Example 4 The Local Authority

Stakeholder Audit

Local Authorities

(EUROlocal Version)

A tool to enable local authorities to analyse and respond to a changing world in which lifelong learning is predominant and cities and regions are in the process of becoming 'Learning Cities' and 'Learning Regions'

Why this Audit can be useful to you and your city

We can only learn our way into the future – this is true of organisations, people, cities and regions. On this principle, local and regional authorities throughout the world are transforming themselves into learning Cities. Countries such as China, Australia, Germany and 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 21st century.

Local and regional authorities will need to be the drivers of this transformation process, and they will need the help of all their managers, administrators and professionals to accomplish it. The Audit requests your views about learning cities and the extent to which you feel that the transformation is possible. If this is carried out as an exercise on a full city scale the local authority will have a much broader vision of learning needs, and the information to help satisfy them.

A little more about this Audit tool

The rationale behind the audit was similar to that of Total Quality Management ie that no real progress will be made to implement much-needed change unless *all* participants are informed and involved. Thus all local authority employees, or as many as possible, should have a stake in creating the city's future. In order to do this they will have learning needs within a variety of learning city operations. And so the purpose of this audit tool is determine what those needs are for each individual. The tool will gather your ideas, opinions and thoughts on the importance and desirability of transforming your city into a 'learning city', and your potential role in making it happen. It will lead you to an understanding of what a learning city is and what may need to be done to create it, bearing in mind its own cultural heritage. It asks what you think of present performance and what you may need to learn in order to take the idea forward.

The Audit is presented freely as a tool which can be used by management and individuals to find out more about the concept, or it can be used to help create a dynamic, vibrant and forward-looking city, confident about its own future.

Who should participate and how?

As many people as possible from as wide a range of responsibilities as possible. Councillors, senior management, service managers, departmental heads, professionals, administrators and perhaps even your customers, the citizens. It is delivered online and can be completed from any information point in the authority. An analysis tool is embedded and can be accessed by participants. For the purposes of the EUROlocal project we will be performing a small analysis of our own, but that will be more about the effectiveness of the tool and what modifications we may need to make to improve it. Your input to that is also useful.

How you can use it.

There are several ways of using this audit

   a) to establish a 'dialogue' between the designer and management and staff in the stakeholder organisation, since the designer will not be present while the audit is being completed.

   b) to pass over essential new knowledge and ideas to management and staff in the stakeholder organisation that will provoke reflection and stimulate insight (this may be done through the use of quotations from expert reports etc)

c)   to provide insights into the nature of learning cities, regions and organisations

d)   to identify the main characteristics of learning cities, regions and organisations

e)   to allow the opinions, experiences and ideas of management and staff in the stakeholder organisation to be freely expressed and meshed with the requirements for change within the organisation

f)   to act as a driver for change – emphasising the dynamic nature of stakeholder organisations

g)   to act as a staff training stimulator, for example as the basis for focus group discussion on particular topics and

h)   to provide ideas for the development of innovative internal policies and strategies to accommodate learning organisation principles

0 Could we firstly take a few of your details so that the statistics we obtain can be more meaningful This section is entirely voluntary. Fill in only the details you wish to complete

0.1. Your Name

0.2. Area of responsibility

0.3. Email address

0.4 Name of Authority

0.5 Approx Number of employees

0.6. Age Band
25-35
36-50
51-65
Over 65

0.7. Gender
Male
Female

0.8. Position
Manager
Non Manager
Elected Representative
Citizen

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 within Europe. 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. Strategy already in place
2=very important – we are developing a strategy to meet it
3=quite important – we will be addressing this within the next year
4= interesting but of low priority to us at present
5= not relevant to me or my local authority

	1	2	3	4	5
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. Below please give your own description of what you understand by the term 'Learning City' ?

1.3. The European Commission 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 ?

a	We are a fully operating learning city implementing all aspects described above to the full	
B	We are a learning city implementing many of the aspects described above	
C	We are intending to become a learning city and have plans to implement many of the aspects described above	
D	We are in the process of drawing up plans as described above	
E	We have a long way to go before we achieve the above	
f	We are not interested in the learning city idea and don't agree with the description above	

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 and we are developing a strategy
3= quite important – we are thinking about developing a strategy
4= interesting but not important enough to warrant a special strategy development
5= Not relevant to me or my local authority

	1	2	3	4	5
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	5
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.				
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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 Characteristics of Learning Cities and Regions

Here we try to give a few ideas about a learning city or region and ask if you think it is an important aspect for your local authority

The following are some of the objectives of becoming a learning city. Please give a mark from 1 to 5 on how important you believe it is for your institution in the longer term.

1= crucial, there will be huge benefits for the city if this is successfully implemented
2= very relevant, there will be many benefits for the cityn if this is successfully implemented
3= important, there will be some benefits for the city if this is successfully implemented
4= not important for us, there may be a benefit but it isn't obvious
5= not at all relevant to this institution

	A Learning City will	1	2	3	4	5
1.7.1	Invest in the future through economic growth based on lifelong learning as a key component					
1,7,2	Invest in the future by encouraging social cohesion through lifelong learning					
1.7.3	Produce an environmental development plan based on active participation by the community in environmental protection					
1.7.4	Mobilise the whole community to contribute its talents, knowledge, skills and experience to its future development through active citizenship and volunteering					
1.7.5	Invest in the future through cultural growth based on an understanding of heritage and cultural pursuits					
1.7.6	Encourage all its stakeholder organisations in schools, adult education, universities and business and industry to participate in Learning City development					
1.7.7	Build robust communities using schools as a central point					
1.7.8	Encourage international links with other cities and regions for economic and social development					
1.7.9	Develop tools to audit and monitor learning city development in all its stakeholder organisations					
1.7.10	Communicate the learning city message to all its citizens using all the media at its disposal and a variety of distribution points					
1.7.11	Develop a learning charter which outlines its responsibilities to all its citizens					
1.7.12	Help organise learning festivals and other celebration events in which its stakeholder organisations can promote their achievements and objectives					
1.7.13	Provide guidelines to all its stakeholder organisations on how to become a more effective learning organisation					
1.7.14	Capitalise on, and celebrate diversity as an investment, valuable for economic , human and intellectual growth					
1.7.15	Invest in the use of learning technologies in its stakeholder organisations					
1.7.16	Consult with its citizens in their vision of the city's future					
1.7.17	Annually research the skills and competences needed for future development					
1.7.18	Encourage innovation and creativity in all its institutions					
1.7.19	Facilitate partnerships between all its institutions that will provide benefits for all participants					
1.7.20	Foster civic pride and a sense of belonging to a vibrant, interesting and go-ahead city in all its citizens					

1.8 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
1.8.1. The concept of the Learning City has been an important subject of discussion in my local authority.				
1.8.2. My area has formally declared itself to be a Learning City.				
1.8.3. My local authority has a formal strategy for developing as a Learning City.				
1.8.4. A senior person has been appointed whose sole responsibility it is to implement the Learning City strategy on the ground.				
1.8.5. The local authority has established a committee for implementing a Learning City strategy.				
1.8.6. A Learning City strategy is publicised in all parts of the area.				

1.8.7. Every employee has been given a copy of the strategy outline.	
1.8.8. Every employee knows, and acts upon, the local authority part of the Learning City strategy.	

1.9 In your opinion, how important are the following stakeholders to learning city development?

1= crucial, the learning city could not develop without its cooperation
2= very important – the learning city would be diminished if it did not take part
3= fairly important – we could manage without them but prefer them to be on board
4.- not very important – couldn't make a contribution
5= under no circumstances do want them to be involved.

	1	2	3	4	5
1.9.1 Schools					
1.9.2 University(s) if any					
1.9.3 All Further Education (Adult) Colleges					
1.9.4 Small Businesses					
1.9.5 Large companies					
1.9.6 Community and Voluntary centres and organisations.					
1.9.7 Chambers of Commerce					
1.9.8 Social Services Organisations					
1.9.9 Health (and Hospital) Services					
1.9.10 Libraries, museums and the Arts (Cultural Services)					
1.9.11 The Chief Executive 's Department					
1.9.12 Trades Unions					
1.9.13 The City Council /politicians					
1.9.14 Public Relations / media organisations(Publicity and Information).					

1.8 The city administration 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:**
''*An Organisations where all its people continually expand their capacity to create, 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?

1.8.1.1	**Fully operational learning organisation according to the definition above**	
1.8.1.2	**Mostly operational learning organisation according to the definition**	
1.8.1.3	**Partly operational as described and with a strategy for the future**	
1.8.1.4	**Partly operational with no strategy for the future**	
1.8.1.5	**Very little evidence of learning organisation characteristic as described**	
1.8.1.6	**Absolutely no interest in becoming a learning organisation**	

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.

1= implements this fully for all employees

2- implements for some employees

3= There may be a policy but I don't know about it

4= hardly any activity in this area

5= Irrelevant - No interest in the authority in doing this

	1	2	3	4	5
1.9.1. **Management/ leadership:** Employees are consulted frequently and fully.					
1.9.2. **Organisational decision-making:** Decisions are made and acted upon at the most appropriate point in each area of responsibility.					
1.9.3. **Rewards:** A reward system exists and is applied to council employees.					
1.9.4. **Organisation management:** Non-hierarchical - each employee is a colleague and treated with equal respect.					
1.9.5. **Feedback:** Feedback on all matters is welcomed, acted upon and always replied to.					
1.9.6. **Grievance channels:** There is a confidential system of airing grievances with no come-back to the complainant.					
1.9.7. **Contribution to policy-making:** Employees are encouraged to contribute to policy-making. Suggestions always replied to.					
1.9.8. **Continuous improvement:** Council employees have personal development plans and an implementation plan.					
1.9.9. **Lifelong learning:** Employees of the local authority are encouraged and given management help to continue to learn.					
1.9.10. **Lifelong learning:** Council employees are encouraged and given help to learn inside and outside of the organisation.					
1.9.11. **Learning support:** 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. **Learning facilities:** The local authority has its own in-house learning facilities made available to all.					
1.9.13. **Use of learning technologies:** Full use is made of new learning technologies for helping people learn.					
1.9.14. **Displays of learning values:** Prominent displays are found in all departments and buildings of the value of learning and encouragement to take it.					
1.9.15. **Displays of results:** Prominent displays of the performance of the council are found in all departments and buildings.					
1.9.16. **Time off for activities:** At least 10% of working time can be taken off for learning and community contribution.					
1.9.17. **Personal development:** Personal skills development courses available for all as and when required.					
1.9.18. **Learning targets:** Everyone has a personal learning target at least once a month.					
1.9.19. **Customer focus:** Everyone in the local authority has received training on treating the public as a valued customer.					
1.9.20. **Quality:** Everyone in the organisation has been on a quality improvement course and is constantly trying to improve performance.					
1.9.21. **Mission (vision, aims and values):** 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. **Strategies (corporate plan):** Everyone in the local council knows, and acts upon, its strategy for the present and the next five years.					
1.9.23. **Celebration:** Learning success is communicated, celebrated frequently and shared with others.					
1.9.24. **Information-sharing:** 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. **Community contribution:** Encourages and supports every person to contribute to the community.					

1.9.26. **Organisational culture:** Local council employees feel a part of it and are eager to contribute to its success.				
1.9.27. **Promoting the learning organisation:** Promotes and publicises its achievements as a learning organisation to the community and the wider world.				
1.9.28. **Helping others:** Actively helps other organisations to become learning organisations.				
1.9.29. **Empowerment and inclusion:** Has special equal opportunity procedures for actively helping all irrespective of creed, culture, language, handicap, race or nationality.				
1.9.30. **Citizenship:** Sets an example in good citizenship and encourages active participation in local affairs.				
1.9.31. **The environment:** Encourages all people to understand and take good care of the local environment.				
1.9.32. **Local characteristics (Civic Pride):** Encourages all people to recognise and preserve the special cultural characteristics of the area.				

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.

THANK-YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS STAKEHOLDER AUDIT. WE APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORT AND YOUR FEEDBACK. WE HOPE THAT IT HAS STIMULATED SOME REFLECTION ON YOUR PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS AS A LIFELONG LEARNING AUTHORITY, AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY AN ABUNDANCE OF IDEAS ON HOW YOUR EFFORTS CAN HELP TO TRANSFORM YOUR OWN CITY AND REGION INTO A LEARNING CITY AND A LEARNING REGION

THE EUROLOCAL WEBSITE www.eurolocal.info CONTAINS A WEALTH OF FURTHER INFORMATION AND TOOLS ABOUT LEARNING CITIES AND REGIONS