

Continuing engagement of community learning and development in Moray Council

10 June 2019

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In April 2018, HM Inspectors published a report on community learning and development (CLD) in Moray Council and in the Buckie area and to a lesser extent Portknockie, Cullen, Findochty and Portgordon. A further monitoring visit was carried out in October 2018. This report is based on a continuing engagement which was carried out in March 2019. During this visit we met with a range of staff, volunteers and partners. We focused on the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out how well partners across the authority are now working together to support learners and communities to improve life chances.

1. How good is the strategic leadership of community learning and development?

Moray Council's CLD governance and planning for change is starting to improve. Senior leaders including the Chief Executive of the council are now clearer about the role of CLD and its contribution to key priorities. Governance functions remain devolved by the Community Planning Partnership to the CLD Strategic Partnership (CLDSP). The investment in developing the capacity of the CLDSP is evident in the extended membership and attendance. A series of development sessions focusing on improvement is leading to a wider understanding of the CLD offer and partners contributions. Strategic partners are now more aware of the areas for improvement and recognise their role within this. However, the CLDSP would benefit from wider representation from formal education. Relationships across CLD partners are also improving and partnership members are much clearer about their role, remit and next steps. However, the purpose and role of the various locality groups is not yet clear. More work is required to ensure that the contribution of young people to planning processes is valued and meaningful. The CLD Plan for Moray (2018-21) is now in place. However, reporting on progress is not yet established or robust. More work is required to develop shared outcomes and performance measures and this should help improve accountability and the management of risk.

2. How good is the learning and development in this community?

CLD work across the Buckie area remains good overall. A few groups continue to develop and expand their offer to local people. Young people in Buckie High School continue to gain important life skills through a range of youth work programmes. Increasing numbers are gaining awards although there is scope to better track and monitor this. High numbers of young people attend the primary transition programme and the Steps to Work group are improving skills and confidence. Young people facing challenges enjoy good support from the Activity Agreement programme. Several are gaining awards as a result. The Essential Skills team report against outcomes and targets and these are mostly being achieved. A few adult learners are progressing to volunteering as a result of improved confidence and acquisition of new skills. Whilst there are some improvements in terms of tracking and monitoring, there is more to do. Although some positive trends are emerging, partners in Buckie are not yet sharing their collective data and reporting against key priorities.

Community groups across Buckie continue to thrive. Several are tackling social isolation and improving health and wellbeing. Those seeking to secure community asset transfer are well supported by Community Support Unit (CSU) staff. Volunteers are now improving local community facilities such as the Cullen Men's Shed. The Lampie Hoose, Buckie Community

Theatre and the Well Park Road group all engage well with their local community and enhance the volunteering offer. Overall, the coordination of CLD at a local level requires clarification. As yet, there is no clear sense of direction or shared ownership. The role of local planning groups are not sufficiently clear and partners are not always aware of their roles. Similarly, links between the CSU, the Engagement Team and Essential Skills could be clearer.

3. Does the Moray Council have a clear sense of direction?

There is not yet a clear sense of direction across CLD in Moray. Moray Council continues to experience a period of significant change and this is negatively impacting on the CLD offer. Partners are making some progress in a few of the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection. However, further work is required both at strategic and local level.

4. What happens next?

We will discuss the most appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact with the authority to monitor progress. We will revisit the local authority to undertake a further inspection visit to evaluate progress within one year the publication of this report.

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