

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE & SPORT SERVICE

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Community Learning & Leisure Service – Self Evaluation Peer Review
Nairn – 8th June, 2006

Report by Area Education, Culture & Sport Manager – Caithness

SUMMARY

This report sets out the background, purpose and methodology of the “Peer Review” conducted on the Nairn Community Learning & Leisure Service. It sets out its findings on the identified quality indicators relative to the self evaluation which had been conducted in Nairn.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Community Learning & Leisure has identified a need to conduct quality assurance monitoring to identify the veracity of self evaluation against the quality indicators of How Good is Our Community Learning & Development.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The review is conducted in a supportive manner to monitor and verify the self evaluations conducted. This will evidence a process of self evaluation, and monitoring, improve accuracy of evaluation and ensure the evidence supporting scores is available.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Peer Reviews are derived through a negotiated process using the HGIOCLD broad brush self evaluation as a starting point.

The basis of the review is then determined between Community Learning & Leisure Manager and Community Learning & Leisure Officer of area being reviewed, to Quality Development Manager and Principal CLD Officer plus the review team leader. This identifies the QI’s to be verified, the focus groups to be consulted and the documenting evidence to be supplied in advance of the visit. (Scoping document – Appendix One)

4. QUALITY INDICATORS VERIFIED

- 4.1 For the Nairn “Peer Review” the broad brush self evaluation scores were scrutinised and a number of identified “strengths” and weaknesses” were selected to be verified through the review process.

Selected as strengths:

Q.I	1.1	Engagement & Support – Youth Work
Q.I	5.4	Partnership Working

Selected as Weaknesses:

Q.I	1.1	Engagement & Support – Adults
Q.I	2.2	Developing Skills and Confidence
Q.I	2.5	Monitoring & Evaluation as part of building community capacity
Q.I	5.1	Community Learning Planning

5. FINDINGS

- Q.I – 1.1
The Peer Review finding supports the score of 2
 - Staff and volunteers have some contact with excluded groups and individuals but have limited success in encouraging them to participate in learning and development activities. Staff do not consistently make a particular effort to attract these groups.
 - Some sections of the community are aware of the range of learning and development opportunities. Marketing strategies are not consistently effective at reaching the intended audience.
 - Potential participants have access to information but it is not always relevant and up to date. Staff provide only basic guidance and there is limited referral to and from appropriate agencies.
- Q.1 – 2.2
The Peer Review finding supports the score of 1
 - Community leaders have access to some training opportunities at a limited range of SCQF levels appropriate to their needs. Opportunities are of mixed quality and provide limited development.
 - Active community members are given limited support by staff to carry out aspects of their roles within groups and in the wider community. Some attention is given to supporting active community members to apply their knowledge and skills for community benefit.
- Q.I – 2.5
The Peer Review finding does not support the score of 3 and feels this level not achieved yet
 - Arrangements are in place for monitoring and evaluating the work of community organisations but they are inconsistently applied and are insufficiently robust. The emphasis in monitoring and evaluation is focused to a limited extent on the experience of participants and non-participants. Service level agreements or other forms of contract ensure only limited monitoring and evaluation.
 - Records are kept of the process of monitoring but they are not clear enough about the scope of evaluation or its results and their implications.

- Monitoring and evaluation contributes little to organisational development. Reviews provide information that results in piecemeal changes in management plans and some increased opportunities for collaboration between groups and agencies.
- Q.I – 5.1
The Peer Review Finding does not support the score of 2 but feels there is only a little way to go
 - The community learning partnership takes limited account of the local and strategic context. Some community profiles exist but they are incomplete or out of date. Partners do not share their targets and priorities effectively. Links to Scottish Executive priorities, policies and Circulars are selective or vague and not understood by all. The Community Plan and community learning strategy have a limited impact of planning for community learning.
 - Some community needs have been considered in the planning process but priority groups have not been sufficiently targeted. Where outcome targets exist they are not always effectively designed to improve the quality of personal and community life.
 - Some use has been made of a suitably structured planning framework but this is not consistent. Links are poorly developed between the community learning plan and locality planning, as a part of community planning.
 - Some important priorities set in earlier plans have been addressed to a limited extent. In a number of respects, progress towards implementing the current plan is behind schedule. There is limited evidence that the implementation of plans has improved the quality of participants' experiences and maximised standards of achievement. Progress towards implementing priorities at partnership and team level is inconsistent. Although many partners are involved in the planning process, a number lack commitment to implementation. There is limited consultation with partners and participants and they are not fully aware of the plan's contents.
- Q.I - 5.4
The Peer Review finding supports the score of 2
 - Staff are engaged in a limited range of partnerships. Some sectors are represented on the community learning partnership but with some important omissions. Partnerships with key local authority services, voluntary and community organisations and other public and private sector agencies produce limited results.
 - Staff are not key members of partnerships. Their leadership, or support to leadership, of the community learning partnership is indecisive and lacks focus. They are inconsistent in seeking opportunities for involvement and development in all partnerships. Staff undertake limited planning for engaging with partners to ensure the active participation of all relevant people and agencies.
 - Partnerships entered into by staff are of limited effectiveness and productivity. They make a limited contribution to improved efficiency and effectiveness and result in some improvement to the quality of provision. Only some partnerships are active and share ownership of developments to date. Not all partnerships are characterised by trust and differences of opinion sometimes remain unresolved.

- Individual staff, the team and the service or agency maintain effective communication with a limited range of interested people and agencies. Methods chosen are not always appropriate to the circumstances. The style and tone generally conveys approachability, but offer limited encouragement to access the team and its services.

6. **OBSERVATIONS**

- 6.1 The Review identified that the broad brush scores were reasonably accurate, albeit some where slightly generous. Movement is in the right direction, and with some effort the identified scores could soon be achieved.

There is considerable scope for improvements in communication and understanding both within CLL and particularly outwith CLL.

Several groups were vague about the role and function of Community Learning and Leisure.

7. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 The overall impression is that Nairn is moving forward slowly. There is work required to consolidate and achieve the indicated scores more consistently. Overall staff are working hard, but have yet to fully embrace or understanding terminology which is new to them.

Signature:

Designation: Area Education, Culture & Sport Manager – Caithness

Date: 12th June, 2006

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Background Papers HGIOCLD – self evaluation
Evidence supplied in advance of review visit

Acknowledgements

The Review team wish to record their thanks to everyone involved in the review conducted, particularly to those individuals in focus groups who gave of their own time to contribute freely and openly.

The Team also thank the staff of Nairn CLLS for their honest open contributions, and we wish everyone success in the various projects and improvement agendas we heard about.

Appendix Three

Review Team

Carol Goodfellow - Area Libraries Officer, Inverness

Norma Christie - Adult Basic Education Co-ordinator, R & C

Graham Nichols - Education, Culture & Sport Manager, Caithness

This team was supported prior to the visit by

Tony McCulloch – Quality Development Manager

Barry Northedge - Principal CLD Officer

Recommendations for Future Reviews

- Balance of personalities in Review Team
- Template for Review Report
- Inclusion in pre-meetings and scoping
- Reviewers have equal standing in team recognising need for leader to take responsibility
- Clear timetabling and details of locations made available on day
- Adequate briefing in advance for participants (non-staff) in focus groups
- Adapted and relevant Q's pertaining to each focus group selected:
 - Youth
 - Users
 - Partners
- Hospitality for Review Team
- Staff lists, attendee's/invitee's to focus groups and linkage to exercise
- Focus groups serviced by 2 reviewers to enable notes and eye contact.