

LONG LEARN ACTIVE LEARNING MATERIALS

FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

LOCAL LEARNING PROVIDERS

AND

EVERYONE AND EVERY ORGANISATION WITH AN INTEREST IN CREATING
STABLE, VIBRANT AND PROSPEROUS LEARNING CITIES, TOWNS AND
REGIONS

Chapter 7 Session 7.1:

Asking the people: Why consult?

‘The strengthening of participation in the governance of a city relies on the strengthening of direct citizen and community involvement in decision-making channels. A truly participative society must design its channels of participation to include all citizens. Too often older people, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, young people and children, to name a few are excluded from decision making processes..’ (Dublin City Development Board)

From ‘Learning Cities. Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government’ (Norman Longworth)

Chapter 7 Session 7.1:

Asking the people: Why consult?

Session outline: There is a new spirit of democracy in the air. Not only do citizens expect to be consulted but also Cities and Regions gain advantages from consulting the citizens. This lesson therefore examines the reasons why consultation is ‘a good thing’ and for local and regional government and the changes that are taking place in cities and regions to make it happen. A series of assignments and exercises guide the learner through the consultation preparation maze and solicit ideas, observations and contexts from so doing. A Case study is also included as well as a glimpse of the changes that need to be made in neighbourhood structures to facilitate effective consultation.

Guidelines for using this Active Learning session

Goals

The creation of learning cities and regions is in all our interests. It promotes social stability, encourages wealth creation, and enables citizens to fulfil their potential, their dreams and their ambitions. It is a survival strategy for our future, and that of our children and grandchildren. But it won't happen unless all of us play our part in making it so. It won't be a simple transition process, to be put into practice by someone else in the local authority. That means that we all, especially local government managers, professionals and staff, need to know and understand more about what it is, why it's important and what the major issues and opportunities are. There are many of them. These sessions have been written to enable each of us to increase our understanding and knowledge of those issues and opportunities. Each one, and there are 57 of them, takes a different theme and offers the learner new insights.

Learning approach

This is an Active Learning session. Lifelong Learning has taught us that people learn best when they are actively involved in the learning. We have therefore given the ownership of the learning over to you, the learner. As well as presenting new concepts in the assignments and exercises, , we draw upon your experience, creativity, imagination and knowledge so that you can better understand the subject matter, and will be better able and more motivated to act upon it. You may, or may not, have a learning leader to help organise the groups, and to bring several learners together into discussion groups and sessions. That will certainly make it easier. We all have different learning styles – but we can also all learn from each other. That is why this session, like all the others, recommends a mixture of individual, small group and large group work, so that ideas and experiences and understandings can be bounced around people. Above all you are urged to make this an enjoyable experience. Learning can be fun. It's up to you to make it so.

Learning Organisation

You will find that the session is divided into 2 main parts

- ✓ **The Learning Space:** A set of assignments that will unlock the brain and involve learners in practical discussions and exercises leading to a greater understanding of the issue
- ✓ **The Learning Kitbag:** A set of source learning materials that provide additional information, charts, diagrams, case studies etc to stimulate further insights.

While each session could be used individually as a self-learning module, it is preferable if there is a learning leader to organise small and large group discussions and to act as a focal point. This can be a departmental manager, a staff member appointed to perform that task, or a professional educator from inside or outside of the organisation. Assignments may be studied on site, or set as preparation for group discussions in the workplace or at a learning provider.

The whole course can be incorporated into a continuous professional development programme in the workplace, or taught separately at a school, college, community centre or university. It takes its provenance, and its inspiration, from the book:

Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government
By Norman Longworth, published by Taylor and Francis ISBN 10 0 415 37175 9

Learners taking the course are recommended to obtain this book either from Amazon.com or from the publishers at http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk/shopping_cart/search/search.asp?search=longworth

Target Audiences

The session will be suitable for those who wish to improve their understanding of the session title's theme, in order to help influence the city, town or region's response to the realities of the 21st century. This includes:

- Elected representatives and Mayoral staff
- Managers, Professionals and staff from all departments in local government as part of a continuous development programme
- Community and Voluntary organisation leaders
- Educators at all levels in local and regional stakeholder organisations, including schools, universities, colleges and workplaces
- Industrialists and Business people as stakeholders in the local authority
- All Citizens with an interest in the development of their community
- Students in universities, adult education institutions and teacher training establishments

Further Reading

Learning Leaders wishing to update themselves on the subject matter of this module will find the following additional references useful.

- 'Lifelong Learning in Action – Transforming 21st century Education' by Longworth, (Taylor and Francis, Abingdon) http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk/shopping_cart/search/search.asp?search=longworth
- 'The Local and Regional Dimension of Lifelong Learning' EC Policy Document found on <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/poledu/tels.pdf>

Ideas for treatment particular to this session: *For seminars and courses with several participants it is suggested that most of these assignments are completed in groups of two or three people, each separate section being debated in open session, facilitated by a learning leader. Assignments 3 and 4 and 12 may be completed individually again with the results discussed after completion. Creative discussion is recommended at all times. The last assignment should provide the feedback that will enable you to improve the session next time round.*

For self-learning individuals all assignments will be individual efforts but try to find someone with whom you can discuss your answers and opinions either by email or face to face. In this way you can enrich the learning experience by experiencing other viewpoints.

The Learning Space

Assignment 0: These learning materials derive from, and extend, the concepts and ideas in ‘Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities.’ Reading pages 142 to 145 of this valuable book before carrying out these assignments would provide an excellent introduction to the session, and strengthen learning.

Assignment 1: How many of the following are, in your opinion, true about your city or region? Tick if applicable and add more in the same vein.

Falling levels of participation in local organizations and projects	
Low election turnouts at local elections	
General apathy about politics	
Feelings of isolation in the majority of citizens from local government concerns	
A lack of active consultation processes that are worthwhile, meaningful and consistent	
Need to improve the capacity of local communities to strategically tackle local problems	
Need to rationalise participation and partnership structures	
A greater need for the transparency and accountability of statutory agencies	

Assignment 2: Say what measures you know about that your local authority has taken to remedy this.

Assignment 3: Let’s look at what others are saying about consultation and its importance. Give your opinion about the importance of the sentiments expressed in the following quotations. 1= crucial, 2= very important, 3= important, 4= fairly important, 5= not important.

	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Local and Regional Government has always faced challenges to its ability to exercise good governance in the face of rapid and uncompromising change. But rarely in its history has there been such a combination of requirements, obligations, mandates, exhortations, responsibilities, accountabilities, imperatives and transformations as in the present day, some of them contradictory and others bordering on the limits of possibility. (Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities.)</i>					
<i>‘Effective governance of the City relies on an empowered local government and strong avenues for participation by stakeholders such as citizens, businesses and communities,’ it says, ‘ The strengthening of participation in the governance of a city relies on the strengthening of direct citizen and community involvement in decision-making channels. A truly participative society must design its channels of participation to include all citizens. (Dublin City Development Board)</i>					
<i>Gone, or certainly going, is the centralised, big government decision-making on behalf of millions machine. In, or certainly imminent, is the sharing of problems and solutions through consultation, discussion, persuasion and social empowerment. (Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities.)</i>					
<i>The links between education and civic participation are strong. The more education people have the more likely they are to take part in various forms of civic activity. Recent research from the UK confirms this; and also shows a strong relationship between civic participation and levels of happiness with local life. (Tom Schuller)</i>					
<i>The inexorable movement towards the creation of ‘learning cities’, ‘learning regions’ and</i>					

<i>'learning communities' comprises both a part of the problem and major element of the solution, since it is only by inserting learning into every aspect of city and regional life that the capacity to cope with ever-increasing demand is engendered (Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities.)</i>					
<i>Consultation changes the rules of the game. Not only do administrators and professionals have new learning challenges, but so also does every man, woman and child in the municipality. And not only in learning but in contribution and participation as well (Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities.)</i>					
<i>Learning takes place in many environments and many places – the home, the school, the university, the adult education college, the church hall, the company and many more. All of them are important stakeholders in the construction and maintenance of the Learning City. In order to implement the principles behind lifelong learning at city or regional level there will be a need to creatively unravel some of these complexities, change imaginatively some cherished empires and procedures and influence strongly some solid mind-sets towards the prospect of a more adaptable future. (Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities.)</i>					
<i>Consultation is not for the faint-hearted. No matter how well you design and implement consultation, you may finish up with all stakeholders disappointed. Even when everyone is better off than if you hadn't set up the consultation, they may still blame you for their disappointments (Bob Dick)</i>					
<i>Many of our institutions, including our schools, government structures, and business organizations, operate on the traditional, linear model of learning. This model may be appropriate for hierarchical, bureaucratic, and authority-driven institutions, but it is less appropriate for learning in distributed networked governance. An alternative model is the 'ecological' approach to learning that emphasizes self-organized, webbed interactions that are adaptive and nonlinear. (Scott Bernstein)</i>					
<i>'Effective community decision making starts with good public dialogue. Dialogue goes beyond facts and information; it also draws heavily on feelings and values. Effective public dialogue is about creating safe spaces for community members to share their perspectives and concerns. It is about building trust and relationships that can guide shared solutions' (Alliance for Regional Stewardship)</i>					

Assignment 4: What do you think are the major messages for local and regional government coming from these quotations

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Assignment 5: Compare your observations with those of other people and consolidate into a longer list.

Assignment 6. What's in it for local and regional government? What do they gain from the consultation process? Look at the diagram on Actionsheet 1A in the learning kitbag below – write down as many advantages for local government as you can

Assignment 7: Now look at Actionsheet 1B in the kitbag – put a tick against the ones you also thought of and add the ones you thought of that are not there. Select the 5 most important in your opinion.

Assignment 8: Discuss this exercise and your choices with others.

Assignment 9: Let's have a look at what your city or region might be doing about making consultation more fruitful. Copy Actionsheet 2 of the learning kitbag (2 pages) below and do the exercise it recommends.

Assignment 10: Now, in column B tick the ones that, in your opinion are the 7 most important in your city or region.

Assignment 11. Discuss this exercise, and the choices you have made, with others

Assignment 12: Let's look at a practical example in terms of the development of a learning city. The diagram in Actionsheet 3 of the learning kitbag is a modification of Dublin's consultation process over the two years to 2003. It informed its strategy for the next 10 years. Do the exercises shown at the bottom of the page.

Assignment 13: Now compare your opinions with those of other people.

Assignment 14: This completes this session but not hopefully your need for knowledge on this important subject. You are invited to complete the diagram on the next page by ticking the relevant box.

LEARNING CITIES AND REGIONS FOR THE FUTURE - YOUR LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE

		High	Enough to get by	Not enough	None	Session
1	Consultation methods and levels					7.1, 7.2
2	Characteristics of a Learning Organisation					2.3
3	Your city as a learning organisation					2.4
4	Skills and competences for learning cities and regions					1.6
5	The city as an ideopolis					1.5
6	Learning Communities in all their senses					2.5
7	Smart cities, wired cities, slow cities					2.6
8	Learning Festivals for developing a learning culture					3.3
9	Learning Charters for demonstrating a city's commitment:					3.2
10	Leadership in the Learning City/Region:					3.4
11	Tools for measuring city and region performance					3.1,4.1,4.2, 4.3,4.4,4.5
12	Lifelong Learning as wealth creator					5.3, 1.5,2.3
13	Tools for activating learners – Personal Learning Audits					5.4,5.5,5.6, 5.7,5.8,5.9
14	Stakeholders in the Learning City/Region – Who? What?					6.1
14	Schools as Stakeholders in community, city and region					6.2, 8.4
15	Higher Education as a stakeholder in community, city and region					6.3
16	Business and Industry as stakeholders in community, city and region					6.4
17	Adult Education Colleges as stakeholders in the city					6.5, 8.5
18	Bringing Museums, Libraries, Archives and Galleries into the learning world					6.6
19	Family Learning					6.7
20	The power of partnerships					6.8
21	Using Technology in the learning city					7.3
22	Active citizenship and volunteering in the learning city					7.4
23	Mentoring in the learning city and region					7.5
24	Resources for the Learning City and region					7.6
25	Global roles and responsibilities for learning cities and regions					8.1
26	Internationalising Learning City Networks					8.2, 8.3
27	International projects as learning city stimulators					8.4, 8.5
28	Two-way profiting from international cooperation					8.6
29	Organisational issues in the learning city and region					9.2
30	Enabling issues in the learning city and region					9.3
31	Pedagogical issues for learning cities and regions					9.4
32	Practical Actions to become a learning city					9.1, 1.4
33	Learning Cities for Elected Representatives (Councillors					4.6
34	Individuals as learners					5.1,5.2,6.7
35	Change, society and the city/region					1.1, 1.2
36	Learning City Domains					1.3
37	Some Research results on Learning Cities and Regions					4.2,4.3, 4.4
38	Towards true Learning Societies					2.2
39	Defining Learning Cities and Regions					2.1

All sessions shown in the last column follow the progress of the book '[Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government](#)' by Norman Longworth (Taylor and Francis – www.tandf.co.uk/books/) ISBN 10 0-415-37175-9, and add new dimensions. They are downloadable from www.longlearn.org.uk

Assignment 15: On the lines below please put your personal reactions to working on this session, based on how much you have learned, how much you have worked creatively and how your ideas have developed as a result.

Chapter 7 Session 7.1

The

LEARNING

KITBAG

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1	Increase in credibility for local government.
2	Increase in local government accountability
3	Provides an opportunity for involving the broader community
4	Satisfies expectations/desire/demand for involvement by local people
5	Provides information about what local people think about a proposal or project
6	Allows amendments to be made based on local opinion
7	If carried out early enough can avoid expense of ultimately unacceptable proposals
8	Avenues are opened for the community to raise issues incorporating local knowledge, expertise and ideas
9	Gives a better understanding of a Community's values and priorities
10	Gives an opportunity for capacity building in local communities.
11	Development becomes more sustainable because more democratic
12	A deeper understanding is developed around an issue or problem through public information sharing, discussion and deliberation
13	Provides an active means for researching opinion on a wide range of policies, services, education campaigns etc.
14	Better decisions are more likely through greater understanding of public attitudes and desires
15	More acceptable decisions lead to more effective policies/programmes/services
16	Networks and sustainable processes can be developed to ensure the continuation of engagement in the future
17	Statutory requirements are fulfilled
18	Allows local authorities to find who the real community leaders are
19	Can be a means of educating the public to make decisions affecting them
20	Can be a means of involving the public in the planning process
21	
22	
23	
24	

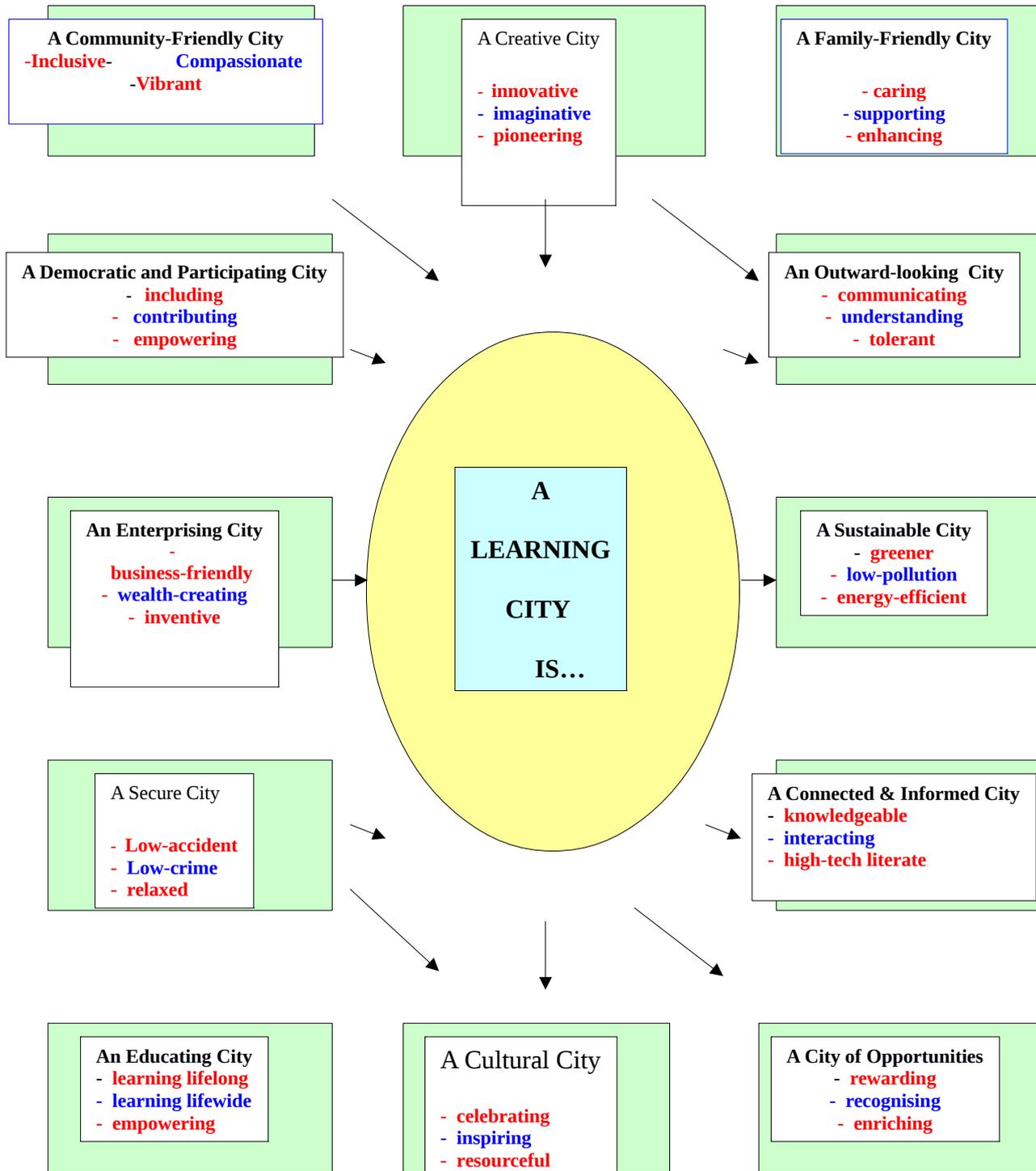
Actionsheet 2:

Which of the following happens in your city's community consultation enabling strategy? Mark each one in column A from 1-4 where 1= fully implemented in our city 2= more than 50% implemented, 3= only partly implemented 4= not at all implemented. In the blank row underneath it give an example of the action from your own city. If there is no city strategy or you don't know , mark in column A your opinion of the action as 1= crucial 2= important. 3= of limited interest 4= no importance

		A	B
1	All Community organizations have a voice at city-level.		
2	Community organisations influence the policy-making-process through participation of, consultation with and monitoring by, communities of policies affecting them at City and National level		
3	Communities' organizations are networked to enable exchange of models of good practice and consultation		
4	Service deliverers become part of the consultation process		
5	Individual Focus groups are organized by the city to help consultation eg young people, third age etc		
6	A comprehensive and sustainable range of community facilities and supports is provided to meet the needs of the different communities of interests		
7	Displays and visual aids are used in community centres to aid the consultation process		
8	A range of initiatives exists to empower the community and voluntary sector to negotiate on an equal footing during the policy-making- process or when delivering its services		
9	Every affected citizen receives a leaflet explaining the issues pro and con and the repercussions of proposals for change		
10	Targeted actions are implemented to ensure that the most vulnerable communities participate in community decision-making.		
11	Social audits and social finance initiatives are developed to help promote a social economy		
12	Research on needs in the City is carried out with citizens via the city website		
13	Volunteerism is encouraged, celebrated and promoted as a way for citizens to participate, learn skills and articulate their interest in matters that affect them		
14	Incentives/rewards etc are developed to support community participation		
15	New means of engaging communities in consultation and discussion are used - for example on the city website, TV and radio channels		
16	A wide variety of appropriate media (e.g. community media, TV, internet, lectures, neighbourhood centres etc) is used to promote discussion on community matters		

17	Increased co-operation between agencies and community groups helps the process of community engagement and consultation		
18	New Neighbourhood/community centres have been developed and are used as a focus for community information and consultation.		
19	All information needed to make effective decisions is available on-line through the city web-site		
20	The City explores, promotes and develops a proper legal and economic framework (e.g. legal status, contracts etc) for consultation with communities, based on models of good practices internationally		
21	Community leaders and community action groups are trained, encouraged and nurtured to campaign on behalf of their local community		
22	Communities are assisted to develop a mission, an identity and a vision		
23	Social audits are developed as a management tool for social economy initiatives and as a way of measuring their social and environmental impact.		

e) In column B above tick them in order of importance for you 1= crucial 2= important 3- of limited importance 4 not important in this city



Exercise 1 Rank the boxes in order of importance to you as a citizen of your city at the right hand side of each box - 1= most important to 12 = least important

Exercise 2: Put a mark out of 5 underneath each box to describe its importance to you
 1= crucial 2= very important 3= quite important 4= only slightly important 5= not important

Exercise 3: Put a mark out of 5 at the left hand side of each box to describe the extent to which you believe your city meets the words described .
 1= in every respect, 2= in most respects, 3= only part way there, 4= not really
 5= not even trying

MATERIALS ON LEARNING CITIES AND REGIONS FOR THE FUTURE – A REMINDER

		Session
1	Consultation methods and levels	7.1, 7.2
2	Characteristics of a Learning Organisation	2.3
3	Your city as a learning organisation	2.4
4	Skills and competences for learning cities and regions	1.6
5	The city as an ideopolis	1.5
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10	Leadership in the Learning City/Region:	3.4
11	Tools for measuring city and region performance	3.1,4.1,4.2,4.3,4.4,4.5
12	Lifelong Learning as wealth creator	5.3, 1.5,2.3
13	Tools for activating learners – Personal Learning Audits	5.4,5.5,5.6,5.7,5.8,5.9
14	Stakeholders in the Learning City/Region – Who? What?	6.1
14	Schools as Stakeholders in community, city and region	6.2, 8.4
15	Higher Education as a stakeholder in community, city and region	6.3
16	Business and Industry as stakeholders in community, city and region	6.4
17	Adult Education Colleges as stakeholders in the city	6.5, 8.5
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38	Towards true Learning Societies	2.2
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