

# **The LILARA Project**

## **Learning Needs Audit** **Local Authorities (English)**

**An Audit to increase awareness of the evolution of the city as a learning city and to determine the learning needs of all local authority employees in the change process**

## **An open letter to participants**

### **You can help make xxxxxx one of Europe's best 'Learning Cities'**

#### **Why we created this Audit**

Local and regional authorities throughout the world are transforming themselves into learning Cities and Learning Regions. China, Australia, Finland to name but a few from many have already made great strides in this movement. They see it as a means of creating future prosperity and social stability by developing the full human potential of all citizens in a rapidly changing 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is also a major focus for regions.

Local and regional authorities will need to be the drivers of this transformation process, and we will need the help of all our managers, administrators and professionals to accomplish it. Your input is valuable.

#### **This Audit**

We have therefore developed an audit tool to gather ideas, opinions and thoughts on the importance and desirability of creating a learning city or region in xxxxxx, and your potential role in making it happen. It will lead you to an understanding of what a learning city or region is and what may need to be done to create it, bearing in mind our own cultural heritage. It asks what you think of our present performance and what you may need to learn in order to take the idea forward.

**By filling in the attached audit, which should take 45 minutes or so, you can help to create your own city or region as a learning cities or regions.**

The audit is in two parts, both of which should be completed. There are no right or wrong answers, and it's OK to enter 'don't know' if you don't feel you have the necessary information or knowledge to answer particular questions.

Thank you.

(Leader of the learning city project)



# CREATING A LEARNING CITY

## 1. Learning Needs Audit: Organisation

**Section 1: We would like to start by asking you about your current perceptions of, and attitude to, the Learning City concept, and your perception of how your Council measures up to it.**

Although there are already suggested definitions of what a Learning City is, we are purposely at this point not providing you with these, as we do not want to pre-empt your own ideas.

1.1 You may be aware that there is much activity on Learning Cities in the world. We would like to know your view of the importance of the sentiments expressed below, taken from reports and other documents.

In this exercise :

1= crucial to the future development of my authority – should be given high priority

2= important enough to warrant the development of a strategy

3= interesting but not important enough to warrant a special strategy development

4= not relevant to me or my local authority

	1	2	3	4
1.1.1. Councils that listen to their citizens and work with them in positive ways to meet the demands of the future will be the best equipped to deal with that future when it comes.				
1.1.2. 'Learning Cities' are where local people are helped and encouraged to think in new, exciting ways - continually learning how to learn together.				
1.1.3. 'Cities and towns in a globalised world cannot afford not to become learning cities and towns. It is a matter of creating future prosperity, fostering social stability and fulfilling the lifelong personal development of all citizens.' The local and regional dimension of Lifelong Learning – Creating Learning Cities, Towns and Regions ed Longworth, DGEaC 2001.				

1.2. In the box below please give your own description of what you understand by the term 'Learning City' ?

1.3. One definition of a Learning City is as follows.

*'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'*

Where do you think your city or area as a whole is at this moment in the fulfilment of this definition ?

- 0-10%
- 10-20%
- 20-30%
- 30-40%
- 40-50%
- 50-60%
- 60-70%
- 70-80%
- 80-90%
- 90-100%

1.4 To what extent do you believe the statements in the boxes below? They include attributes identified in an earlier EU project as being key to a successful Learning City.

In this exercise :

1= crucial to the future development of my authority – should be given high priority

2= important enough to warrant the development of a strategy

3= interesting but not important enough to warrant a special strategy development

4= Not relevant to me or my local authority

	1	2	3	4
1.4.1. The future prosperity of the city depends upon its ability to motivate its citizens that learning is a lifelong activity.				
1.4.2. Future social stability in the city depends upon its ability to motivate its citizens that learning is a lifelong activity.				
1.4.3. The local authority that is not open and responsive to the changes that both the wider world and its own citizens require of it will experience declining success, employment and security.				
1.4.4. The jobs of the future are not the jobs of the present - they will require, for example, much greater understanding, skill, adaptability, flexibility, creativity and awareness of diversity.				
1.4.5. Imaginative strategies must be designed by the local authority to reach out to those currently unwilling to see the importance of learning for their, and their city's, future.				
1.4.6. The local authority is responsible for creating a culture of learning in all its citizens.				
1.4.7. The concept of the Learning City is key to the future of the area.				
1.4.8. All employees in the local authority should be aware of what a learning city is and the part they can play in its development.				
1.4.9. The special qualities of my city should be preserved.				

1.5 Now please can you tell us the extent you think that the councillors and officers responsible for guiding the area into the future believe the same statements? Use the same marking criteria.

	1	2	3	4
1.5.1. The future prosperity of the area depends upon its ability to motivate its citizens that learning is a lifelong activity.				
1.5.2. Future social stability in the area depends upon its ability to motivate its citizens that learning is a lifelong activity.				
1.5.3. The local authority that is not open and responsive to the changes that both the wider world and its own citizens require of it will experience declining success, employment and security.				
1.5.4. The jobs of the future are not the jobs of the present - they will require, for example, much greater understanding, skill, adaptability, flexibility, creativity and awareness of diversity.				
1.5.5. Imaginative strategies must be designed by the local authority to reach out to those currently unwilling to see the importance of learning for their, and their city's, future.				
1.5.6. The local authority is responsible for creating a culture of learning in all its citizens.				
1.5.7. The concept of the Learning City is key to the future of the area.				
1.5.8. All employees in the local authority should be aware of what a learning city is and the part they can play in its development.				
1.5.9. The special qualities of my area should be preserved.				

1.6. As we said in the introductory letter, this audit is a tool. It invites your feedback. At this stage you may wish to give an opinion about the extent to which your council is becoming a Learning City.

**1.7 In this part of the Audit we explore together the way in which you think that your local authority is already active in developing strategies towards becoming a Learning City.**

**Where do you think your local authority is now, as far as you can tell?**

	Yes	Partly	No	Don't know
1.7.1. The concept of the Learning City has been an important subject of discussion in my local authority.				
1.7.2. My area has formally declared itself to be a Learning City.				
1.7.3. My local authority has a formal strategy for developing as a Learning City.				
1.7.4. A senior person has been appointed whose sole responsibility it is to implement the Learning City strategy on the ground.				
1.7.5. The local authority has established a committee for implementing a Learning City strategy.				
1.7.6. A Learning City strategy is publicised in all parts of the area.				
1.7.7. Every employee has been given a copy of the strategy outline.				
1.7.8. Every employee knows, and acts upon, the local authority part of the Learning City strategy.				

**In your opinion, have the following implemented their own parts of the Learning City strategy?**

	Yes	Partly	No	Don't know
1.7.9 All Schools				
1.7.10 University(s) if any				
1.7.11 All Further Education (Adult) Colleges				
1.7.12 Small Businesses				
1.7.13 Large companies				
1.7.14 Community and Voluntary centres and organisations.				
1.7.15 Police				
1.7.16 Community (Social) Services				
1.7.17 Health (and Hospital) Services				
1.7.18 Libraries, museums and the Arts (Cultural Services)				
1.7.19 The Chief Executive (and Office)				
1.7.20 Children's (Education and Social) Services				
1.7.21 Corporate (Financial) Services				
1.7.22 Public Relations (Publicity and Information).				

**1.8 The city as a learning organisation**

In order to survive in a constantly changing and highly competitive marketplace, companies are becoming learning organisations, workplaces are becoming learning spaces, and employees are becoming a constantly learning workforce. The learning organisation concept is also catching on in local authorities. In this section therefore we explore together the extent to which council workplaces have become part of a 'learning organisation'.

This is a working definition of a **learning organisation**:

***“Organisations are where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”***

**1.8.1. From your experience as a member of staff, how far do you think that your own local authority is a learning organisation at present?**

- 0-10%
- 10-20%
- 20-30%
- 30-40%
- 40-50%
- 50-60%
- 60-70%
- 70-80%
- 80-90%
- 90-100%

## 1.9 The council workplace

The table below outlines generally accepted concepts associated with a good 'learning organisation'. Please give a rough percentage of how far you think that your council has developed the following approaches in trying to become a good learning organisation.

	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
1.9.1. <b>Management/ leadership:</b> Employees are consulted frequently and fully.				
1.9.2. <b>Organisational decision-making:</b> Decisions are made and acted upon at the most appropriate point in each area of responsibility.				
1.9.3. <b>Rewards:</b> A reward system exists and is applied to council employees.				
1.9.4. <b>Organisation management:</b> Non-hierarchical - each employee is a colleague and treated with equal respect.				
1.9.5. <b>Feedback:</b> Feedback on all matters is welcomed, acted upon and always replied to.				
1.9.6. <b>Grievance channels:</b> There is a confidential system of airing grievances with no come-back to the complainant.				
1.9.7. <b>Contribution to policy-making:</b> Employees are encouraged to contribute to policy-making. Suggestions always replied to.				
1.9.8. <b>Continuous improvement:</b> Council employees have personal development plans and an implementation plan.				
1.9.9. <b>Lifelong learning:</b> Employees of the local authority are encouraged and given management help to continue to learn.				
1.9.10. <b>Lifelong learning:</b> Council employees are encouraged and given help to learn inside and outside of the organisation.				
1.9.11. <b>Learning support:</b> Personal support structures (eg learning counsellors) exist to ensure that every employee can be directed towards learning relevant to his/her own needs.				
1.9.12. <b>Learning facilities:</b> The local authority has its own in-house learning facilities made available to all.				
1.9.13. <b>Use of learning technologies:</b> Full use is made of new learning technologies for helping people learn.				
1.9.14. <b>Displays of learning values:</b> Prominent displays are found in all departments and buildings of the value of learning and encouragement to take it.				
1.9.15. <b>Displays of results:</b> Prominent displays of the performance of the council are found in all departments and buildings.				
1.9.16. <b>Time off for activities:</b> At least 10% of working time can be taken off for learning and community contribution.				
1.9.17. <b>Personal development:</b> Personal skills development courses available for all as and when required.				
1.9.18. <b>Learning targets:</b> Everyone has a personal learning target at least once a month.				
1.9.19. <b>Customer focus:</b> Everyone in the local authority has received training on treating the public as a valued customer.				
1.9.20. <b>Quality:</b> Everyone in the organisation has been on a quality improvement course and is constantly trying to improve performance.				
1.9.21. <b>Mission (vision, aims and values):</b> Everyone has a hand in defining the mission of the local council and each service is given a copy of the mission statement.				
1.9.22. <b>Strategies (corporate plan):</b> Everyone in the local council knows, and acts upon, its strategy for the present and the next five years.				
1.9.23. <b>Celebration:</b> Learning success is communicated, celebrated frequently and shared with others.				
1.9.24. <b>Information-sharing:</b> Every effort is made in many different ways to keep all people up to date with events, news, successes, failures, problems, opportunities.				
1.9.25. <b>Community contribution:</b> Encourages and supports every person to contribute to the community.				
1.9.26. <b>Organisational culture:</b> Local council employees feel a part of it and are eager to contribute to its success.				
1.9.27. <b>Promoting the learning organisation:</b> Promotes and publicises its achievements as a learning organisation to the community and the wider world.				
1.9.28. <b>Helping others:</b> Actively helps other organisations to become learning organisations.				
1.9.29. <b>Empowerment and inclusion:</b> Has special equal opportunity procedures for actively helping all irrespective of creed, culture, language, handicap, race or nationality.				
1.9.30. <b>Citizenship:</b> Sets an example in good citizenship and encourages active participation in local affairs.				
1.9.31. <b>The environment:</b> Encourages all people to understand and take good care of the local environment.				
1.9.32. <b>Local characteristics (Civic Pride):</b> Encourages all people to recognise and preserve the special cultural characteristics of the area.				

**1.10. Earlier we suggested that: ‘Organisations are where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.’**

**Can you give 3 examples of the local authority working as an integrated, learning organisation - that is, where different services are working together?**

1.

2.

3.

**1.11. If you have any comment to make for discussion about the local authority as a learning organisation, including any concerns you may have, please use the space below.**

## **2. Learning Needs Audit - Personal**

As a local authority employee, you will have a particular part to play in the development of your Learning City. The next step is to ensure that you have the information you need in order to make your contribution. So the second part of the audit is a tool to help you assess your own learning needs. Based upon the results of your input and that of others, we will be able to identify seminars, courses and workshops that help satisfy your learning needs.

Below, therefore, we identify groups of issues that you may wish to know more about in your own learning development. We ask you to rate them in terms of high, medium and low importance for you. The comments section is there for you to add new topics, select part topics or simply make any comment you may wish to make.

**Section 2.1 – The audit on the next page outlines 12 aspects of a learning city or region for which courses will need to be created. The leaders would be local authority personnel, university experts and freelance lecturers. In addition learning materials, both taught and self-learning, are found in abundance on this website.**

**Section 2.2 Learning Needs Audit – Personal**

Each section represents topics which describe the work of a Learning City. We'd like to know which of these you would be interested in following up in courses, workshops or seminars. Please use the comment boxes to say why you are interested/not interested in any of the parts of each topic.

High: particularly relevant to you; Medium: generally relevant to most people; Low: Very little relevance to you

	High	Medium	Low	Comments
2.2.1. <b>Basic knowledge, understanding and awareness issues:</b> Nature and characteristics of a Learning City. Why it is necessary. How it is different. Agents of change. Implications for me, for my family, for my fellow citizens. My role and responsibility. Constructing a Learning City. Examples of good practice.				
2.2.2. <b>Organisational and planning issues:</b> My area as a learning organisation. My role in strategy and policy development. Tools and techniques for improving performance. Continuous learning programmes. Quality management. Managing my learning. Developing leadership. Examples of good practice.				
2.2.3. <b>Wealth creation issues:</b> Employment and employability. Attracting industry and inward investment. Workplaces as learning organisations. Skills and competences for the future. The Learning City as an investment. Role of the regional development agency. Linking cities globally. Learning festivals. Marketing the area as a Learning City. Entrepreneurial education. Case studies.				
2.2.4. <b>Social issues:</b> Personal development tools and techniques. Learning incentives. Social inclusion. Developing Learning Communities and Learning Societies. Multiculturalism and diversity. Promoting tolerance and inter-ethnic communication. Work-life balance. Case studies of good practice.				
2.2.5. <b>Educational issues:</b> Creating a culture of learning. Teaching and learning differences. New skills-based curricula for a learning age. Continuous professional development for all. Learner ownership. New learning methods. Learning styles. Mentoring schemes. Counselling. Improving access to learning. Removing barriers. Celebrating, rewarding and recognising learning success. Non-traditional students. Evaluation.				
2.2.6. <b>Resource and financial issues:</b> Investing in lifelong learning. Full service budgeting schemes. Service credit. Partnerships for increasing resource. Tapping into community human, financial and physical resources. Case studies of good practice.				
2.2.7. <b>Contribution and participation issues:</b> Personal contribution to building a learning area/community. Active citizenship. Volunteering. Corporate social responsibility. Time-off social programmes. Mobilising the community. Case studies of good practice.				
2.2.8. <b>Political and democracy issues:</b> Learning and local politics. Consulting the people. Educating civic leaders. Civic education for all. Local and global responsibilities. Learning City charters, participation and contribution. Learning Communities and Neighbourhoods. Communicating the learning message to all.				
2.2.9. <b>Technology issues:</b> Technology and the learning future. Smart cities. Wired Cities. Using the Internet and education technology tools for learning. Linking Learning Cities nationally and globally. Learning Region Networks. Distance learning and multimedia. Case studies of good practice.				
2.2.10. <b>Stakeholder issues:</b> Institutions as stakeholders - roles and responsibilities of schools, universities, adult colleges, business and industry, voluntary and community organisations. People as stakeholders, individuals and families, councillors, myself. Using previous learning experiences. Case studies				
2.2.11. <b>Environmental and cultural issues:</b> Citizen involvement. Sustainability. Eco-diversity. Area regeneration. Education. Eco-awareness. Culture in the Learning City. Local history. Role of museums, libraries, galleries etc. Street culture. Case studies of good practice.				

Thank you for your participation. We will keep you informed on further developments.