

Best Value Review of Community Learning and Development

1. SUMMARY

1. Due to changes in the HMIE inspection regime it was considered appropriate to review the current Community Learning and Regeneration Service, focussing on staffing structure and service delivery. The attached report details the findings of the Best Value Review that was carried out during the period May 08 to February 09, together with recommendations for improvements in service delivery through increased joint working and efficiency savings through staffing restructure.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to consider and accept the recommendations set out below.

2.1 Service Delivery

- 2.1.1 There are several reasons that a move from the current geographical structure to a function based structure is the recommendation of this review. The need to provide a service which is consistent, is integrated within similar services and avoids duplication was a clear priority. The views of the stakeholders involved were taken on board together with the concerns of the staff focus group, which related to fragmentation of the service. Strong partnerships being maintained should avoid this and the clear lines of responsibility should not dilute service delivery.
- 2.1.2 With regard to youth work, there are services within this department, and outwith, whose client base is youth. There is limited partnership working amongst the groups, and therefore little knowledge of what services are on offer. It is recommended that the youth work services provided by Active Schools, CLD and Duke of Edinburgh are managed by one manager, who will be responsible for forming partnerships with Social Work, Health and Education. It is recommended that the staff currently employed by Corporate Services to administer the Youngscot Service transfer into this new structure to be managed with other youth focused services, allowing development, support and closer partnership working. The transfer of staff should include any specific funding and earmarked reserve currently covering the cost of the service.

2.1.3 It is recommended that the structure of the youth work services be centred around the secondary school clusters, following the model currently in place for Active Schools, with youth workers placed at LGE9 on the salary scale. Partnerships should be formed in each of the cluster groups involving health, education, police, and should develop an action plan/ strategy which would feed into an overarching departmental youth strategy. Regular meetings of the cluster based partnerships should ensure that early intervention and diversionary work is in place, and referrals amongst the service deliverers allows the variety of youth work currently on offer to compliment and enhance. In order to facilitate this move to functional based youth team the CLD youth work should be led by an LGE 13 post, reporting to the current Community Resources Manager, together with an administrative assistant to be utilised for all youth work. It is recommended that an LGE10 post of Standards Officer be created, reporting directly to the CR Manager, carrying out work for both Youth and Adult Services, with regard to CLD requirements and standards essential for HMIE and other inspections, and to inform managers of initiatives and ongoing development. It is also recommended that this post should administer and monitor the Education, Leisure and Social Welfare grant process.

2.1.4 With regard to Adult Learning, Numeracy and Literacy, there is a need for closer working with the FE colleges currently operating within Argyll and Bute, creating a more strategic and consistent approach to learning across the council. It is recommended that an LGE 13 post should co-ordinate the adult learning programme, including numeracy and literacy work, across Argyll and Bute, developing opportunities for a wider client base through extended leisure activities and report directly to the Head of Community Regeneration. An area CLD worker placed at LGE 9 on the salary scale should be based in the each of the community centres, including modular building in Oban, together with administrative support. The functions of booking schools, community centres and mini buses should remain with the administrative assistants in the short term, until such times as the Customer Contact Centre is in a position to accommodate this activity. It is recommended that the LGE13 managing the adult learning team approach the Customer Contact Centre Manager to discuss the possibility of this function moving in the near future. The current staffing structure in place for Numeracy and Literacy and the current budget should remain, with the manager reporting to the LGE13 post. It is recommended a formal partnership be put in place with CLD adult learning staff and the employability team, based in Development Services, which should include an SLA

involving a referral system to ensure the natural progression from learning to prospective employment.

2.1.5 Community Capacity Building can be broken down into two distinct areas of work.

- Community Development
- Community Engagement

2.1.6 It is recommended that, in line with the findings of the Demonstration Project, areas of service throughout the council currently working with the 3rd sector in a development role, should be drawn together forming a unit where consistency and support can be provided. A single point of contact would be established linking services being delivered through the 'LEADER' programme and with links to the new Business Gateway Service and local area regeneration and community development in the Local Plan.

2.1.7 It is recognised that the ability for Development Services to dovetail work currently being delivered in other departments to the 3rd Sector with Business Gateway should lead to a much more dynamic service, offering not only funding and training, but capacity building support to community groups aspiring to be social enterprises or existing social enterprises undertaking community development planning. The work of this unit would be more likely to have tangible outcomes, linked to high spend and priority projects with clear focus and obvious links to the Council's service plans. It is recommended that 4 of the staff currently employed within CLD and paid from the Fairer Scotland fund should be integrated into the new unit to provide the community capacity building element of service. This service would be undertaken in consultation with Community Planning Partners to ensure continuity of service, particularly with ABSEN, the CVSs, the Volunteer Centre and HIE, filling the service gaps which are to be identified in a CPP targeting exercise currently being lead by the Community Planning Manager.

2.1.8 Services engaging in 3rd sector development on a statutory basis (procurement of homecare, housing grants etc) should not be involved in this unit.

2.1.9 It is recommended that the broader community engagement work linked to the local area committee planning groups should be carried out by 1 x LGE 9 member of staff in each of the 4 geographical areas currently employed within CLD and paid from the Fairer Scotland Fund. In line with the Council's Community Engagement Strategy, the staff should be linked through the Area Corporate Services Managers to the Local Area

Community Planning partnerships and should be line managed by a LGE13 post, Community Development Manager, reporting directly to the Library and Information Manager in Planning and Performance. This would lead to greater community involvement through the Local Area Planning partnerships across the council giving consistency of approach.

2.2 Support Services

- 2.2.1 The work currently carried out by the CLD team is supported through the employment of 80 part time sessional staff. The work carried out by the sessional staff varies from area to area, and in some parts of the service it was difficult to find justification for the hours recorded. However, there are services provided through some of the staff which are required in order to successfully realise CLD objectives. Therefore with regard to the sessional staffing budget and associated sessional staff, it is recommended that the Community Resources Manager and the Adult Learning Manager review and rationalise this workforce with a view to removing the sessional budget and bringing necessary sessional staff, together with their budget, into the core staffing budget, with terms and conditions of service brought into line with personnel requirements. This work should be carried out by September 2009. This will bring to an end the time consuming administration of time sheets for both Community Services and Payroll, and bring staff into line with the single status core conditions of service. It will also achieve the efficient and effective use of current resources as required by Best Value.

2.3 Accommodation

- 2.3.1 The traditional accommodation supported by CLD are the community centres which are located in Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Dunoon, Rothesay and Helensburgh (Kirkmichael). There is a modular building in Oban where CLD staff are accommodated. The community centre in Dunoon, Rothesay, Kirkmichael and Lochgilphead are all well used by community groups, with the community centre in Campbeltown being in the main used by Argyll College.
- 2.3.2 It is recommended that the Adult Learning Manager should in the very short term review with the Centre Councils both their constitutions and the annual payments which they make to the Council. A decision should be reached regarding the termination or renewal of the existing arrangements and if renewed constitutions are found to be appropriate an SLA should be drawn up, with the involvement of the Quality Assurance Manager ensuring the legality of any payments made to or by the

Centre Councils. Insurance liability responsibility for renovations and costs incurred by the Council in relation to administration should be focused on, with recommendations being submitted to DMT by late summer.

- 2.3.3 It is recommended that CLD youthworkers should be accommodated within the secondary school clusters they are associated with, alongside their Active School counterparts, and that the Community Resources Manager should commence negotiations with the schools to put this in place wherever possible.
- 2.3.4 It is recommended that janitorial services within the community centres during office hours be removed, and that reception duties during these hours should be carried out by administration staff. The cost of employing combined cleaning and janitorial staff for the hour before closing each night should be negotiated with Operational Services. Cover for administration staff holidays and sickness with regard to reception duties will be the responsibility of the Adult Learning Manager. It is recommended that negotiation with the centre councils with regard to out of office hour lets of the community centres be instigated in order that procedure may be put in place.
- 2.3.5 It is recommended that the Adult Learning Manager costs and pursues a case management system, allowing ongoing monitoring and planning of the developing programmes and courses for both adult and youth work.
- 2.3.6 It is recommended that the Adult Learning Manager, together with the Community Resources Manager investigate the development of appropriate information relating to their services being displayed on the Council's website.
- 2.3.7 It is recommended that negotiation with the Culture and Libraries Manager should commence regarding a joint approach to delivering courses based with library accommodation where feasible.
- 2.3.8 It is recommended that all interdepartmental transfer of staff should include budget and any specific funding relating to the provision of service.
- 2.3.9 It is recommended that any non-structural changes brought about through this review should involve public consultation.

3. DETAIL

3.1 This Best Value Review considered all areas of the Community Learning and Regeneration Service, Adult Learning; Youth Work; Community Capacity Building, together with the administration function, accommodation and budget. Consideration was given to other areas of service both within the department and in other areas of the council where service of a similar nature targeting a similar client group was being delivered.

3.2 Joint working featured predominantly in the discussion, and is reflected in the recommendations of the review with opportunity for partnerships to be formed internally and externally.

3.3 Cost was an issue, and opportunities for savings have been identified in several areas of service.

3.4 Areas of service which require further review have been identified and responsibility for this has been allocated in the recommendations.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The recommendations provide an opportunity to improve service delivery by jointly managing areas of work which target similar client groups, and by creating formal partnerships to align services.

4.2 In addition there are opportunities to make budget savings and efficiency savings, whilst improving outcomes for the client.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy: None

5.2 Financial: Savings as noted in the report

5.3 Legal: None

5.4 Equal opportunities: None

5.5 Sustainability: None

Director of Community Services
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