

Learning Towns and Cities

Good Practice Guides

Marketing Learning and Developing Guidance

The purpose of this document is to draw out key lessons, with examples, from a range of innovative marketing learning and developing guidance activities to support non-traditional or excluded learners.

Marketing Learning and Developing Guidance Projects	
<u>Darlington - A Learning Town</u>	Passport to Learning 'To produce an Action Pack to attract potential beneficiaries of the Passport initiative, and to widen participation in the Learning Town Partnership'
<u>Derby City of Learning</u>	Developing a community focus for learning 'Develop a community based marketing strategy for learning opportunities in four target wards'
<u>Norwich Learning City</u>	Learning Cities learning together
<u>Southampton City Council</u>	Assessing the Value of Learning Shops in Southampton
<u>Stockton's Learning Towns</u>	Encouraging innovation, diversity and new ways of working 'Marketing learning to low participation wards through Stockton's Learning Towns'

LESSONS

1 Lessons from evaluating partnerships

1.1 Share knowledge and expertise

Sharing knowledge and expertise is essential in effective partnerships. Norwich Learning City - as a neutral body providing a common vision - has proved an invaluable structure for enabling providers to talk and network together, developing trust and encouraging partnerships to undertake joint projects.

Derby

It was found absolutely essential for all interested professionals to link together to try to bring learning opportunities to people living in disadvantaged wards in the city. Links with police, housing officials, social workers, health visitors, head teachers and community workers are a pre-requisite if the underlying barriers to learning are to be tackled effectively.

Networking at subgroup level allows many people opportunities to share information, processes and systems which would not normally occur.

Darlington

Information on the Learning Town and Passport project was not being disseminated throughout member organisations. There was a good reporting network amongst steering group representatives, but they did not give feedback to others in their own organisations. The Passport project was not 'owned by the group' and therefore no one organisation was driving it forward.

In Darlington and Stockton managers worked jointly on the planning and delivery of their marketing projects. Southampton City Council Library Service is able to provide support and knowledge to advisers in the community.

1.2 Role of the honest broker

Learning shops and the work of project co-ordinators for learning communities enable a common agenda to be made top priority. All projects comment on the significance of being seen as an 'honest broker for the client'.

Strong partnerships have the added advantage of also being an excellent vehicle to access funding opportunities.

Stockton's Learning Towns

A range of seminars and discussion groups was brokered by the manager in order to develop and capture the existing good practice of all players - professionals, voluntary groups, private and public sector.

Derby

The City of Learning Director is seen as an independent promoter of learning opportunities for all, playing the role of 'honest broker' between the different delivery organisations in the city. This has meant speedier progress and has enabled trust to be established more quickly.

1.3 Joint marketing activity

Joint marketing and a broader array of events occur as a result of links and networks made under a Learning City umbrella.

In Norwich and Stockton this includes the Learning Festival, where they co-ordinate events and encourage providers to collaborate in staging activities and publicity opportunities.

It is important to ensure all partners and key people within the organisations are briefed when commencing a campaign - otherwise messages may not be fully supported.

Norwich - Learning Festival 1999

The Festival is, in its third year, and runs during Adult Learners' Week in May. This year it engaged 56 organisations, provided 226 activities and over 7,600 people participated. Key successes from the Festival were:

- shared resources (finance, expertise, staff) to support a joint event;
- initial benchmarking with other cities running Learning Festivals;
- successful joint partnership bid to fund external evaluation of the Festival;
- more cost-effective shared marketing budgets;
- opportunity for informal networking amongst providers; and
- engagement of new providers, and participation of informal learning and cultural activities in the Learning City initiative

Stockton's Learning Towns

The Regional BBC Education Advisor is an important contact in promoting local activity, as well as attracting further media.

In Stockton, the Advisor was informed of the forthcoming Adult Learners' Week in 1999 and the promotion of WEBwise and a local bowling activity. This turned into a live interview, support from a number of key partners with learners, equipment and expertise, TV cameras, coverage on the regional news and a video used by BBC to demonstrate how BBC staff can work with local people.

This year Stockton is working with BBC on MusicLive.

Derby - Adult Learners' Week 1999

In 1999 partners (FE Colleges, university, TEC/Chamber, LEA, Adult Learning, major industries) worked together to promote a roadshow visiting every area of the city. Partners shared the cost of producing a joint brochure with information about all partners to enable learners to select the most suitable venue.

For 2000, Derby is planning an eight-week campaign starting in April, each week featuring a different theme (e.g. early years, University for Industry) with joint activities and publicity material, leading up to the week itself. Costs will be shared by all and the theme will be promoted under the City of Learning banner.

2 Lessons from evaluating participation

2.1 Sell the benefits - not the products

Key tips include:

- be targeted and have specific 'hooks';
- use incentives; and
- stay local.

There must be a clear link to the economic agenda for learners.

It is important to offer tangibles where possible. Norwich offer Open College Network accreditation as an optional extra. Darlington's Passport to Learning project identified the full range of benefits to learners. Stockton has a supply of balloons and pens which are always popular.

Stockton's Learning Towns

Image Group, a 'fit for purpose marketing consultant' has these tips on selling learning benefits:

- identify target markets;
- identify a full range of benefits and incentives for your target markets;
- nominate a named media contact;
- identify all new opportunities and look for connections;
- create and then use consistently a campaign theme; and
- have a clear strategy which is revised, based on customer feedback.

2.2 Be innovative in ways of engaging learners in day to day activities

Learning communities are just beginning to evaluate the ways in which they actively engage and receive feedback from the broad range of players within partnerships. Traditional methods of 'learning' marketing have not encouraged the public to shape their learning.

Education and training organisations need to think more creatively about how they take and receive messages from 'consumers'. The use of videos and imagery is a powerful medium, particularly when trying to attract non-learners.

Derby

Face to face interviews with residents and providers of learning found that non-learners in a disadvantaged ward were not even prepared to consider learning. They were far more concerned with where money for the next meal would come from, and did not see skills development as having any relevance to their daily lives.

Traditional marketing methods such as mailshots, pamphlets and 'freebies' were quite simply thrown in the bin without consideration.

The project highlighted a lack of real appreciation by the 'professionals' of the obstacles in the way of engaging in learning at a local level in very excluded communities. The message of learning was not seen to have any relevance to individual's current situation and they could certainly see no long or even medium term benefits.

2.3 Technology has the potential to be a powerful way to engage learners

Southampton

Three of the four Learning Shops are located within libraries. The main users have been schoolchildren supporting their school curriculum. Encouraging adults to use the Learning Shop is now an aim of the local authority's Lifelong Learning Development Plan. These Shops are not guidance shops, but operate as IT Learning Centres without the tutor support. However, Flexible Learning Strategy funding (from DfEE) has been secured to pay for a tutor per Learning Shop. The Learning Shop Development Plan, produced through the Pathfinder Project, has helped to secure this funding.

Darlington - Passport to Learning

The project aims to encourage participation by establishing a user-friendly 'Passport to Learning' which:

- provides a wide range of entry points and progression into learning (leisure, crafts, workplace learning, evening classes);
- would be recognised by all existing learning providers;
- leads to other learning, employment and recognition of achievement;
- encourages partner participation in promotions and delivery;
- works effectively across social and cultural boundaries; and
- appeals to individuals, families and groups.

Key messages based on the findings of a marketing consultant:

- short-term priorities for any learning and/or marketing programme should focus on altering individuals' behaviour;
- a change in behaviour will then create a stimulus to bring about the longer term aim of cultural change;
- research the motivational triggers of learners;
- a financial incentive is a major incentive to all learners;
- target the incentive system appropriately i.e. cinema tickets/McDonald's token = non-traditional or family learners, discounted course fees = those already interested in learning but not currently participating;
- ensure the range of incentives will cover all potential target consumers;
- issue an individual number which could then be used for tracking purposes and more specific target marketing; and
- try to be inclusive even if project is targeted.

2.4 Working with the media

Stockton's Learning Towns, a partnership which formed in 1998 and has had a dedicated full-time manager, part-time administrator and valuable help from SBC Pro Promotions Team, offer the following hot tips:

- Watch regional evening programmes between 5.30 - 7.00 pm. Lookout for features such as 'what's on diary' and identify those organisations/individuals prepared to get involved.

For example:

Tyne Tees TV coverage of Adult Learners' Week 1999 bowling tournament. It gave the private sector company good publicity, the community received free bowling, and the partners saw an immediate result in promoting learning, and relationships were formed with media colleagues.

- Read your local press (as well as teletext on all five channels), identify what sort of features they produce, and match your activity. Then arrange a development meeting to describe your objectives and establish a dialogue. Beware - advertising sections of press have expertise, but they come at a cost and may deflect your objectives.
- Be prepared to work fast and to deliver a product exactly as it is asked for.
- Support national campaigns organised by organisations such as Campaign for Learning and NIACE. Campaigns run at key intervals throughout the year, and all are supported by national press, teletext and sometimes entry on the learndirect database.
- Develop at least five press releases for each campaign and release as a national campaign unfolds. This usually results in the press release being used to promote local activity supporting national storylines.

- Use quiet 'news times' of the year (Christmas - late January and parliamentary recesses) to send out press releases.
- Link into your local free press, especially community newspapers. A small advert may ensure a feature as well. Community newspapers are often looking for short articles of local interest.
- Provide a photographic opportunity - children and babies are particularly successful.
- Always acknowledge the help you receive from other organisations.

Stockton's Learning Towns

...appointed Image Group Consultants to develop a customised marketing plan. Listed below is a summary of a range of tips on selling learning:

- 3 T's when getting a story: True, Topical and Targeted;
- make life easy for the media - keep them informed;
- if you have 'hard facts' to support a story - i.e. surveys, government statistics - use it;
- spend time getting to know and understand the perspective of the media world - it will bring results;
- there is a basic art to press releases -remember to have a short simple catch line and an emotional angle; and
- send the press release typed. No matter how good the story, if the handwriting is difficult to read it will be thrown into the bin!

2.5 Local is best

- Involve people who have local status to take on an ambassadorial role - each project is actively using this technique to very good effect.
- Organisations with expertise in particular sectors should be given greater respect and the opportunity to engage with individuals to promote learning opportunities

In Derby

...the City of Learning joined forces with the Derwent Ward Action Group to find effective ways of promoting learning in that community. Other professional bodies on the Action Group (DWAG) include the police, health visitors, housing officer for the area, social services, the local primary school head teacher, local community workers, the local Councillor, representatives from the Education Service, the local nursery, and others.

This Group organised an open day at the local nursery where young, single parents in particular were encouraged to come in to gain advice on any matters which concerned them, and learning opportunities with crèche facilities were featured. Residents had been asked what they would like to see, and such things as aromatherapy, financial advice, housing queries, and childcare issues were requested. All of these requests were met. 1200 leaflets were distributed to local people - but only 9 people turned up over the two day period!

When the project was evaluated, everyone had 'meant to come' but other things had 'just got in the way'. This demonstrates the barriers to overcome, and the programme will run again in spring when it is hoped for improved attendance, supported by improved development work.

2.6 Feedback mechanisms

It is important to include residents in consultations. This will always be a time-consuming activity - but highly important as people are able to comment on issues and perceptions, helping to shape plans at the very early development stage.

Feedback is critical to explain both what has and hasn't worked and why. Cynics and advocates alike have the opportunity to express views. Partnerships can begin to work together on the issues raised.

Stockton's Learning Towns

A series of discussion groups was held with a broad cross-section of players involved within any aspects of learning. A follow-up session then looked at ways in which local solutions could be identified, and approval of the recommendations was sought at the Learning Towns Board.

Southampton

One of the three Learning Shops is also a Community Centre. The manager is a key local volunteer who has a responsibility for collecting informal and formal feedback and for communications within both the Learning Shop and the Community Centre.

Questions to consider in targeting non-traditional or excluded learners

- What motivation triggers can be used to target those people currently not thinking about learning?
- How could access for rural communities be addressed by the Learning Shop concept?
- What role might the Internet have to play? Does it exclude even greater numbers of those at the margins or beyond learning?
- Is there a real issue over gender in the predominantly female education/ learning professions?
- Is the organisation clear about what services are on offer? Can staff give a short and simple explanation of the service?
- There should be greater emphasis on taking resources and activities into communities, but what are the implications?
- Personality and perceptions affect decision making for all potential learners - what does this mean to traditional recruitment practice?

3 Lessons on evaluating performance

3.1 Research the need

Undertake local research to establish local need, constraints, concerns and potential ways of working. All the projects recommended not being over-ambitious in terms of outcomes, being prepared to modify action plans and hence able to deliver a product.

A common concern is that the same few communities are targeted for support, can become excited by the potential, but also disappointed and then disillusioned with results.

It is important to be thorough in the way in which learning opportunities are targeted. Blanket approaches typically do not achieve good response as individuals are unable to recognise themselves in the campaign.

Monitoring and evaluation is critical to targeting and should be given discrete budgets to allow for effective follow-up from a full range of activities.

Derby

The overall aim was to develop a community-based marketing strategy for learning in four of the most deprived wards. After initial outreach research (door to door and survey), it became clear that the target was too ambitious. The Board was consulted to approve a reduction of activity to one ward.

Southampton Learning Shops

Research identified that potential groups of users were not represented amongst existing clients (particularly males aged 40+). This information is now being used as a focus for more local research.

3.2 Establish/share evaluation techniques

Norwich has a thematic Learning City SRB (Single Regeneration) Bid with its own evaluation systems. However, the Learning City group is exploring other ways of trying to capture cultural change. It needs to undertake some attitude surveys to establish a baseline and is setting up a labour market information project group to take this forward. This may be linked to a press led debate about people's attitude to learning.

Norwich actions to date:

- agreed common questionnaires at joint events i.e. the Learning Festival '99
- sharing databases i.e. SRB4, Employment Service, Widening Participation, Learning Shop, Colleges (including ward profiles and deprivation figures)

Norwich is now beginning to form a standard view on collection of data to establish baselines on guidance issues.

Southampton

Southampton Learning Shops - Southampton shared an evaluation questionnaire, and an aims and objectives matrix with performance indicators with 3 other learning shops.

3.3 Think evaluation before action

- Think about evaluation at the start of the project to ensure it is an on going part of operational plans.
- Have an established cohort of baseline information which can be used to inform the Learning City regarding promotion of lifelong learning.
- Keep information and statistics simple and take (e.g. pay for) advice from experts.

Norwich

Clearly establish amongst partners an understanding of the need for evaluation of performance, and have a project group which will establish baseline data.

Darlington/Stockton

Collaborative planning at the start of both projects included identifying evaluation measures. This helped to make explicit the purpose of the projects, identify clear objectives and ensure maximum benefit.

PRACTICAL TIPS IN MARKETING LEARNING AND DEVELOPING GUIDANCE

Emerging issues:

- Sell the benefits, not the features of a product.
- Learn to listen to all partners, not just those who may hold power.
- Remain focused. This may mean revisiting goals and objectives over time if there is a turnover in group membership.
- Remember to enable participants to develop at their own pace - don't expect instant results. To change the culture in disadvantaged areas will take time.
- Don't be discouraged - keep on trying, because once learners are engaged, the rewards are great.
- Remember to market the benefits of learning internally to partners and externally to specific target groups and members of the media.
- Funding structures and systems still encourage individual institutions to put their priorities first.
- Keep a collection of examples of existing practice and key questions to help with future planning.
- Secure additional funding from an alternate source to carry the momentum of the project forward.
- Look for opportunities to develop further the roles of groups and networks originally set up to support a project and to maintain momentum.
- Resist the temptation to make assumptions about people's interests.
- Photographs make issues come alive - use a combination of both local and national people to generate interest.
- Try to be inclusive even if project is targeted.
- Make activities fun and accessible to all. Try to ensure taster sessions are low-cost, if not free.
- Forget education 'speak' and 'selling the course' - when you get the call/visit, then you give the details!
- Use incentives particularly when targeting non-traditional or excluded individuals.
- Cater to the whole community. This means reviewing and challenging all aspects of operation in order to offer an inclusive service to the community.
- Use a wide range of events to promote activities - involve local people and a local celebrity.
- Find a champion appropriate to the target beneficiaries - this may not always be a 'typical' role model.
- Scale projects down if necessary.
- Word of mouth and local contacts are the best source of promotion - whatever the target audience.
- If you are a practitioner, find a colleague to work with - the benefits have an impact across all aspects of professional and personal development.

Potential causes of conflict:

- Unclear focus and lack of priorities.
- Organisations and individuals can be faced with split loyalties.
- Individuals may be uncertain how much personal authority they have.
- Many partnerships and individuals operate in informal networks and decisions are not always made or shared openly and uniformly.
- Poor communication processes within individual organisations and amongst the partnerships.
- Inconsistent/poor attendance or lack of continuity of people at meetings.
- Decision makers not delegating responsibility.
- Limited support/feedback of paid staff who are responsible for the day to day success of partnerships.
- Willingness of people to be honest and to contemplate actions which may not always benefit them or their individual organisation.

- Beware of jargon.
- Don't assume lack of knowledge on behalf of the consumer.
- Lengthy questionnaires which put people off.

Comments relevant to all forms of marketing activity

- Consult with local people. Take time to do effective market research.
- Consider a single brand for learning within your community.
- The best marketing tool is the 1:1 approach.
- Have resources to pay staff to do the work or tailor the work to the resources.
- An absence of readily available and homogeneous data makes comparative studies difficult
- Reviewing, as well as forming partnerships, is a key function of the partnership process.
- External non-educational/training consultancy can provide real help in reviewing marketing opportunities and should be considered at various stages of project development.
- Ensure that funding to support activities is maintained.
- Take account of the existence of current partnerships, build on their experiences and be aware of the effect on new ones.
- All partnerships operate within an informal networking arrangement - it is important to ensure the connections are made appropriately.
- Resist the temptation to over-simplify existing partnerships within your community.

Learning Towns and Cities

Pathfinder Project Report

Darlington

Objectives

To market learning to groups who would not normally participate. The marketing project known as the Passport project is to encourage participation, have a range of entry points and progression opportunities and invite partner involvement. The project intended to involve employers among the partnership and to work across social and cultural boundaries to appeal to individuals, families and groups of learners.

This project, together with Stockton, have worked in partnership throughout the Pathfinder initiative.

Outcomes

There has been considerable activity in relation to the Passport project. This has included a report from marketing consultants with useful input into the process of launching an Action pack for the project. The Action Pack has been completed in draft and the steering group for the project is actively involved in seeking funding both for the action pack and the Launch of the Learning Town initiative.

However, like many other projects involved in the Pathfinder Initiative this project has been deflected by the business of setting up the Learning partnership and the Development of the local authority's Lifelong Learning Development Plan. The Darlington project co-ordinator believes that a dedicated worker for the Learning Town initiative is a necessity if substantial progress is to be made.

Problems within the initiative have included a lack of follow up commitment to initial enthusiasm, the lack of a single organisation prepared to drive the initiative forward, an excess of strategic discussion without operational activity and problems resulting from lack of funding.

This project would recommend dedicated staff time and appropriate delegation to operational staff to enable action to be agreed and put into place without lengthy consultation. The project clearly benefited from the use of consultant time and the shared work with Stockton.

For both the Stockton and Darlington projects there were issues with the use of the Guide. Some related to the format and construction of the document but in preparing useful guidance for partnerships it was felt that some or all of the following would have been useful:

- a section on the benefits of partnership;
- help on the issue of losing partner commitment;
- more on resource issues;
- emphasis on the need for concrete action;
- a section on the role of co-ordinator including matters relating to their management, setting of targets and evaluation of performance; and
- checklists and questionnaires that could be pulled out and used independently would add greatly to the Guide's usefulness.

Learning Towns and Cities

Pathfinder Project Report

Derby

Objectives

To develop a community based marketing strategy for learning in the four target wards being prioritised by the Learning City initiative. Four separate and defined phases were planned: initial survey; research and assessment; development of the strategy, and the first phase of implementation. The survey and assessment were to focus on one ward with the practicalities of subsequent work being considered only on the basis of the results of work in the first ward. Initial work by the consultant resulted in selection of the first target area.

The particular ward chosen exhibited considerable deprivation. Early work indicated a need for extensive groundwork before marketing learning was likely to be at all productive.

Outcomes

The work in the ward selected has resulted in the close involvement of the learning city initiative with the ward action group, which deals with social issues such as crime and disorder. This group is in the process of using European Social Fund money to recruit a community worker from within the community to be trained to work in the area. One of the items in this worker's remit will be dealing with learning issues as conditions allow.

During the project the consultant performed an audit of current participation in the learning from the area. Other work has been focused on involvement with the Ward Action Group including attendance at an "Away Day", co-ordinating activity in developing parenting skills training and working on the arrangements surrounding the recruitment of the worker.

Among the difficulties encountered by this project has been a lack of appreciation of the obstacles in the way of engaging in learning at a local level and the initial cynicism of both residents and community workers. It is felt that the project has made progress in overcoming this. Further difficulties resulted from the lack of both time and financial resources to drive the initiative forward.

The Guide was of little assistance to this project. The activities in the Guide related to operations that seemed irrelevant in dealing with the huge issues of social exclusion met within the target area and issues of partnership working in very excluded communities. The Guide was not flexible enough to be adapted to such circumstances and, if there were a toolkit that could help in this context, it would need to be highly adaptable to local circumstances.

Learning Towns and Cities

Pathfinder Project Report

Norwich

Objectives

To promote a culture of lifelong learning in the Norwich.

The Pathfinder project used the Guide in evaluating the success or otherwise of the marketing of learning. The initial project proposal indicated interest in pursuing the participation strand of the Guide but the final project report's main focus is on the usefulness of the Guide in relation to evaluating performance.

The Guide was used mainly as a background document and a basis for reflection. The matrices within it were found to be less useful.

The particular activities that the project focused on developing evaluation tools for were the Learning Festival, the Learning Shop and the SRB 5 project operating in the City, which has a focus on community participation.

Outcomes

It was found very difficult to evaluate the Learning Festival because there was no established useful base line data. The number of changing variables from different providers made any kind of exercise extremely complicated. However, an effort was made to produce a plan for looking at a number of indicators that would indicate the success of the Festival for this year. These included the development of guidance targets and evaluation of participation rates.

So far as the Learning Shop was concerned, the city has established a cohort of base line information through a survey of 300 clients of the 18,000 using the shop during the year. The 300 survey provides information on the gender, age of users, patterns of attendance and response to the survey. It is clear from this work that the Learning Shop is good at reaching people who are thinking about learning and from this group it was able to attract a mixture of ethnic groups and those with an interest in basic skills. The Shop is not effective in reaching those who have not contemplated learning. Other strategies are needed to evince an interest from those with no current intention of taking part in learning activities.

The evaluation of the SRB5 project is of key interest to the Learning City initiative as all partners are involved in the delivery of this large initiative. The toolkit has been used as a starting point in evaluating SRB5, and there has been a great deal of interest in Norwich in the use of the Local Government Management Board "Learning from Complexity Pack". There is still a great deal to be done in the development of evaluation strategies for this area of work.

During the life of the project a number of key staff in Norwich became interested in the learning from complexity materials and how these might be used in evaluation. There was particular interest in the areas of cultural transmission and increased returns, which are part of the Pack's approach.

The project felt that the Guide was a useful background document, but they did not find it easy to use in relation to the specific projects they wished to evaluate.

Learning Towns and Cities

Pathfinder Project Report

Southampton

Objectives

To develop a system for assessing the value of Learning Shops. The original project bid included, developing a shared understanding of the objectives of Learning Shops, identifying performance indicators and targets, developing ways of collecting and monitoring data and consideration of the ways that Shops might extend their role.

For the purposes of the Pathfinder project, evaluation has been based on Strand 3 of the Guide, focusing on performance. The Guide is set at a strategic level and, because the project itself was involved with the development of the partnerships and activity that were field based, it was not found to be very user friendly. The work done with the shop in Southampton was drawn from the Guide, but also the current Local Authority good practice.

Outcomes

Four Learning Shops have been established to date; three in library facilities and one in a community shop. A particular Shop that was a focus of the project is located in a library and most of the work done in it related to school age children. Few adults have been engaged and none in the 40 - 55 age range. The Shops are not guidance shops. They are effectively IT learning centres with very limited learner support. Library staff provide this and it is felt that the kind of support is not adequate if those attending are not competent in their use of IT.

The issues that emerged from the project include, the problem mentioned above in relation to learner support, but also issues in relation to access in terms of opening hours. Libraries based in the community tend to have quite restricted opening hours which do not fit in well with likely patterns of use of an IT centre. It has been difficult to market and raise awareness of the Shops, particularly among the target client group and for some of these prospective learners, the library environment would not be a comfortable one.

The Partnership involved in the development has been a successful one, but there is a need to engage partnerships fully at both strategic and operational level. Resources are inevitably an issue impacting on all the other issues mentioned above.

The Guide was not considered user friendly, which would be an issue if used by community groups. There was a request to extend frameworks, which would help initiatives follow a structured process. However, using the Guide enabled the initiative to set about the work in a constructive way, creating an aims and objectives matrix with performance indicators.

Learning Towns and Cities

Pathfinder Project Report

Stockton-on-Tees

Objectives

To work closely with the Darlington project to share meetings and consultants, both on the use of the Guide and on marketing. An initial joint meeting with Darlington and the consultant resulted in the planning both of work on the project, the development of a marketing strategy and evaluation of using the "Learning Town" concept in marketing, and the use of consultancy available through the project.

The marketing consultant used by the project participated in workshops on the issues in marketing learning in disadvantaged communities and produced a feedback report for the Learning Town's Board. This activity was followed by a seminar to develop strategy, which resulted in ten potential marketing projects being incorporated into a Marketing and Development Plan for Stockton's Learning Towns. Funding and support are being sought for the projects from both challenge funds available locally and national funding streams.

Outcomes

The lack of specific funding and need to diversify funding sources as a result has been one of the problems faced by this project. Further difficulties have been the commitment of some partner organisations and the maintenance of momentum.

Essential in the development of marketing initiatives and partnerships in connection with Learning Communities are keeping a sense of focus, employing consultants who are fit for the job to be undertaken, being prepared to modify projects as circumstances may demand and ensuring enough resources have been invested in the project from the start. This project benefited significantly from the shared work with Darlington and felt that sharing work with a similar project was essential to their progress.

So far as working in partnership is concerned the project leader felt a key skill was learning to listen to all partners and not just the most forceful and that consultation with residents was time consuming but highly rewarding. The partnership exercise had involved significant learning particularly so far as maintenance and motivation of partnerships were concerned.