

<b>Title of Report:</b> <b>Derry and Strabane Learning City Region Initiative</b>	<b>Officer presenting: Head of Business</b> <b>Author: LC Co-Ordinator/Head of Business</b>
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## **1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations**

1.1 To update members on the Derry and Strabane Learning City Region Initiative.

## **2 Background**

**2.1** A Learning City is defined as a place which uses its resources to promote inclusive, lifelong learning in education, families, communities and the workplace.

**2.2** In 2018, NWRC, Ulster University, NWRC and Council took the strategic decision to pursue UNESCO Learning Cities status as a tri partite project. Each organisations committed to contribute £30k per annum for a 3 year period. The broad aims of the three partners were as follows:

- Apply to become a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities
- Develop a Derry & Strabane LC Brand/Logo
- Raise the profile of lifelong learning throughout the district
- Deliver a LC Festival
- Identify external funding sources and mainstream the promotion of the LC Brand across the organisations and widen the stakeholder base.

**2.3** Derry City and Strabane Learning City are now proud members of UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities.

- 2.4 Learning City Subgroup has now been set up with representatives from Foyle Learning Community, Mourne and Derg Learning Community, NI Libraries, All State, St Ceclia's College, Seagate, North West Regional College and Ulster University (Magee) and Neighbourhood Renewal. The Subgroup have met twice the last meeting was in February 2020. All other meetings have been suspended due to COVID restrictions.
- 2.5 The Learning City Management Group officially announced their membership of UNESCO at the Learning City Launch in January 2020.
- 2.6 A Lifelong Learning Festival had been scheduled for May 2020, unfortunately, due to COVID19 restrictions this had to be cancelled. However, the Learning City Management Group took the decision to run the world's first ever Learning City Festival in July 2020 (1-2).

### **Learning City Official Launch January 2020**

- 2.7 DCSDC joined the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities in January 2020.
- 2.8 The launch of the UNESCO Network status was held in the Guildhall and was a "Call to Action" for our Celebration of Learning Festival which was due to happen in May 2020. The "Call to Action" invited applications from all communities and sectors to offer learning events/activities in their local communities, workplaces, schools or colleges.
- 2.9 Over 100 participants attended the event held in the Main Hall in the Guildhall. Participants were from all sectors, and communities across the city and region.
- 2.10 The launch demonstrated how as a new member of UNESCO's Learning City network we could utilise that platform to promote lifelong learning in the region.
- 2.11 Derry City and Strabane Learning City led the way by hosting the world's first Virtual Learning City Festival on 1 and 2 July 2020.
- 2.12 Fifty-five online free learning events such as Pilates, cooking, training your puppy, robotics were all included in the 2 day festival. All the videos are still available for viewing at the Learning City website:  
<https://www.derrystrabane.com/Learningfest>

- Over 10,500 visits to the Festival website;
- 40,000 social media interactions;
- Comments/retweets from Japanese Embassy, Ukraine, Mexico City, Germany and UK and Ireland;
- Contributors in the first Learning City Virtual Learning Festival

Bluebell Arts	Nerve Centre
In Your Space	NWRC
WHSCT	Ulster University
NSPCC	Eden Project
Verbal Arts Centre	NW Japanese Community
U3A	The Void
Open University	Cork Learning City
Creggan Country Park	Startacus
DCSDC	STEM aware
Cedar Foundation	Craft Training
Bronagh Gallagher	Sutrans
Nintendo Foyle	Boomhall Trust
Barry Turton (local artist)	

All contributors donated their time, expertise and skill in kind to the festival. The financial cost of that would have been based on the time £?

- To officially launch the festival Derry City and Strabane Learning City hosted an online International Lifelong Learning Conference.
- Presents from Colombia, South Korea, Thailand, USA, Ireland, Germany shared their knowledge and experience of lifelong learning during lockdown and how each of those cities were able to target the most disadvantaged groups during the COVID19 pandemic.
- Over 100 people attended the online event from across the globe, USA, Australia, Turkey, and of course Ireland and the UK;

2.13 Council Officers are now advising the Global Virtual Learning Festival in September 2020 hosted by Wyndham Learning City, Australia and PASCAL.

- 2.14 Derry City and Strabane Learning City hosted The World's First Virtual Learning City Festival. This places Derry and Strabane Learning City region in an excellent position to apply for and succeed in achieving the Learning City Award which is a biennial award only available to member cities of the Global Network of Learning Cities in 2020.
- 2.15 Derry City and Strabane Learning City asked to present at the OSAN Green Cities Conference in August – the Mayor did a welcome to the city address
- 2.16 The First Global Lifelong Learning Festival will be held on 1-4 September, Derry City and Strabane will be participating in the event via an online webinar – ***“Learn about the Irish Lifelong Learning Festivals”*** .
- 2.17 The Irish Network of Learning Cities meets up every 6 weeks. The network consists of, Cork, Limerick, Dublin, Belfast and Derry /Strabane.
- 2.18 The Network hosted a “Learning Day for Ireland” on 30 September. This will be a one day virtual learning event similar to the festival in July.
- 2.19 Small grants will be available to potential contributors via the NW Community Fund up to £500.

### **3 Key Issues**

- 3.1 Access for all – The COVID19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of lifelong learning and as a UNESCO Learning City we must ensure citizens have access to relevant training and skills. One of the main challenges will be ensuring individuals furthest away from the employment and education market have the requisite digital skills to be able to access online learning resources such as the Virtual Learning Festival and digital health care.
- 3.2 Council Officers have engaged with the Lottery to develop a funding application designed to deliver the following:
- Map the lifelong opportunities through a live and interactive database of services across region
  - Create lifelong learning pathways and understand how people from different ages, communities and backgrounds access learning opportunities

- Create a repository of all life long learning opportunities that can grow and evolve in response to the needs of the community.
- Deliver an annual lifelong learning festival.

3.3 NWRC and Ulster University have confirmed their continued financial commitment (£30,000 for year 3) to support the LC initiative. NWRC and UU are in the process of identifying key priorities within their respective organisations under the themes of the UNESCO Life Long Learning and as a response to the COVID Pandemic.

3.4 Council has affirmed its commitment to leading the facilitation and growth of the LC Initiative through the development of a LC Strategy. The LC strategy will review the following:

- Current support structures and aim to identify measures to broaden stakeholder involvement through the establishment of an overarching Derry City and Strabane Learning City Network. This network will involve stakeholders from across the City/Region who wish to deliver, mainstream and programme their own Learning City Initiatives under the LC Network Brand.
- Identify long-term funding to embed the LC Initiatives across the City/Region.

## **4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR and Other Implications**

**4.1** The LC budget is met within existing Business budget and previously allocated on a three basis at £30,000 per annum. All budgets currently subject to ongoing review in line with the ongoing rates process.

## **5 Recommendations**

5.1 Members note the contents of the report.

## **Background Papers**

*Learning City Evaluation Report – World's First Virtual Learning City Festival July 2020*