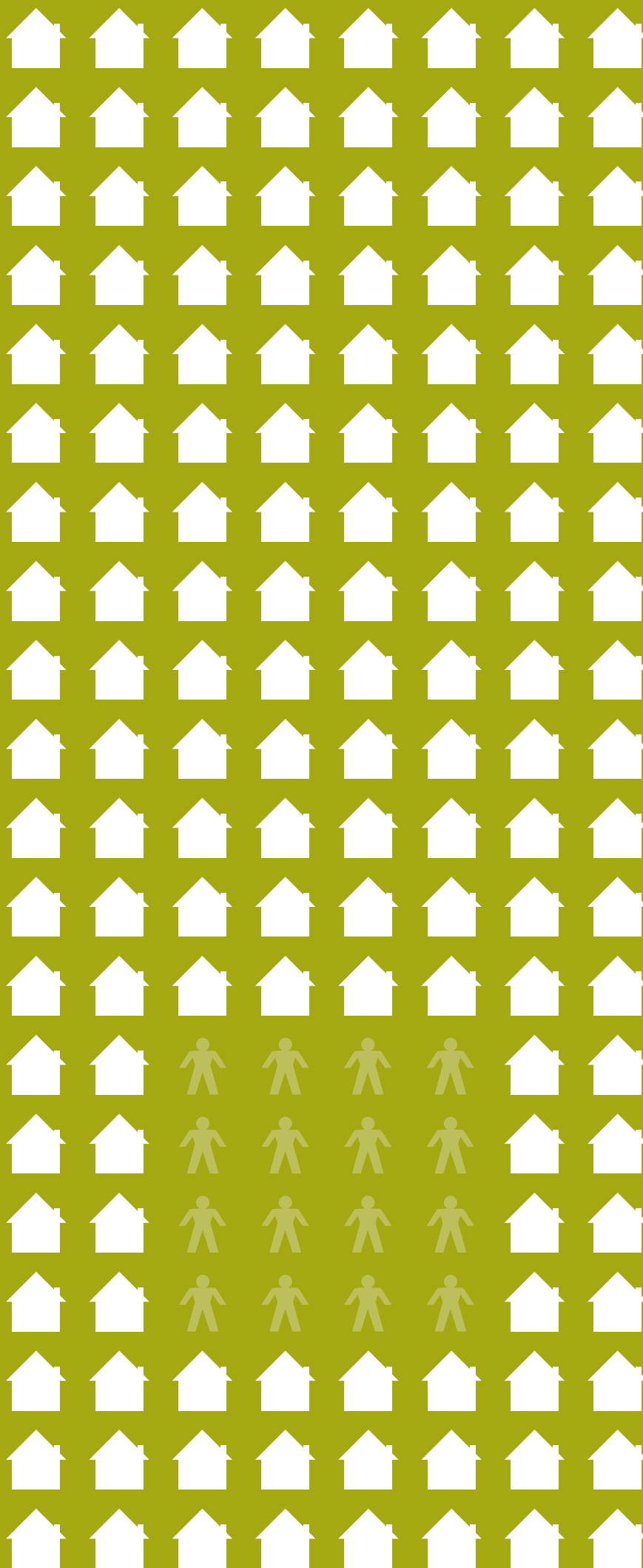


Neighbourhood Learning Centres

Guide for Practitioners



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Foreword

“The learning centre is like a stick of rock: it has the word ‘learner’ going right through the middle of it. The learners say what, they say when, they say how...”

Lisa – Workers Educational Association

“One of the pleasant surprises for us was discovering how many people from our community had skills that we didn’t know of. This woman said she could teach arts and crafts. The project flagged up the untapped potential out there in terms of people who have skills and talents to offer us as a community ...”

Delroy – Afro Caribbean National Artistic Centre, Nottingham

“Everyone learns better if they are in an environment that they can enjoy. Some people may need to learn how to laugh – most of us know how to cry ...”

John – Pennywell Community Business, Sunderland

“The project has created a kind of ‘buzz’ in the community. People are being motivated to get involved in all kinds of activities ...”

Rashad – Thornton Lodge Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Huddersfield

“Everybody can ...”

Focus group of local people from the Pennywell, Ford and South Hylton Estates in Sunderland

I: Introduction

What's the purpose of this guide?

The guide has been prepared to provide help and advice for all those thinking of setting up a Neighbourhood Learning Centre. It's intended to be a *practical guide* written for *non-specialists*.

What is a Neighbourhood Learning Centre?

There is no single model for a Neighbourhood Learning Centre (an 'NLC', for short). They are all different, because they meet the needs of their own local communities – and these are different.

However, they have a number of features in common:-

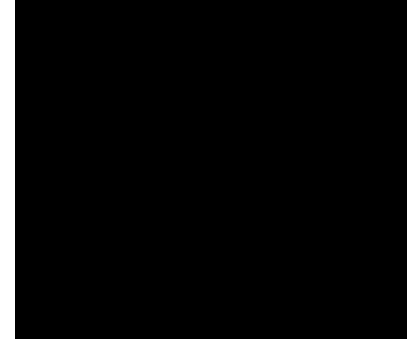
- *local people play a key role*. They are involved in a variety of ways – as learners, volunteers, staff, and trustees. In short, it is *their* NLC, not one parachuted in from outside;
- *they are based in accessible, local premises*. NLCs will always be on the estate or in the suburb or the village. Local people will not be expected to travel to larger, less personal institutions (such as colleges) elsewhere;
- *they have a variety of learning programmes, most of which require no entry qualifications at all*. Local people will be actively involved in deciding what courses and activities will be set up;
- *learning and teaching styles are very different from traditional approaches*. The emphasis is on learning being flexible, useful – and fun;
- *they can be supported by government funds: but they will also need to raise money from trusts and other donors*.

What are the benefits of having an NLC in our community?

There will be benefits both to the *community* as a whole, and to local people as *individuals*. For example, the *community* will have:-

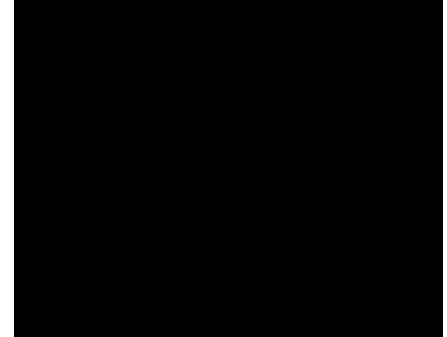
- a safe and welcoming place to hold meetings, including for local clubs and societies. They would not need to have to have learning as their main purpose;
- better facilities. Over time the NLC is likely to have its own computer equipment, for example – and this will be available for local people to learn on and use. The NLC might also develop its own child care facilities;
- a focal point for the community. The NLC will become an accepted 'centre' in which events and activities can be held, such as family days, celebrations and concerts.

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Second Chance School,
East Leeds Family Learning Centre

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Pennywell

For *individuals*, the benefits will include opportunities to:-

- meet other local people;
- raise their skills, increase their self confidence and gain proper recognition;
- find out about other opportunities (e.g. courses elsewhere, jobs, community events).

How can I find the information I want quickly and easily?

This Guide provides a short overview of how to go about setting up an NLC. It's in three main sections. They cover the following:-

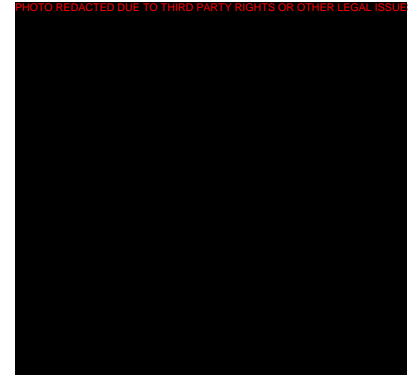
- how to get started;
- points for the planning stage;
- managing an NLC.

The material on which the Guide is based has been compiled from the actual experiences of local communities which have established their own NLC. Brief details of the participating NLCs are given in Tables 1 and 2 of Appendix A. Their contribution has been very important.

The Guide may be sufficient for your immediate purposes. However, a number of other publications are available in the same series. These are based on the experience of the same NLCs and are available free from the Department of Education and Skills.

The other items in the series are more detailed. They are grouped into two sets:-

- 'case studies' – descriptions of individual NLCs;
- 'templates' - guidance on tackling some of the more complex tasks.



Fun Day Summer Launch,
East Leeds Family Learning Centre

Case studies

Case studies on each of the sixteen NLCs featured in this series are available separately. For each NLC, information is given on:-

- the local context;
- community ownership;
- management arrangements;
- partnerships;
- the programme of opportunities;
- awareness raising and marketing;
- funding;
- monitoring and evaluation;
- sustainability (how they are preparing for the future);
- learning points.

Most case studies are about five or six pages, so you may not want to read them all. The tables in Appendix A will help you decide which ones will be most relevant to the needs of your community.

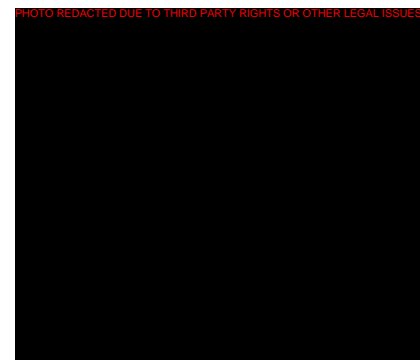
Templates

The templates provide practical guidance on tackling key tasks. They also include examples from the experience of NLCs which have piloted the approach.

The *Social Inclusion Strategy* template provides guidance on how to find out what the issues are which local people feel most strongly about. These will not only be about learning, of course: they often include concerns about crime, health and transport, for example. The template describes how local people can develop a strategy to take positive action on such issues. An outline of key points is provided in Appendix B of this Guide.

The *Community Learning Profile* template provides guidance on how to find out what sort of learning opportunities will be of most interest – and value – to the community. Often programmes are set up without sufficient research into local needs. This template describes how to go about collecting the right material on which to base the plans. An outline of key points is provided in Appendix C of this Guide.

The *Development Plan* template provides guidance on the process of setting up an NLC. It goes through similar steps to that summarised in the next three chapters of this Guide, but with more detail and with some practical examples. An outline of key points is provided in Appendix D of this guide.

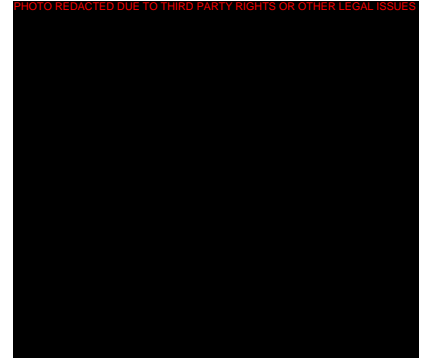


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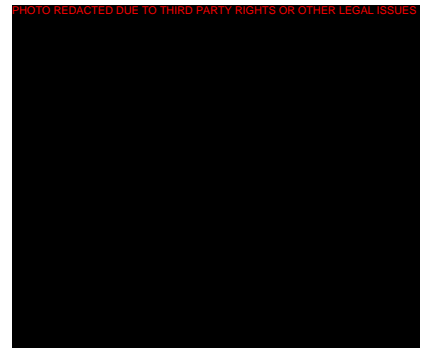
The *Evaluation Strategy* template provides guidance on measuring the impact of local NLCs. Too often, NLCs are judged by criteria which may be relevant for *other* learning providers (e.g. Further Education Colleges). But these do not always recognise the contributions of NLCs (e.g. where encouraging non-learners to join a community activity would be a more relevant objective as first rung non-accredited learning, before considering taking formal qualifications). The evaluation template sets out an approach which is targeted specifically at neighbourhood learning. An outline of key points is provided in Appendix E of this Guide.

And finally ...

There are, of course, other sources of useful information on community learning initiatives. These are summarised in Appendix F. In addition to listing agencies and publications, the appendix also suggests some useful websites to access.



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II: Getting Started

However convincing the arguments are for setting up an NLC, nothing will be achieved unless *someone actually does something!* It will then be important to *work with other people* – especially local residents – to ensure the plans are relevant and widely supported. Turning a dream into reality will then need some *effective project management*.

This chapter provides a few suggestions for each of these steps.

Someone actually has to do something....

Most people are happier supporting someone else than taking a lead. But NLCs will not ‘happen’ unless an individual or a small team has a vision and convinces other people that it is one worth pursuing.

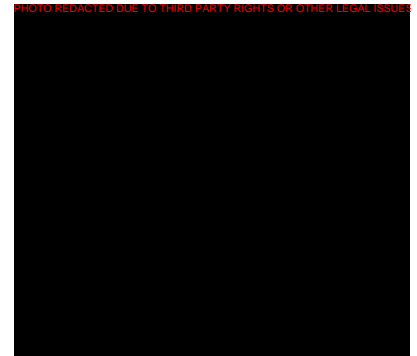
The important thing to stress is that this individual – sometimes called a ‘champion’ or an ‘animateur’ – does not have to be someone with professional qualifications. Indeed, the most essential ‘qualifications’ are:-

- having commitment and enthusiasm;
- being locally based – preferably living in the community.

Examples of animateurs behind current NLCs include:-

- a local resident and member of a village hall management committee, who became frustrated by the lack of facilities in the community;
- the manager of a local community business, who became convinced that learning would be a stimulus to growth and development in the community and turning round negative attitudes.

Another key learning point from the case studies is that local ‘problems’ can be turned round and used positively. For example, when the numbers of enrolments to a community primary school went down, some of the buildings became surplus to requirements. Rather than see this as a problem, the headteacher - with active support from local people - realised that the spare capacity could be adapted for use as an NLC.



Card Making Group, Flegg NLC, Norfolk

Working with others....

However enthusiastic the amateur is, he or she will need a small group of people around them to help realise the vision. These must be local people with a commitment to *making it happen* in their community.

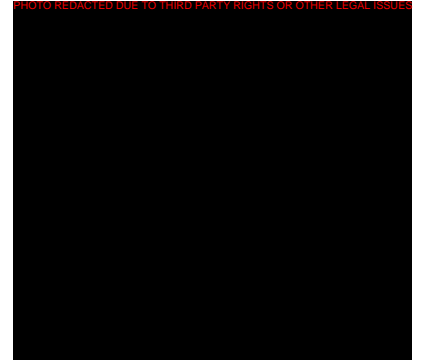
In the early days, such groups are best kept informal. The time will come when constitutions and legal entities will be important but that is further down the track. For now, the key messages are:-

- retain ownership locally. Don't bring in external players until you are clear about your own plans and the contributions you are seeking from others;
- dream the dream. At a later stage – especially when funding becomes an issue – there may need to be some compromises and trade offs. But don't let caution and pessimism take over from the outset!
- exploit local networks and contacts. In every community there will be huge, untapped resources. This will include people who can bring:
 - relevant skills (e.g. in building, engineering, childcare, administration, ICT)
 - some of their time (e.g. to canvass views among local people, deliver leaflets, find out who are the key decision makers in local and regional funding bodies)
 - moral support (e.g. providing encouragement when things go wrong and reassurance that the vision is achievable);

The key will be finding the people who have these precious resources! Word of mouth is crucial here.

A good starting point for this group would be to prepare a *Social Inclusion Strategy*. This would have two immediate and powerful benefits. First, it would encourage the group to consult with the wider community right from the beginning, thereby raising the profile and extending involvement.

Second, it would make sure the plan was not too narrow. Finding out what issues are on the minds of local people may well throw up concerns about community safety, say, or substance misuse, or public transport. All of these would be relevant points for the strategy. See the template entitled *Social Inclusion Strategy* for more details on how to go about this.



Monteney Community Workshop

Plans are relevant and widely supported...

If the first requirement is a champion, and the second a small group of committed local people, the third and fourth are:-

- evidence of learning need;
- broad support from the community.

Gathering evidence of need provides another early opportunity to canvass views of local people. The template entitled *Community Learning Profile* provides guidance on how to gather the relevant information.

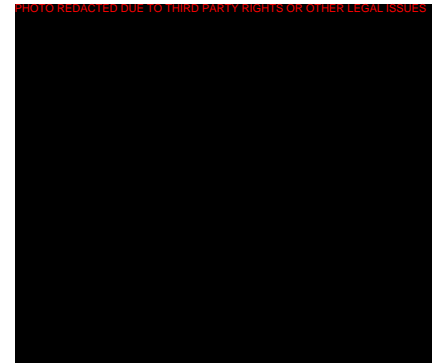
It's a vital step. Without such material, funding bodies will not be convinced the case has been well researched. And – of equal importance – you run the risk of making plans which 'miss the point' or are not supported by local people.

At this stage, it is also important to find out which other organisations and partnerships are active in your area. Make a point of going to see them and exploring the extent to which your plans are mutually supportive.

The case studies have a lot of useful material on this. The trick is to strengthen your position by having as many key people and organisations as possible 'on side' and ensuring plans are developed in a mutually supportive way – but without losing your own identity. Be careful not to become simply a satellite of a bigger player wanting to have a presence in your community.

Effective project management...

There will come a point when what began as a dream becomes more of a project – and moreover a project that involves plans, premises, people and budgets. This is the point at which a development plan will be needed. The next chapter picks up the story here.



Monteney Community Workshop

III: The Planning Stage

The main components of the plan will be:-

- the objectives – what is the NLC trying to achieve?
- the users – for whom is the NLC being set up? What are their needs?
- the programme of activities – what is the NLC actually going to deliver?
- the management arrangements – who will own it? How will it be run?
- premises – where will it be based? What equipment will be needed?
- funding – how much will it cost to set up and run? Where will the money come from?

This chapter provides some hints on each of these components. More detailed material can be found in the templates and case studies. Whilst there is not a section headed ‘community ownership’, this is a *central theme which underpins all the material discussed.*

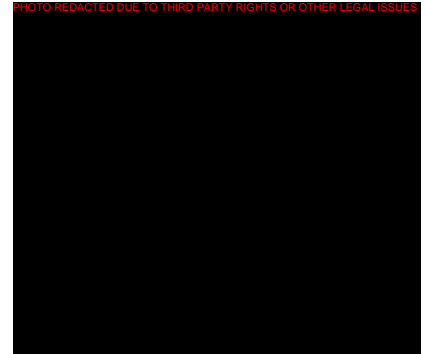
Objectives

The starting point for the plan must be the question: what are we trying to achieve? Not only must there be a clear answer to this but it must also be an answer to which all those involved are committed. This means that time will have to be set aside for drafting – and consulting on – the objectives.

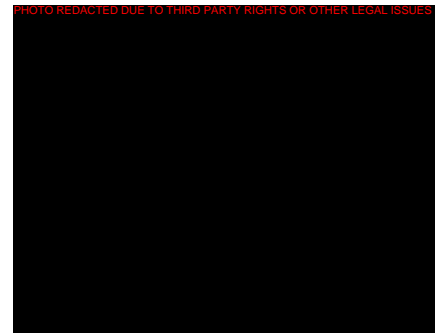
At first sight, it may seem straightforward – surely the objective is ‘to set up an NLC in our community’? So far so good! But objectives will be needed to put some flesh on the bones at the next level of detail (e.g. priorities between different types of users or activities). Provided they have been worded carefully and command widespread support, objectives can help to resolve differences at a later time.

NLCs have also found it helpful to prepare a statement of core values (e.g. ‘respecting all participants’, ‘promoting equality of opportunity’). This may seem very theoretical but it’s an excellent way of getting everyone to think things through and ensure the foundations are strong.

Incidentally, without a statement of objectives and values, it will be almost impossible later on to judge whether you’ve achieved what you set out to do!



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East Leeds Family Learning Centre



Monteeney Community Workshop

Users

The plan will need to describe the target users of the NLC. Who are they? What are their needs? How will they be met? This, in turn, will help to estimate user numbers.

On one level, it will be easy to describe the users – potentially this will be everyone who lives in the catchment area. However, in practice, it will be important to describe target users in greater detail. This will then be useful in designing marketing strategies and programmes of activities.

For example, if one of the target groups was single parents, childcare facilities would clearly be a high priority. Similarly, if one of the target groups was people for whom English is an additional language, translation of materials into community languages would be important.

There will also be other potential users to take into account. These could include:-

- local groups (e.g. a housing association or a drama club seeking a regular local venue);
- employers and professional associations (e.g. for training events or seminars);
- other training providers with an interest in delivering programmes in community settings;
- private hire (e.g. by a local band for practice or by a local family for a wedding reception).

As noted in the previous section, projecting user numbers and setting some targets could be controversial if there were no agreed objectives and values. For example:-

- should priority be given to local learners or to employers (because they will pay a premium rate and help to subsidise other activities)?
- should priority be given to regular users or to new enquirers?

Programme

One of the biggest learning points from the pilot NLCs has been that it is a mistake to rush straight into designing the programme! The problem arises when – despite statements about community ownership – *planners decide they know* what courses and activities the potential users will need. Even if they are right (and they seldom are), much of the impact is lost, since local people do not *feel* the programme is *theirs*.

The stages are, therefore:-

- initial research (*see Community Learning Profile*);
- consultation with those in the target groups;
- tasters to check out interest and canvass additional views;
- first few sessions;
- evaluation and consultation;
- revised programme (and so on).

Several of the NLCs set up focus groups to advise on the programme – and other – aspects. Whilst for potential learners it's the topic which is the main 'draw' (e.g. learning about computers, growing leeks, or line dancing), there will always be opportunities to build in skills with a broader relevance. Often the underlying need is for basic skills such as literacy and numeracy.

Some of the other learning points from the existing NLCs are:-

- keep promises. If you say to the focus group that you will build their recommendations into the draft programme, do so;
- aim for a *range* of activities. Don't give the impression that the NLC is only for those with learning difficulties at one extreme, or those in senior management posts seeking career development programmes at the other;
- plan a *rolling* programme. Avoid the constraints of an academic year at all costs! Those who have overcome crises of confidence to cross the threshold on a wet Thursday afternoon in February will not be impressed to be told they will have to return on enrolment day in September;
- be careful about providing a base for other providers of learning. This can often be an ideal arrangement, especially where other providers can deliver programmes for which you don't have the expertise. But make sure local learners' needs come first. Don't let external providers have the final say on curriculum design.

Management Arrangements

The plan will certainly need to be clear on the management arrangements. What legal entity will the NLC have? How will key decisions be taken? How many workers will be needed?

Choosing the right legal entity is a decision on which external help is vital. There are some technical issues (e.g. about tax and personal liability) which need to be talked through with accountants and solicitors. Most of the NLCs are companies limited by guarantee, but a few are trusts. Both types of entity can obtain charitable status – which brings tax advantages; this is another point on which professional advice will be needed.

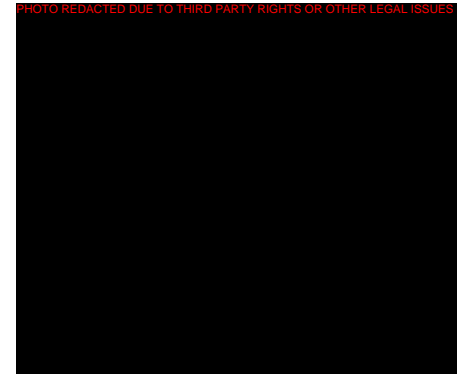
The crucial point to bear in mind with the constitution is that it must demonstrate in practice that *the local community is in the lead role*. There's no point in claiming that the NLC is owned by the community if the reality is that the members/directors/trustees (the terms vary depending on the legal entity) are mostly professional people from outside. That having been said, it will be important to have a balance of skills on the Board; it will also be essential to provide training for local people so that they have the skills – and confidence – to fulfil the role.

In addition to the formal decision making body such as the Board, it will be essential to have other consultative bodies. This will ensure those local people with an interest in the NLC have an opportunity to have their say in an informal setting. User groups, focus groups, open days, lunchtime discussion groups – and many other forums – can all be helpful. However, participants will need reassurance – and evidence – that their views are being taken into account.

It is difficult to generalise about staffing. The numbers and types will depend on the type of NLC and range of activities. For the purposes of the plan, the line should be: start small but build in some growth for subsequent years.

Learning points from the pilots include:-

- have a good balance between volunteers and paid workers. A great deal can be achieved through a team of active and committed volunteers;
- try to grow from within. Encourage learners to become volunteers and recruit paid staff from volunteers. It is quite common for the same person to have several roles within the NLC (e.g. learner, volunteer, part-time employee and committee member);
- invest in training and development, and include volunteers as equals;
- employment law is complex – don't take risks! Seek advice from a personnel specialist and/or solicitor;
- recently retired tutors living in the area can be a valuable resource.



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Premises and Equipment

Finding the right premises will be crucial. The NLC would ideally be based *in the heart* of the community it serves, so think carefully when considering an attractive base in a neighbouring area.

The main criteria are that:-

- it is safe – especially on dark evenings or when young or otherwise vulnerable people are on the premises;
- it is accessible (including for those with disabilities);
- it is not too expensive;
- it provides flexible accommodation – since the activities themselves will vary as learners' needs change.

Typically, NLCs are not standalone buildings but based in premises with other community roles (e.g. a village hall, a school, a community business, a family learning centre). This means that facilities can be shared, awareness raised and networking promoted.

Sharing facilities inevitably brings some tensions too! It is a good idea to agree some 'ground rules' with other users of the building.

Most NLCs offer some form of computer training, either direct or through another provider (e.g. UK online, learndirect, an FE college). Special care will be needed with protecting this equipment. So, for example:-

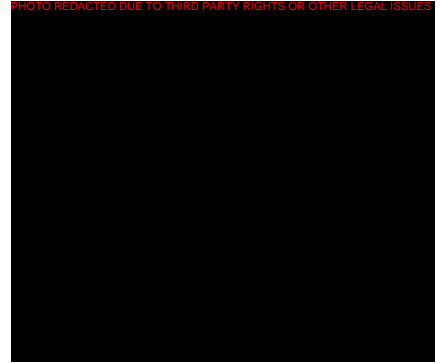
- ensure the kit is security tagged;
- take out effective software virus protection;
- install software to control access to unsuitable websites.

Funding

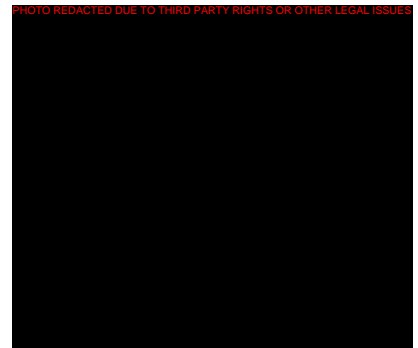
Securing funding will be a major challenge for all NLCs. Preparing a business plan will be a vital building block; this will include a description of the proposed centre, a statement of objectives, and projections both of user types and numbers, and of income and expenditure. This document will help to convince potential funders that yours is a project worth supporting. It may be a sensible investment to get some external help in presenting the data in a coherent and convincing way.

Funding will be needed for three main types of expenditure:-

- capital items (e.g. adaptation of premises);
- set-up costs (e.g. signs, furniture);
- revenue costs (e.g. salaries, consumables, power).



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Potential sources of funding will include:-

- major charitable trusts;
- UK government and European Community;
- regional and local bodies;
- employers.

It would be worth identifying someone with experience of – and a good track record in – drafting bids, and working with him/her on the first few submissions. It would also be important to make early contact with your local Learning and Skills Council, as this body is the principal funder of adult education.

Learning points from NLCs thus far include:-

- be persistent! Don't be put off by early rejections;
- include an allowance for overheads in your costings for project funding. In other words, don't just include the directly attributable costs such as the hourly rate of the trainer and the consumables: add on a sum (say, 40%) to contribute towards the cost of the building (e.g. rates, maintenance), other staff (e.g. receptionist, cleaner) and other overheads (e.g. insurance, licenses);
- use cross subsidies. Since many learners will not be able to contribute anything towards costs, take the opportunity to add a premium on commercial contracts (e.g. hosting an employers event) in order to reduce deficits elsewhere;
- exploit the potential for sponsorship, wherever possible. Local employers, for example, may well be willing to subsidise newsletters, provided they can feature their logo (but do check the business is reputable and not in an inappropriate sector!).

Funding will not only be an issue in the development phase, of course. Ensuring financial stability will remain a key concern throughout the life of the NLC. The next chapter considers some of the other issues for the delivery phase.

IV: Managing the NLC

This Guide is mainly about the early stages of establishing an NLC. This final chapter briefly considers some of the issues that would arise once the foundations were in place.

The points discussed are:-

- marketing;
- monitoring and evaluation;
- sustainability (planning for a secure future).

Several of the sections in the previous chapter are also relevant here. For example, planning the programme of activities is not a one-off: it needs to be continually revised. A similar point was made about funding.

Marketing

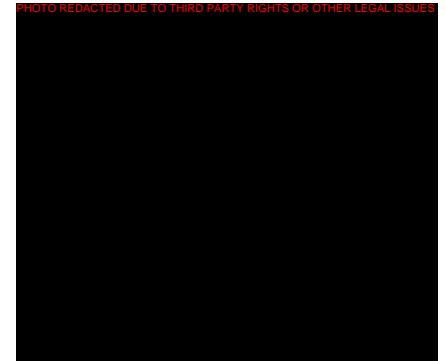
In the early days, the key objective will be raising the awareness of local people about the NLC. However, the need for marketing will not diminish once the centre is established. Each new activity, event, programme and course will need to be promoted.

The experience of NLCs is that word of mouth is by far the most effective medium. This is one sector in which glossy leaflets are almost entirely *inappropriate!* Posters and flyers can be useful, but they need to be locally produced. Something fairly basic but with a local flavour will be far more influential than materials which have been externally designed.

The significance of word of mouth cannot be exaggerated. This is why reputations for keeping promises, and for providing enjoyable and helpful programmes, are so important. It's the existing learners who are the most effective ambassadors. Sadly, negative experiences are equally influential: once trust is broken, it's very difficult to regain the position.

Other suggestions include:-

- produce regular newsletters;
- provide regular briefings to the local media;
- hold high profile events (e.g. family fun days);
- use local surveys to help raise awareness (e.g. asking local residents what learning opportunities they would like);
- put inserts into other circulations (e.g. local free newspapers).



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Monitoring and Evaluation

It will be important to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of the NLC. This makes it absolutely essential to keep records (e.g. of participants and activities) and actively seek feedback (What went well? What could be improved next time?). It will be more difficult to try and find this out in retrospect – much better to collect data on an on-going basis.

There is, of course, a balance to be struck between the need to have effective records and the need to protect the confidentiality of individuals. The informal nature of the learning will not lend itself easily to record keeping and tracking.

It would be tactful – and practically useful – to canvass the views of a representative group of learners on this. Having explained why monitoring and evaluation are important ('to ensure we are achieving what we set out to do' and 'to judge the impact of our centre', respectively) advice could be sought on the way forward (What sort of records would it be sensible to keep? How should we go about this?).

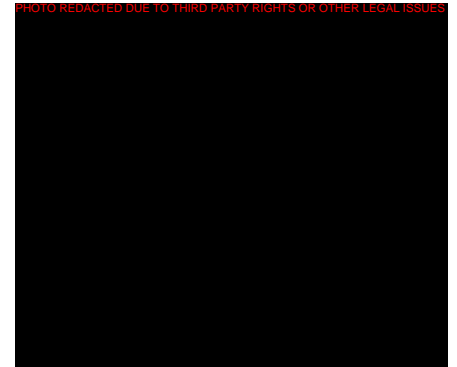
A separate template entitled *Evaluation Strategies* has been prepared in the same series and is available separately.

Sustainability

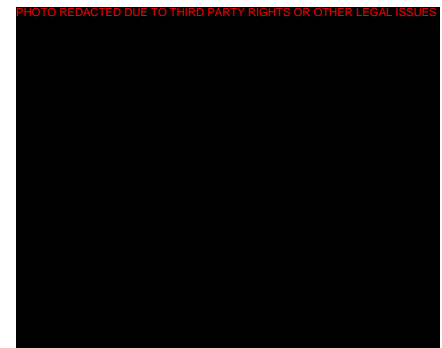
A major concern of current NLCs is sustainability – in other words, how to plan for a secure future. The unfortunate reality is that most projects are only funded on a fixed term basis – often simply for the next financial year. This makes it very difficult to make longer term plans and enter into longer term contracts (e.g. over leases or capital purchases). It's not very comforting from the perspective of staff, either!

There is no simple answer, here. But the experience of NLCs to date provides some hints as to how to minimise the concern:-

- keep in touch regularly with funding bodies. Find out whether there are any changes planned to budgetary arrangements. If so, make sure your bids and claims 'hit the right buttons';
- try and negotiate longer term contracts if at all possible. The more that NLCs make the case, the greater the likelihood of movement from funding bodies;
- celebrate success. Make sure that everyone is aware of the NLC's achievements;
- make certain that the community is behind the NLC. There have been instances in existing centres where the fact that local people were determined in their support has made a crucial difference when funding decisions could have gone the other way;

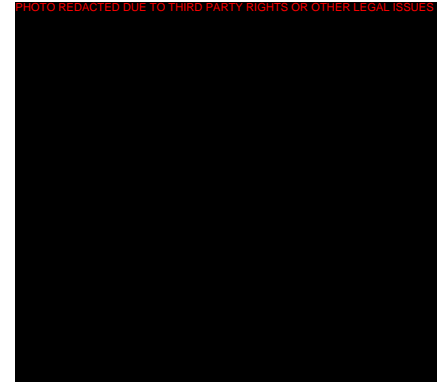


Pennywell



Pennywell

- carry out rigorous evaluations. Funding bodies will be much more impressed by evidence of impact backed up by hard data ('the number of learners on the estate has gone up by 42% in the past 17 months'), than assertions ('we are being very successful');
- try to find some regular income channels which are independent from funding bodies (e.g. letting rooms commercially, providing consultancy for other projects, becoming a franchised deliverer of courses on behalf of bigger institutions).



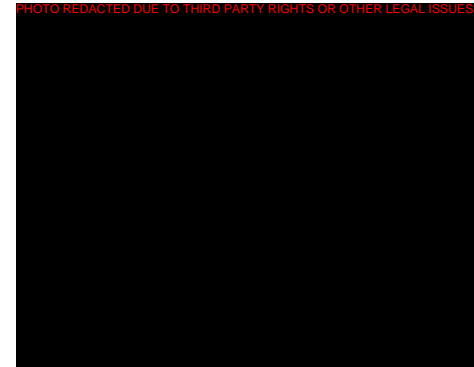
Final Word

The material in this guide has been distilled from the experience of real people blazing the trail for neighbourhood learning. They have had their disappointments, as well as their triumphs. But above all, they have *learned from their experiences*.

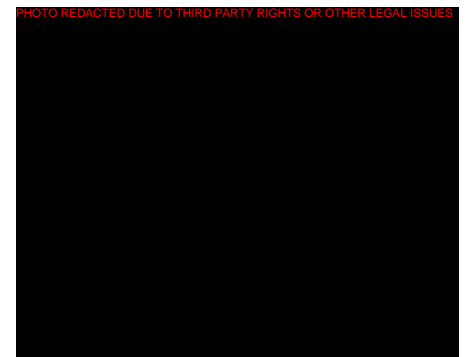
These final words of advice come from the NLC managers themselves:-

- Decide on your priorities and then stick to them (Birchwood Access and Training Centre).
- Be realistic about what the NLC can deliver and what it cannot. You will not be forgiven for broken promises. Say what you will deliver and deliver what you say (Pennywell Community Business, Sunderland).
- Keep testing – what works and what doesn't work? Keep changing your perception and recognising that you can't keep doing what you did in the past (WEA, East Midlands).
- A strategy is worthless if it does not allow those it is directed at to take ownership (Downham Market and District Learning Community).
- Health is a major factor in determining attitudes to learning among older people. If any real degree of success is to be achieved, lifestyle and other social problems need to be addressed (Age Concern, Liverpool).
- Encourage participants to become involved with the project from day one, giving them ownership and a feeling of empowerment (Birchwood Access and Training Centre).
- Give the training necessary to the committee, to ensure that their involvement is seen to be of worth and is valued and that they can effectively carry out their duties (Pennywell Community Business, Sunderland).
- Explore the possibility of utilising spare capacity within the local community – space already equipped for learning can be hired for a small fee (Ethnic Business Development Centre - EBDC).

- The formation of a learning focus group with representatives from the local community is useful, not just because it gives the project community ownership but because the focus group is a continual bank of good ideas (Regen Centre, Riccall).
- Strong commitment is essential: it requires passion and determination to get the project up and running (Flegg NLC, Norfolk).
- Make sure there is the capacity to respond to individuals whenever they present themselves for learning. Construct a rolling induction programme and enrol learners throughout the year (East Leeds Family Learning Centre).
- Provide teaching and learning aids in a clear format – they must be legible and free from jargon (EBDC).
- Encourage the more able learners to support those less able within informal environments – learners prefer to *learn* rather than *be taught* (EBDC).
- If you want people to attend your course, doing a mail out isn't good enough. It's the community consultation that really brings people in – it's vital (WEA, East Midlands).
- Good advertisement probably depends more on what is said over the garden fence than flyers and surveys. Encourage learners to return and bring their friends with them (Flegg NLC, Norfolk).
- Ensure that you are represented on your local area partnership. This is vital if you want to keep informed on funding streams and opportunities (Regen Centre, Riccall).
- Network with other organisations locally, regionally and nationally as much as possible (Birchwood Access and Training Centre).
- Be persistent with organisations and funding bodies. Write to as many as possible, introducing your project – and follow up (Regen Centre, Riccall).
- Recognise the importance of food and fun as a means of engaging with individuals, families and groups. Promote friendships, and a sense of ownership and belonging (Hatchford CARE, Solihull).
- Linking learning explicitly to employment opportunities acts as a powerful motivator for people to learn, especially when there are guaranteed jobs associated with the learning programme (East Leeds Family Learning Centre).
- Have pride – never forget your core values (Pennywell Community Business, Sunderland).



Fun Day Summer Launch,
East Leeds Family Learning Centre



Monteney Community Workshop

Appendix A

Brief details of case study NLCs

Table A1: Contact information

NLC Title	Principal Sponsors
Active Age Centre	Age Concern, Liverpool
Birchwood Access and Training Centre	Birchwood Access and Training Centre
Downham Market and District Learning Community	Downham Market College (High School) and Norfolk LEA
East Leeds Family Learning Centre	East Leeds Family Learning Centre and Leeds City Council
EBDC	Ethnic Business Development Corporation
Flegg NLC	Flegg High School and Norfolk LEA
Hatchford CARE	Hatchford Primary School and Solihull College
Kickstart Youth Inclusion Project	Crime Concern
Lincoln College	Lincoln College
Manor and Castle Development Trust	Manor and Castle Development Trust
Monteney Community Workshop	Monteney Community Workshop Trust
Pennywell NLC and Ford NLC	Pennywell Community Business Ltd
Regen Centre, Riccall	Regen Centre 2000 Ltd
Thornton Lodge NLC	Pakistani Community Alliance, Voluntary Action Kirklees and Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Greenway Centre, The Chase, Hill Learning Centre	Workers Educational Association, East Midlands District
Villages Initiative	Crime Concern

	Location	Key Contact	Telephone
	Clubmoor, North Liverpool	Liz Greenwood, Active Age Manager	0151 2871 329
	Birchwood, 5 miles from Lincoln	Pat Jackson, OBE Centre Manager	01522 697 587
	Downham Market, Norfolk	Christopher Shaw, Deputy Head	01366 389 100
	East Leeds	Debra Scott, Area Manager	0113 224 3174
	South London	Titus Boye-Thompson, Chief Executive	0208 6913 476
	Martham, 10 miles from Great Yarmouth	Cherry Crowley, Headteacher	01493 740 349
	Fordbridge, North Solihull	Deb Laxton, Project Manager	0121 7707 518
	Southwark, South London	Martin Seddon, Crime Concern Development Adviser	07813 670 15
	Lincoln	Jane Summers, Community Development Manager	01522 876 000
	East Sheffield	Policy and Strategy Manager	0114 2789 999
	Parson Cross, North East Sheffield	Keith Yule, Manager	0114 2571 415
	Pennywell and Ford estates, West Sunderland	John Tulip, General Manager	0191 534 1338
	Riccall, 5 miles from Selby and 10 miles from York	Alison Seabrooke, Development Director	01757 248 849
	Thornton Lodge, inner Huddersfield	Rashad Bokhari, Development Worker	01484 544 877
	Sneiton/St. Anns area of Nottingham	Lisa Robinson, WEA Consultant	07976 754 431
	Bentilee, Berryhill and Eaton Park areas to east of Stoke-on-Trent	Neighbourhood Safety Project Manager	01782 766 942

Table A2: Brief descriptions of case study NLCs

NLC Title	Type of community
Active Age Centre	Older people in 4 wards in North Liverpool
Birchwood Access and Training Centre	Large estate, mixed housing
Downham Market and District Learning Community	Medium sized, but growing town and adjacent villages (some both rural and remote)
East Leeds Family Learning Centre	Large urban estate
EBDC	Ethnic minority communities in the boroughs of Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham and Southwark
Flegg NLC	Rural village, with other villages in catchment area
Hatchford CARE	Estate built in 1960s to re house residents from run down inner Birmingham – now with its own problems
Kickstart Youth Inclusion Project	Young people, mainly from ethnic minority backgrounds, who have been identified as being at risk of offending
Lincoln College	Eastern City, with largely rural catchment area
Manor and Castle Development Trust	Urban estates
Monteney Community Workshop	Large urban estate
Pennywell NLC and Ford NLC	Urban estates
Regen Centre, Riccall	Village, with other villages in catchment area. Selby Coalfield is nearby (scheduled for closure)
Thornton Lodge NLC	Inner urban area with high concentration of South Asian people, particularly of Pakistani origin
Greenway Centre, The Chase, Hill Learning Centre	Urban Estates
Villages Initiative	Urban estates

	Type of base/location	Comment
	A purpose built Active Age Centre	Particular focus on people aged 50 and over. Outreach taster sessions in community locations. Innovative work on social inclusion issues.
	Self contained centre with prominent position in main shopping area	Committed to developing its own people. Track record in awareness raising and marketing.
	Based from the business technology centre in the 6th Form block of high school	A useful large scale survey. Tested an approach working with parish councils.
	Substantial premises – a former secondary school	Wide range of learning opportunities delivered free to local residents. Partnerships with both public and private sector. Piloted a job guarantee programme with Tesco. Positive relationships with other local providers.
	Based from offices in south London. EBDC does not itself host an NLC	Particular focus on black and minority ethnic communities. A strategy of working with other local delivery organisations to facilitate NLC development.
	Secondary school (shared use with school)	Active involvement of parents and local people. Ran taster courses to assess demand.
	Adapted premises in primary school (shared use with UK online centre)	Setting up adult learning provision from scratch. Worked hard on local ownership.
	Main premises on site of local school but much work with young people takes place in outreach settings, including community halls, youth clubs, cafes, parks and street corners	Emphasis on ‘low-profile’ education that does not require people to stop what they are doing and join a class. Introducing accreditation for learning that takes place through existing project activities
	Several outreach centres in local communities, schools and services bases	Extensive menu. Good example of mainstream institution working effectively with local communities.
	The MCDT is a community based regeneration organisation.	The MCDT was the prime source for early work on the Social Inclusion Strategy Template.
	Former campus of Sheffield College. Moving to purpose built premises	An early pioneer in the NLC movement. Genuinely community owned (local people as Trustees). Special interest in multi-media especially printing.
	Pennywell NLC is on PCB’s premises (including training centre) on the Pennywell estate. Ford NLC is in a converted house on the Ford estate	High degree of ownership by residents – they determine programme for NLCs. Friendly and informal ethos.
	Purpose built village community centre	Fascinating example of initiative by local people. Significant capital project.
	Shop-front centre in the heart of the local community	Excellent links with local community groups. Informal ethos. Bilingual approach. Commitment to transferring ownership to the community.
	The Greenway Centre and the Chase are both community centres, The Hill Learning Centre is based jointly in the Sycamore Millennium Centre and the adjacent Afro Caribbean National Arts Centre	Good interaction with local communities. Rich diversity of learners (age, ethnicity). Engaging members of local communities as tutors.
	Based out of an SRB project office on the Bentilee Estate	Learning is just one component in larger integrated strategy for community regeneration. Focus on ‘mainstreaming’ (i.e. as opposed to project being a bolt on)

Appendix B

Structure of the *Social Inclusion Strategy* Template

Foreword and General Guidance

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 Definition of social inclusion
- 1.2 Why strategy is needed
- 1.3 Purpose of strategy
- 1.4 Target readership
- 1.5 Structure

2. How Prepared

- 2.1 Process followed
- 2.2 Membership of Working and Reference Groups
- 2.3 Learning points

3. The Community

- 3.1 Brief profile of the area
- 3.2 Brief profile of the population
- 3.3 Labour market data
- 3.4 Indicators of deprivation
- 3.5 Other contextual data

4. Barriers and Issues

- 4.1 to 4.9 (or whatever)

Key barriers and issues, as identified and grouped by Working Group, and endorsed by Reference Group

5. Barriers and Solutions

- 5.1 General framework
- 5.2 Specific actions, cross-referenced to barriers/issues identified in previous section.

Note: This summary shows the *structure only* of the template. The full version of the template includes suggestions for material to include in each section and some examples from *Social Inclusion Strategies* prepared by NLCs in the pilot phase. See back cover for ordering details, quote ref: NLCTEMPLATE01.

Appendix C

Structure of the *Community Learning Profile* Template

Foreword and General Guidance

1. The Local Area

- 1.1 Brief profile of the area
- 1.2 Brief profile of the population
- 1.3 Labour market data
- 1.4 Indicators of deprivation
- 1.5 Other contextual data

2. Current Providers and Partnerships/Networks

- 2.1 Partnerships and networks active in the area
- 2.2 Providers of learning opportunities based *in* the area
- 2.3 Providers of learning opportunities based *outside* the area, but with one or more *outreach bases* within the area
- 2.4 Providers of *information, advice and guidance* services based in the area
- 2.5 Support facilities for learners in the area
- 2.6 Forums for consulting with the local community
- 2.7 Strengths, weaknesses and gaps in current provision

3. Current and Potential Learners

- 3.1 Current *learners* segmented in different ways
- 3.2 Current *learning provision* segmented in different ways
- 3.3 Evidence of unmet demand

4. Barriers and Constraints

- 4.1 Attitudinal barriers
- 4.2 Financial constraints
- 4.3 Family constraints
- 4.4 Access and transport constraints
- 4.5 Other barriers and constraints

Note: This summary shows the *structure only* of the template. The full version of the template includes suggestions for material to include in each section and some examples from *Community Learning Profiles* prepared by NLCs in the pilot phase. See back cover for ordering details, quote ref: NLCTEMPLATE02.

Appendix D

Structure of the *Development Plan* Template

Foreword and General Guidance

1. Summary

- 1.1 What is planned
- 1.2 Why it is needed
- 1.3 Who is driving the process
- 1.4 How it will be delivered

2. Context and Rationale

- 2.1 Policy context – national, regional and local
- 2.2 Catchment area for NLC
- 2.3 Community profile
- 2.4 Baseline position ref. learning
- 2.5 Rationale for NLC

3. Vision and Objectives

- 3.1 Principles underpinning NLC design and planning
- 3.2 A week in the life of the NLC in 2005
- 3.3 Strategic objectives – years 1 and 2

4. Community Ownership

- 4.1 Community engagement in design and planning
- 4.2 Community involvement in implementation and delivery

5. Legal Entity and Structures

- 5.1 Legal entity
- 5.2 Management board
- 5.3 Management and delivery structure
- 5.4 Consultative forums

6. Users/Members/Clients

- 6.1 Potential users (*individuals*) – needs, target numbers
- 6.2 Potential users (*local groups*) – needs, target numbers
- 6.3 Potential users (*other providers*) – needs, target numbers
- 6.4 *Priority* client groups – needs, target numbers

7. Programme for Centre Activities

- 7.1 Programme planning
- 7.2 Content of menu

8. Centre Workers

- 8.1 Number of centre workers
- 8.2 Profile of workers
- 8.3 Appointment process
- 8.4 Training and development

9. Premises, Plant and Equipment (Including ICT)

- 9.1 Premises
- 9.2 Adaptations required
- 9.3 ICT
- 9.4 Other equipment

10. Marketing and Awareness Raising

- 10.1 Market research
- 10.2 Target groups
- 10.3 Key messages
- 10.4 Media/channels

11. Access and Equality

- 11.1 Learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- 11.2 Language
- 11.3 Childcare
- 11.4 Hours
- 11.5 Inclusivity

12. Impact Assessment

- 12.1 Outcomes desired
- 12.2 Measurement/assessment
- 12.3 Data sources
- 12.4 Dissemination

13. Finance

- 13.1 Set-up costs
- 13.2 Working capital
- 13.3 Revenue subsidies
- 13.4 Funding sources
- 13.5 Financial projections

14. Project Schedule

- 14.1 Work plan
- 14.2 Dependencies
- 14.3 Contingencies

Note: This summary shows the *structure only* of the template. The full version of the template includes suggestions for material to include in each section and some examples from *Development Plans* prepared by NLCs in the pilot phase. See back cover for ordering details, quote ref: NLCTEMPLATE03.

Appendix E

Structure of the *Evaluation Strategy* Template

Table E1: Outline structure for an *Evaluation Strategy*

Section	Coverage
1. Context and rationale	Brief description of rationale for the project and summary of relevant contextual factors
2. Objectives	Clear statement of objectives defined for the project, including both national and local objectives, as relevant
3. Outcomes and measures	Clear statement of outcomes to be assessed for each objective, and measures to be used
4. Data gathering	Using existing data Commissioning new data Data gathering techniques
5. Measuring added value	How progress that <i>would have been achieved in any case</i> (i.e. even without the project) is to be measured and taken into account
6. Analysis	Approach to data analysis
7. Reporting	Schedule of outputs to be produced and structure of reports (see also the table on next page)
8. Dissemination	Process for feeding back the outcomes and learning points to all relevant parties
9. Resources	Assessment of resources required (staff time, professional fees and expenses, venue costs for events etc.)
10. Key contacts	List of those principally involved, together with telephone and fax numbers and e-mail addresses

Note: This table shows the *structure only* of the template. The full version of the template includes guidance on how to carry out an evaluation and some examples from *Evaluation Strategies* prepared by NLCs in the pilot phase. The next page illustrates a possible outline structure for an evaluation report. This also is discussed in more detail in the *Evaluation Strategy* template. See back cover for ordering details, quote ref: NLCTEMPLATE04.

Table E2: Outline structure for evaluation report

Section	Heading	Content
1	Background and purpose	Rationale for and context of project Terms of reference for evaluation
2	Approach	Methodology used Explanation of terminology adopted
3	Key findings	Headline conclusions
4	Impact by objective	Discussion of progress against each objective, using both quantitative and qualitative data
5	Overall impact	Added value, taking into account other factors that will have had an impact on outcomes achieved
6	Value for money	Analysis of costs and benefits
7	Learning points	Examples of good practice and errors to avoid
8	Conclusions and recommendations	Including recommendations for other key players
Appendices		Research instruments Supporting data

Appendix F

Sources of Further Information

Publications

The Learning and Skills Council Remit Letter from the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (formerly Employment)

Secretary of State's vision for the Learning and Skills Council, its statutory framework and the priorities for its first Corporate Plan.

Copies from:

Mike Morley
DfES
W3A
Moorfoot
Sheffield S1 4PQ

Or by e-mail to Post-16.feedback@dfes.gov.uk, or by visiting the DfES's website at www.dfes.gov.uk/post16

Learning and Skills Council Corporate Plan

Document on www.lsc.gov.uk

Copies from:

PO Box 5050
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham
NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 6022260
Fax: 0845 6033360
E-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Solutions

Report of the Policy Action Team (PAT) on Skills.

Copies (quote reference PAT2) from:

DfES Publications
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham
NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 6022260

Also on www.lifelonglearning.dfes.gov.uk

A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan (Social Exclusion Unit, Jan 2001)

Copies at www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu, or by contacting the Social Exclusion Unit

Tel: 020 7944 8383

e-mail: neighbourhoodrenewal@odpm.gov.uk

National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Policy Action Team Audit

(Social Exclusion Unit, Jan 2001). Tracking progress.

Copies from the Social Exclusion Unit as above.

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) (odpm): NRU Learning and Development document on www.renewal.net

Skills for Life: The National Strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills

Document on www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/news/

Copies from:

DfES Publications

Sherwood Park

Annesley

Nottingham

NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 6022260

Mutual Advantage Report: Working with Voluntary and Community Organisations on Learning and Skills

A limited number of copies of the Part 1 Report and Part 2 Case Studies and Resources are available from:

EDuce ltd

St John's Innovation Centre

Cowley Road

Cambridge

CB4 0WS

Tel: 01223 421685

Fax: 01223 420844

Copies can also be viewed and downloaded on www.dfes.gov.uk/led/

Funding Community Groups

A consultation document. Document on www.homeoffice.gov.uk under Volunteering. Further copies by calling 020 72178400, or by e-mailing: public_enquiry.acu@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Empowering the Learning Community

(Education & Libraries Task Group March 2000) Ways in which co-operation between the education and public library sectors can be stimulated and improved to support lifelong learning.

Copies from:
Library & Information Commission
19-29 Woburn Place
London
WC1H 0LU

Tel: 0207 273 8700
Fax: 0207 273 8701
E-mail: lib@lic.gov.uk
Web: www.lic.gov.uk

Towns, Cities and Regions in the Learning Age: A Survey of Learning Communities (2000) LCN with DfES and Local Government Association

Current state of learning communities in the UK.

Copies from
IDeA Publication Sales
Layden House
76-78 Turnmill St
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7296 6600

LGA Code: ED045, ISBN 184049 198 1

Moving on: the Learning and Skills Council and the voluntary and community sector. Final report and recommendations

Main issues and recommendations from nine regional seminars for the voluntary and community sector on the Learning and Skills Council.

Copies from WEA or NIACE.

Also on the NIACE website: www.niace.org.uk

Extended Schools Guidance

Guidance for schools who want to provide community services and facilities on their premises.

Document on www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools

Copies from DfES publications quoting ref. no. EXSG

Lifelong Learning News

Free quarterly publication covering developments across the whole field of lifelong learning, aimed at practitioners in the field.

Copies from:

Dan Walton
DfES
Room E8
Moorfoot
Sheffield
S1 4PQ

Telephone: 0114 259 5553

e-mail: dan.walton@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Also on www.lifelonglearning.dfes.gov.uk

Useful Web Sites

Department for Education & Skills (DfES) – formerly Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)

DfES home page - www.dfes.gov.uk

Lifelong Learning home page - www.lifelonglearning.dfes.gov.uk

Learning Partnerships home page - www.lifelonglearning.dfes.gov.uk/lp/

Neighbourhood Learning in Disadvantaged Communities – www.skills.org.uk

Learning City Network

www.LC-Network.com

National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)

www.niace.org.uk

Basic Skills Agency

www.basic-skills.co.uk

Learning and Skills Council

www.lsc.gov.uk

National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/index/nationalstrategy.htm

Home Office Active Communities Unit (ACU)

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/acu/acu.htm

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

www.regeneration.odpm.gov.uk/neighbourhood/

Local Strategic Partnerships

www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/lsp/guidance/

Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA)

www.lsagency.org.uk

Government Offices

<http://www.go-nw.gov.uk/>

<http://www.go-ne.gov.uk/>

<http://www.go-london.gov.uk/>

<http://www.go-wm.gov.uk/>

<http://www.go-em.gov.uk/>

<http://www.go-east.gov.uk/>

<http://www.goyh.gov.uk/>

<http://www.gosw.gov.uk/>

<http://www.go-se.gov.uk/>

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PO Box 5050
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham
NG15 0DJ

Tel: **0845 60 222 60**
Fax: **0845 60 333 60**
Text phone: **0845 60 555 60**
Email: **dfes@prolog.uk.com**

For further copies of this document please quote ref: NLCPRACGUIDE
For copies of the templates please quote ref: NLCTEMPLATE01-04

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