

Audit 4

Charters, Communication and Consultation

Audits – Tools to help Cities and Regions achieve better Economic, Social and Green Development

Introduction

We're mapping out a journey into the world of 'Learning Regions.' We're convinced that it will transform your own region into a modern, vibrant and dynamic place where the economy prospers, social capital advances and people flourish in many ways. Please read these notes to know why it is important for you, for your region and for its citizens.

So what is a Learning Region?

The European Commission has a definition. Its policy document says *'A learning city, town or region recognises and understands the key role of learning in the development of basic prosperity, social stability and personal fulfilment, and mobilises all its human, physical and financial resources creatively and sensitively to develop the full human potential of all its citizens.'* So a Learning Region can also be a city or a town or any place that is large enough to have active educational, social and industrial sectors and an administrative structure to organise them.

And why is it important?

For Local and Regional Authorities that definition has important implications and opportunities. In the globalised and complex world of the 21st century, we all know that great and rapid change is inevitable. So, those regions that are flexible and versatile enough to learn and adapt quickly and effectively will be the winners and will best serve the medium and long-term interests of their citizens. Regions can only learn their way into the future. There is no other way.

It affects too the strategies, policies and actions taken by regional management in order to influence that future. They must develop a clear vision of what a learning region is and how it can be activated. It isn't easy. Charles Handy said, perceptively, in 'the Empty Raincoat'.

'When the future was an extension of the present, it was reasonable to assume that what worked today would also work next year. That assumption must now be tossed out. The world is not in a stable state. We are seeing change that not only accelerates ever faster but is also discontinuous. Such change lacks continuity and follows no logical sequence.'

The Audit Tool

The audit isn't simply a questionnaire. It's a powerful tool, carefully-worded to raise the key questions and provide some of the answers. It opens up the mind to new possibilities and new insights about your region's future as a place for quality learning and regional development. It isn't one-sided. We don't just ask for information in the questions and exercises. We want to profit from your opinions, tap into your personal knowledge and encourage you to weigh up some alternatives. In this way your, and our, learning is active. It's shared with many people, separately or in groups, and it's more durable.

So, this Audit Tool has 4 purposes, all of them designed to help you construct a 'learning region' in your locality.

- Firstly, it gathers together ideas, experiences, opinions and observations from those who complete it so that they can be taken into account in strategies and actions – a sort of structured blog
- Secondly, it provides information about how some regions are planning their communications strategies and invites you to learn from these while presenting ideas of your own
- Thirdly, you are encouraged to use any section of the tool as part of your continuous development programme, encouraging all your departments to learn and to join in the debate
- Lastly, it provides an index by which your region can measure and improve its performance as a learning region in this aspect of policy

So this is a tool and not just a questionnaire – its purpose is to stimulate thinking and debate, to start a process, to promote action on this aspect of regional economic, social and environmental development, and the importance of lifelong learning in it.

Go to it. Please note that, where we use the word region, this also means cities and towns

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About this Audit

A Learning Region is an integrated region. What happens in one aspect affects what happens in another. There is no point in developing a strategy for learning region development unless you intend to communicate it to others who can help you build it up. This audit therefore explores what is communicated, where, to whom and how. Whether or not yours is a learning region, by participating in this exercise you will learn much about the importance of good communication.

4.1 So firstly let us take a couple of quotations from publications. How far do those responsible for leading the city/region into future believe the sentiments expressed in these

1= Crucial, 2= Very strongly, 3= partly true, 4= not very much, 5= not at all/irrelevant to this region

		1	2	3	4	5
4.1.1	<i>Developing a Publicity/Information/Promotion Campaign to market the Learning city concept to its citizens should be sensitively and professionally carried out. The activities under this heading would include jargon-free, attractively presented booklets, pamphlets and other reading materials, a poster campaign (including smaller posters for shops, offices, schools and other organizations), media promotion through tv and radio, press coverage, and the development of a Learning Festival (European Memorandum on lifelong learning)</i>					
4.1.2	<i>Creating a Connected and Informed Learning City requires connecting people to one another. This is achieved not just by the provision of information, but also by the application of information through debate, discussion, movement and action. People connect to each other, to society, to shared values and create in the connection a shared sense of meaning, purpose and place. These connections are the bedrock upon which individuals engage meaningfully in family, community, career and civil society.(Dublin Learning City Strategy)</i>					

4.2 To whom

Have a look at the table below. On a 4 point scale of crucial to not important, select your assessment of the degree of importance for the following target audiences in regional development

		Crucial	Very important	Fairly important	Not important
4.2.1	Politicians responsible for economic development				
4.2.2	All politicians				
4.2.3	All members of the economic development committee				
4.2.4	Senior Management in business and Industry in the region				
4.2.5	Employees in business and industry in the region				
4.2.6	Senior Management in regional administration				
4.2.7	Employees in regional administration				
4.2.8	Senior Management in Universities				
4.2.9	All University staff and students				
4.2.10	Senior management in schools				
4.2.11	Senior Management in Vocational and Adult Education				
4.2.12	All Staff in Vocational and Adult Education				
4.2.13	Other key opinion formers in the region				
4.2.14	All people in the region.				

4.2.15 We hope that there are no selections from the last two categories. It is our contention that the more people who become involved in economic and social development in a region, the more it is likely to prosper. This is one of the bases for learning region development. However, if you wish to make a comment please do so here.

4.3 Communicating with your audiences - how

Let's look at the methods by which the regional message is communicated to its audiences.

In your region, is the message of a vibrant region with plans for the future, promoted by using any of the following techniques? Please select the relevant answer

	Yes	No	In plan	Don't know
4.3.1 Posters of all kinds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.2 Promotional video(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.3 Newspaper articles and/or advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.4 Radio broadcasts and/or advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.5 Brochures and leaflets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.6 mailshots	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.7 Newsletters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.8 TV programmes and/or advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.9 On its website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.10 Events: learning fairs and festivals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.11 Events: Exhibitions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.12 Portable Display Boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.3.13 We suggest that the more methods used to communicate a positive message about the region, the more citizens will respond and become engaged. This is one of the tenets of a Learning Region. However, if you have points for discussion about communication methods in the region, please make them here

4.4 What percentage of your population do you estimate would be aware of the plans for regional economic and social development? Put a cross on the line according to your guess.

0% _____ 100%

4.5 Communicating with your audience 2 – the web: Some regions use the regional website extensively to keep citizens involved and informed. Please let us know to what extent your communication strategy envisages the purpose of the local authority website:

	Yes	No	In plan	Don't Know
4.5.1 Keeping business up to date with opportunities and developments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.2 Developing the region as an e-region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.3 Providing broadband, hi-speed connectivity at a reasonable cost to all homes and organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.4 Interactive availability of on-line access for citizens to statutory services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.5 Creating a competitive telecommunications environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.6 Creating an environment for sustainable business to business (B2B) web transactions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.7 Increasing the speed of development of on-line public service provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.8 Providing education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.9 Improving core skills of computing, communication and the use of digital media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.10 Networking schools and homes for better communication with parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.11 Networking schools and homes in a way that enables all young people to have equal access to information through the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.5.12	To skill the adult population for the information age		
4.5.13	to link public information centres such as libraries to homes		
4.5.14	To set up Community and Voluntary Fora to bring together the community and voluntary organisations		
4.5.15	linking community champions and local supporters with the various education, training, business, local development, and community & voluntary interests		
4.5.16	as a consultative mechanism to encourage citizens and agencies to participate in learning region debates and activities.		
4.5.17	To conduct and maintain an audit of service provision and statistical data in the City		
4.5.18	To develop, maintain and make available a comprehensive database of community & voluntary activity within the region		
4.5.19	to encourage and enable people to find voluntary work in their neighbourhood		
4.5.20	to develop a learning market place where people can plan their learning journeys for life.		
4.5.21	to develop themed 'marketplaces' which allow all stakeholders to shape and share information, agree policy, build statistical data, participate in decisions, and "trade" in goods, opportunities and services.		
4.5.22	for data collection and analysis that addresses a social research function		

4.5.23 Electronic Communication via the internet and the regional website is one of the most versatile ways of achieving good communication with target audiences, and will become more important in the future. Again a basis for establishing a learning region. If you have points for discussion about the use of the web in the learning region, please make them here

Key Learning Messages – What?

Strategies and plans for regional economic, social and environmental development will affect all the people who live there. This section explores the nature of the messages that are communicated to people about the future of their region

4.6 In addition to the usual information, does the authority include in its literature any of the following messages

		Yes	No	In plan
4.6.1	The effect of rapid change and/or the knowledge society on the nature and availability of employment			
4.6.2	The effect of rapid change and/or the knowledge society on the need to learn to become employable			
4.6.3	The effect of rapid change and/or the knowledge society on the value of learning			
4.6.4	The need to become a learning region and its implications			
4.6.6	The authority's responsibility to its citizens in a changing world			
4.6.7	The economic opportunities of a knowledge society			
4.6.8	The opportunities for individual contribution to regional life			
4.6.9	Environmental messages involving the citizen			
4.6.10	The region as an attractive place to live and learn			
4.6.11	The value of diversity in a knowledge society			
4.6.12	The challenges that citizens will face in the transition to a knowledge society			
4.6.13				

4.6.14 Such messages prepare people to live in a learning society. If you wish to make a comment on the role of the region in enabling key learning messages to reach learners please do so here

4.7 Accessibility of the messages – where? To engage citizens in understanding and participating in regional development, the message should be communicated in places where people gather en masse. So here we explore where those places might be and whether your regional strategy takes this into account.

Where will the learning region messages be displayed or made available to its citizens.

		Yes	No	In plan
4.7.1	Shopping Centres			
4.7.2	Community Centres			
4.7.3	Doctor's/vets surgeries			
4.7.4	On public hoardings			
4.7.5	In local authority offices			
4.7.6	Libraries and Museums			
4.7.7	Sports/leisure centres			
4.7.8	Local Sports clubs (eg football, Rugby			
4.7.9	Schools			
4.7.10	Businesses			
4.7.11	Pubs and clubs			
4.7.12	Cinemas. theatres etc			
4.7.13	Hospitals			
4.7.14	TV			
4.7.15	Newspapers			

4.7.16 You may wish to make a comment on this aspect of regional communication. Evidently a learning region would make use of all public spaces to pass over these very important messages and would find a way of making them easily understood. Please comment here if you wish.

4.8 Learning Charters

Some Learning Regions have developed charters outlining their commitment to encouraging learning in the region. The following is an example created by the European Lifelong Learning Initiative and adopted by some European cities. You are invited to choose which of these commitments you feel are most important to you for your (learning) region

The ELLI (European Lifelong Learning Initiative) Charter for Learning Cities

WE RECOGNISE THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING AS THE MAJOR DRIVING FORCE FOR THE FUTURE PROSPERITY, STABILITY AND WELL-BEING OF OUR CITIZENS.

We declare that we will invest in Lifelong Learning within our community by:

- 1. DEVELOPING PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN ALL SECTORS OF THE CITY FOR OPTIMISING AND SHARING RESOURCES, AND INCREASING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**
- 2. DISCOVERING THE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS OF EVERY CITIZEN FOR PERSONAL GROWTH, CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY WELL-BEING**
- 3. ENERGISING LEARNING PROVIDERS TO SUPPLY LEARNING GEARED TO THE NEEDS OF EACH LEARNER WHERE, WHEN, HOW AND BY WHOM IT IS REQUIRED, LIFELONG.**
- 4. STIMULATING DEMAND FOR LEARNING THROUGH INNOVATIVE INFORMATION STRATEGIES, PROMOTIONAL EVENTS AND THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE MEDIA**
- 5. SUPPORTING THE SUPPLY OF LEARNING BY PROVIDING MODERN LEARNING GUIDANCE SERVICES AND ENABLING THE EFFECTIVE USE OF NEW LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES**
- 6. MOTIVATING ALL CITIZENS TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR OWN TALENTS, SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND ENERGY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CARE, COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, SCHOOLS AND OTHER PEOPLE**
- 7. PROMOTING WEALTH CREATION THROUGH ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPMENT AND ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATIONS TO BECOME LEARNING ORGANISATIONS**
- 8. ACTIVATING OUTWARD-LOOKING PROGRAMMES TO ENABLE CITIZENS TO LEARN FROM OTHERS IN THEIR OWN, AND THE GLOBAL, COMMUNITY**
- 9. COMBATTING EXCLUSION BY CREATIVE PROGRAMMES TO INVOLVE THE EXCLUDED IN LEARNING AND THE LIFE OF THE CITY**
- 10. RECOGNISING THE PLEASURE OF LEARNING THROUGH EVENTS TO CELEBRATE AND REWARD LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT IN ORGANISATIONS, FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS**

On behalf of the City of

SEAL

Signed

Title.....

4.8.1 Please use this opportunity to give further information or to express any further opinion you wish to about your region's strategies to becoming a learning region and/or the questions that have been asked above.