and improve the quality of learning provision
- increase the number of people participating and achieving in continuing education and training, and to ensure participation by all groups
- ensure adequate support for individuals and groups to participate in lifelong learning.
- create learning organisations within businesses and other organisations throughout the city.
- build competitive advantage by contributing to labour market needs and to enable employers to voice their skill requirements and Birmingham people to acquire the skills they need to compete in the workforce.
- contribute to social inclusion by building confidence in communities, allowing people to become active citizens, and by offering ambitious learning opportunities within specific areas.
- eliminate low levels of literacy and numeracy and other essential learning skills.
- enable the appropriate celebration of learning, and value all types of learning regardless of outcome.

### **The partners**

While individual activities to promote learning have involved partnerships on the ground, the strategic emphasis has come from the City Council. However, in the past year or so, a Lifelong Learning Forum has brought together players from across the city to explore the learning agenda.

Partners include:

- The City Council
- Birmingham TEC
- FE Colleges
- HE Institutions
- Birmingham Careers & Education Business Partnership
- Voluntary Organisations

An initial conference considered membership, role, structure and mode of operation and a second conference has been held recently to review progress.

### **Problems encountered**

Many of the problems in terms of roles and remit have emerged in Birmingham as in other Learning Cities. TEC and FE colleges have largely focused on the Post 16, people in employment agenda, but the City Council has a much broader range of interests. Competition in the post-16 marketplace has sometimes hindered co-operative activity. However, the Forum has enabled joint bidding processes to develop and joint responses to Government initiatives are now a feature of the Forum's activities.

### **Target setting and action planning**

The Lifelong Learning Forum is currently developing a business plan and has active sub-groups undertaking key activities around Widening Participation,

information, advice and guidance, marketing and Individual Learning Accounts.

The City Council's lifelong Learning strategy aligns specific targets, some of them measurable and many of them intending to develop numerical measures, to the key objectives described above. Each objective also has a timescale, a lead department and a list of activities to be carried out. The second phase of the strategy is to provide a framework for evaluation of progress within the City Council and to raise the profile of Lifelong Learning with officers and members, and the citizens of Birmingham.

### **Funding**

A great deal of external funding has been attracted to Birmingham. It has secured SRB funding of 27 million pounds for the promotion of core skills.

Funding to support Widening Participation activities was received during 1997/98 for the Birmingham/ Solihull Partnership

No specific funding has been obtained for the development of the Learning City and no specific staff or organisational structure exists to support it. However, within the City Council, a Lifelong Learning Strategy Group exists, led by the Assistant Director ( Libraries and Learning ) who has a corporate remit for lifelong Learning, and represents the City on the Learning City Network.

## **Key Facts - Birmingham**

Situation: West Midlands

Population: 1,000,000 (approx.)

Schools and colleges:

Most state secondary schools are LEA maintained or voluntary aided, but there are 17 grant maintained secondary schools in the city, Higher and Further Education institutions include the Birmingham University, Aston University, University of Central England, Regional centre for the Open University and there are 8 FE Colleges and 3 sixth form Colleges.

Adult Education:

About 40,000 students are enrolled on courses each year.

Employment trends:

- Working age population 767,000
- Labour Force 455,000
- Economic Activity 59.4%
- Unemployment rate 12.5%

Labour Market Dynamics

- Manufacturing employment will account for most of the gross job losses between 1997 and 2010.
- Professional Services, hotels and catering and other industries services are predicted to be the top contributions to employment growth.
- By 2010 manual workers are expected to be down to 26.1% of the total, while managerial and professional occupations are forecast for 36%.
- By 2010 woman are expected to have 48.2% share of employment in the city.
- The number of jobs in Birmingham is actually greater than the number of residents putting themselves forward for employment.
- The main determinant of exclusion from the labour market is lack of qualifications. However, ethnic minorities (through discrimination), the disabled, lone parents, older and younger, then face additional problems in finding work.

## **Derby**

### **Derby targets learning**

The initial inspiration to make Derby a City of Learning came from a visit by the Strategic Director of the Southern Derbyshire Chamber to Baltimore, which had become a City of Reading.

After discussions with initiatives in other parts of Britain, a model for a City of Learning was devised. It was recognised that the concept would only be of use if it could embrace the self-interest of providers and harness commitment at the highest level.

About 40 people at a senior level in city institutions were invited to a seminar to gauge the amount of interest in the initiative. This was followed by a meeting of some seven key people, chaired by the Director of Corporate Affairs at Toyota who is also Chair of the Board of Southern Derbyshire Chamber. A number of specific matters were agreed:

- The initiative would not be a talking shop
- The future of the initiative would be assessed after one year
- Those present agreed that the relevant parts of their corporate plans would be realigned to match the objectives and targets of the City of Learning
- The group would act as a Sponsor Body to the initiative
- A Forum at a senior, but more operational level should be set up
- Sir Christopher Ball, Chairman of the University of Derby, would act as the link between these two groups
- The initiative would deal with the City of Derby as defined by the boundaries of the Unitary Authority
- It would involve city residents, rather than those who worked there.

Since this initial meeting, The Forum and sponsor body both meet on a quarterly basis. The Forum has also met in two groups to consider target setting. In addition, there is a Marketing Group to cover promotional activities, currently chaired by the editor of the Derby Evening Telegraph; a Networked City Group which is currently exploring links with major telecommunications companies and a thriving Education Business Partnership.

### **The partners**

The Sponsor Body currently consists of:

- The Chief Education Officer for Derby City Council
- The Chair of the City Education Committee
- The Chief Executive of the Southern Derbyshire Chamber
- Principals of both Colleges of Further Education
- The Vice-Chancellor of the University
- Sir Christopher Ball

The Forum represents the same broad interests and consists of nominations from the Sponsor Group. Again membership is at a senior level.

Those involved in the Forum include:

- The Operations Director of Southern Derbyshire Chamber
- The Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University
- A Vice-Principal from each College
- The Assistant Director of Quality from the City Council's Education Department
- Three employer representatives from Rolls Royce, the Health Authority and a manufacturing firm
- A Trades Union representative
- Voluntary sector representative
- Three school heads - one from a grant maintained secondary school, one from a local authority maintained secondary school and one from a primary school.

The Director of the multi-agency literacy project "Read and Write Away" may also be co-opted onto the Forum Group.

The initiative is linked to the Derby City Partnership, the economic planning group for the city, through the high level of membership of both groups.

### **Target setting and action planning**

In Derby, target setting is seen as the key to a successful strategy and the initiative has made considerable progress in this direction.

In terms of baseline data the initiative is well equipped. An extensive household survey involving over 5,000 individual interviews was carried out in the Southern Derbyshire area and useful data on skill levels down to local district level are available. Research was commissioned from the Policy Research Unit of Leeds Metropolitan University on the evidence from Derby that learning pays for individuals. Southern Derbyshire Chamber also partnered the Basic Skills Agency and the Community Education Service in research into local literacy and numeracy levels.

The Forum Group has set special targets for Derby, based on the National Targets for Education and Training.

The Foundation Targets are:

- **85% of young people to achieve five GCSE's at grade C or above or equivalent by 2000.**
- **75% of young people to achieve level 2 competence in communication, numeracy and IT by 2000. 35% to achieve level 3 by age 21.**
- **By age 21 60% of young people to achieve NVQ level 3 or equivalent by 2000.**
- **Additional Targets for consideration**
- A target relating to parental education
- A target to deal with under-achievement by boys in English

- A target that all children considered able to do so should be able to read and write by age 7
- A target to ensure that young people have a qualification at level 2/3 in Science and Technology.

The Lifetime Targets are:

- **60% of workforce to be qualified to NVQ 3 or equivalent by 2000.**
- **33.3% of workforce to have qualification at NVQ 4 or above by 2000. 40% by 2007.** As the national target will probably be exceeded in Derby, a more ambitious target has been set.
- **Investors in People**
- **Additional Targets for consideration**
- The survey carried out by the Basic Skills Agency showed that 25% of the population have some difficulty with basic skills. A target to reduce this to 10% by the year 2000 is under discussion.
- A target relating to participation in learning by the whole population.

These Lifetime Targets, except the one relating to participation which is yet to be set, relate to the workforce, including those discouraged from working or registered as unemployed.

An Awayday was held in March 1998 at which a priority action agenda was agreed for 1998/9 which includes the following:

- Motivate 'excluded' and 'disadvantaged' groups to participate in learning
- Develop workforce skills, focusing on those with lower level existing skills
- Enhance guidance for adults
- Achieve collaboration among post-16 providers
- Delivery of an effective marketing campaign
- Produce collaborative bids for European and other funding

### **Problems encountered**

The Derby initiative has encountered few problems so far. The vigorous competition between providers, the independence of schools (50% of Derby secondary schools are grant maintained) and the need to prioritise targets are likely to present challenges to the City of Learning. These should be alleviated by the following agreements, already made by the partners:

- A three-year commitment to the project
- No substitution of group members
- Commitment to a substantial joint awareness raising campaign
- Commitment to assist each other in the Forum and Sponsor Body
- Adoption of relevant targets and goals and agreement to monitor these within the setting of corporate planning.

### **Progress so far**

The Derby initiatives major achievements to date have been the rapid target setting exercise and the establishment of a high level partnership, plus excellent coverage by the local news press.

The next stage is to refine the targets and secure resources to achieve them.

## **Funding**

This initiative has received no funding from external sources, nor has it made any bids for such funding.

### **Key Facts - Derby**

Situation: Derbyshire

Population: 232,000

Schools and colleges:

Grant-maintained and LEA maintained. Further and Higher Education institutions comprise the University of Derby and two tertiary colleges, Mackworth college Derby and Derby Tertiary College: Wilmorton.

Adult Education:

About 17,700 students are enrolled on courses.

Employment trends:

- In the process of making the transformation from a railway and engineering town to a more diverse and dynamic city.
- Manufacturing still provides jobs for nearly a third of the workforce.
- The service sector is growing, including high technology, tourism, culture and associated services.
- The City Challenge project of Pride Park is attracting major international companies such as the Prudential.

## **Dudley**

Dudley MBC and Dudley TEC are working closely with the aim of creating a 'Learning Borough'. It is intended that this be formalised in an agreed strategy involving Dudley MBC, Dudley TEC, Local FE Colleges and Dudley Chamber of Industry & Commerce, amongst other partners. Dudley's proposals will build upon "The Learning Age" Green Paper, taking advantage of the Lifelong Learning focus now given to a Department of Dudley MBC, and building on the opportunity presented by the fibre optic cable network now covering the borough.

## **Oxford**

Heart of England TEC and its partners have a written Learning Strategy for Oxfordshire which describes priorities for action within and between sector partners. The TEC is currently exploring the possibility of formalising the concept of Oxfordshire as a learning community.

## **Other Initiatives**

A number of other places have enquired about the Learning City concept. These include Colchester, Chelmsford, Kings Lynn, Leicester and Slough.

Others have adopted the idea without necessarily using the term "Learning City". In Wolverhampton and Batley collaborative partnerships of the kind described in many cities seem to be developing. Gloucester, York and Durham are all actively discussing strategies of this kind.

The concept of the "Learning County" is also arousing interest following the publication of "Kent Learning". Suffolk in particular is pursuing this agenda.

## **Appendix**

### **The author took part in the following activities during the preparation of this report:**

- Attended regular meetings of the Learning City Steering Group in Norwich and the consultative conference in September 1996.
- Attended regular Planning Group meetings of the Learning Curve in Thetford. Involved in the launch of this initiative and in the consultative conference held in October 1996. Prepared the conference report for this group.
- Met with the steering group chair and initiator of the Sheffield initiative and subsequently discussed progress.
- Attended three meetings of the Learning City Network. This links a number of those involved with Learning City initiatives in the UK to share progress and good practice.
- Attended conference on the concept of the Learning City hosted by Southampton District Council.
- Interviewed the coordinator of the Nottingham initiative on progress to date and attend the Nottingham conference in January 1997.
- Interviewed the coordinator of the Learning City company in Edinburgh in its last week of operation and the Director of the Scottish Community Education Council (SCEC) on her experience of the initiative and any similar developing initiatives in Scotland.
- Visited Derby and Birmingham to interview staff involved in these initiatives.
- Requested up-to-date information from all known initiatives.
- Undertook desk study of information from Learning Cities.

*Further information on Learning City Network can be obtained from*

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