

## Edinburgh Lifelong Learning Partnership

Edinburgh was one of the first UK Cities to declare itself a Learning City. It has a seat on the board of the UK Learning Cities Network. It's efforts to establish a culture of lifelong learning throughout the city resulted in the setting up of a the Edinburgh Lifelong Learning partnership, described below.

### Introduction

The key issues remain largely the same. ELLP's Vision Statement contains a commitment to

- ¥ Help make learning a normal, accessible, productive and enjoyable feature of everyday life.
- ¥ Promote learning in new places and in new ways.
- ¥ Use new methods of communication and information technology facilitate learning.
- ¥ Embrace broad range of education and training, both formal and informal.
- ¥ Strengthen active citizenship.
- ¥ Contribute to economic prosperity across the city.

The force behind establishing the partnership was the City of Edinburgh Council, with the support of other key agencies. ELLP is located in a neutral venue - in serviced offices in the city centre - 'with the aim of enabling it to be seen as an independent broker between institutions which might be competing in some markets'.

Partners divide into two distinct groups. The board comprises the founding partners who provide core funding. They are the education providers: i.e.

Heriot Watt University;

Napier University;

University of Edinburgh;

Queen Margaret University College;

Edinburgh's Telford College;

Jewel & Esk Valley College;

Stevenson College;

the City of Edinburgh Council; Career

Development Edinburgh & Lothians;

Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise;

the Workers' Educational Association; and

Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothians (the latter have observer status only on the Board, because they are not company founders, but they do provide funding).

In addition, there is a complementary group of organisations with whom ELLP has established informal, working alliances, including local and national organisations and businesses.

The partnership is managed by a full time chief executive assisted by a marketing project manager and an administrative support officer. It is governed by a Board of Directors who are nominated from each of the funding partners. The City of Edinburgh has two places, and the Board is chaired by the Lord Provost of the city. The Board meets twice a year to agree the strategy and (annually) to recommit funding.

### Making sense of lifelong learning in Edinburgh

ELLP fulfils the need for a body which can make sense of Edinburgh's vibrant learning scene and promote coherence. It also links lifelong learning with the city's regeneration strategy.

Partly because it is a major city and Scotland's capital, Edinburgh is served by a bewildering range of education and training organisations. This cannot make it easy for learners to find their way around the system. Learning centres is a field of feverish activity, with several new ones recently created and others upgraded. Some of these are in libraries or community centres/community high schools.

The city council and ELLP are together a key force in creating coherence out of the many initiatives. It has produced a set of Community Learning Plans for neighbourhoods and communities of interest. ELLP set up an Intranet for its partners in order to improve the sharing of information and resources and to reduce duplication of effort. It also helps the partnership more clearly identify those areas where no activity is taking place but where there is a need.

### Linking learning and regeneration

The Capital City Partnership is the overarching body for regeneration policy in Edinburgh, linking the locally based Social Inclusion Partnerships, (SIPs). ELLP and the Capital City Partnership are linked through a shared policy agenda; there are also operational linkages

Subject to six monthly reviews by the Board, much of the partnership's work is planned and delivered through action groups:

#### Marketing

This group involves all of the formal partners plus, currently, other relevant organisations such as the Open University. Later in the year, work will be underway to engage more fully with the non- traditional learning providers. A key function of this group is to implement a common marketing programme for learning. It is also looking at the barriers to learning in Edinburgh and mapping access routes.

#### Key employers

This involves key public and private sector employers in the city. The group's remit is to help shape the development of a culture of lifelong learning in the workplace - both within their own organisations, and through influencing others, especially smaller companies. A key piece of work is collating and disseminating best practice, and designing a toolkit for managers to use.