

REPORT TO: POLICY AND REVIEW (PERFORMANCE) PANEL
FOR: 13 APRIL 2005

**REPORT FROM: STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND
LIFELONG LEARNING**

WRITTEN BY: ROBIN JOHNS, HEAD OF COMMUNITY LEARNING

LIFELONG LEARNING – BEST VALUE REVIEW PROGRESS REPORT

1. Purpose of Report

To inform the Panel of progress to date in the Review of Lifelong Learning.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Panel endorse the conduct of the Review, and consider the implications of the emerging issues.

3. Background

The Panel approved the scope of the Review at the meeting of 27 October 2004. Since that time independent consultants have steered the research process, and a steering group comprising internal and external stakeholders has met twice. The paper attached as Appendix I was presented to the Corporate Management Board (CMB) meeting of 17 March 2005. This paper was written by the Review Manager, and summarises progress to date and some emerging issues.

CMB accepted the interim report, and recognised that the Review had emphasised the strong links between Lifelong Learning and other themes in the Community Strategy, in particular Community Involvement, Health and Social Wellbeing, and Economic Wellbeing.

The Review Working Group, comprising the consultants together with Head of Strategy, Best Value Manager, Head of Community Learning and Education Policy Adviser, have met to discuss the emerging issues. They have requested the Review Manager to:

- Review existing success criteria
- Amplify data to enhance area-based research
- Strengthen links with the University, Trade Unions and the Primary Care Trust
- Consider how to establish value for money comparators and examples of good practice, and to report to the next meeting of the Steering Group.

Lynda Fisher
Strategic Director, Education and Lifelong Learning

PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL
BEST VALUE REVIEW OF NON-FORMAL LIFELONG LEARNING
REPORT TO CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM
17th MARCH 2005

Context

There are a number of factors which make this a particularly opportune time to be carrying out this exercise:-

- opportunities presented by structural reorganisation within the Council to reconsider current practice;
- the establishment of the Learning Partnership Board;
- the imminent cessation of SRB funding;
- the government's commitment to improving adults' skills in literacy, language and numeracy.
- changes in the funding priorities of the Learning and Skills Council which mean that Highbury College will be withdrawing from all community-based learning activities except basic skills provision (see above - 'Skills for Life');
- the introduction of 'Every Child Matters' and the requirement to pay some attention to the contexts within which children learn.

Scope

Investigations have focused on the two regeneration areas of Heart of Portsmouth and Paulsgrove and Wymering and on Hilsea.

Issues

In the light of the evidence so far reviewed, the following are emerging as matters the Council needs to address with some urgency:-

1. The pan-council vision for non-formal lifelong learning needs to be developed more fully, so that it is clear to everyone exactly what social purposes the Council expects it to serve.
2. Planning processes should be strengthened so that the roles of all contributory players – both internal and external partners - are fully recognised, and so that responsibilities for delivering against action plans are clearly allocated.
3. Review and evaluation process need to be strengthened - A set of relevant performance indicators, success criteria and quality measures for non-formal lifelong learning should be developed, so that the Council and its external partners can judge the impact of their efforts on the lives of Portsmouth residents in ways that are meaningfully linked to its corporate goals (as opposed to simply complying with the requirements of various funding bodies).
4. The Council should press forward with its plans to help employees with poor basic skills overcome their difficulties in these areas. It needs to engage the trade unions fully in this process.
5. The Council needs to work in partnership with others to develop a 'Skills for Life' strategy for the city, and to ensure that it is implemented.
6. The Council needs to exert its influence within the Learning Partnership Board in relation to the above points, to ensure that non-formal lifelong learning becomes a powerful element within the Community Strategy.