

# THE LEARNING COMMUNITY: Dursley and Cam Learning Health Check Report

## SUMMARY

### Background

The Learning Community (TLC) in Cam and Dursley is part of the Government's Testbed Learning Community initiative which has emerged from the National Skills Strategy. TLC is about using learning and skills development to create a sustainable and socially cohesive community in which individuals are connected and involved in learning. The model is currently being developed by a partnership between GLI I Community Project, Gloucestershire Learning Partnership and Government Office for the South West, there are 3 phases of the project – Research and Preparation, Implementation, Evaluation.

Part of Phase I of the Learning Community initiative involved:

- undertaking a **Learning Health Check** by consulting local residents including young people and employers
- **Mapping** existing local learning provision and venues for learning, including organisations in the 'travel to learn' area

This report is a summary of the survey and mapping process which aims to identify gaps in provision and develop a Learning Plan, in consultation with partner agencies..

### The Survey

Through working in partnership with Rednock School and Renishaw we were able to survey a large number of local people, young people and employees. We also surveyed employers both face to face and through postal surveys.

We achieved a **24%** response rate for return of the Employer Survey, an **8%** return rate for the Individual Survey and a **27%** response rate for the Young People's Survey. The survey covered areas such as:

- *for employers* : recruitment of staff, skills requirements of employers, training needs of staff, skills gaps in employees/new recruits and training need of employers themselves.
- *for individuals* : feelings about work, views on training and learning and barriers to learning
- *for young people*: methods of learning, after school activities and future aspirations
- *skills audit*:: for individuals and young people - with data on areas of interest, experience, keenness to learn and train

We received 44 responses for the Mapping exercise with details of provision, and 8 responses with details of venues. These have been entered onto the Can Do Exchange web site, an online directory of provision in the area

**This report aims to assist the future planning of local educational opportunities, the key points and recommendations from this report are presented in the Learning Plan Part I. Appendices to this Report are presented in a separate document. The 3 Learning Health Check Documents are:**

- 1. The Learning Plan – Part I**
- 2. The Learning Health Check Report**
- 3. The Learning Health Check Appendices**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A learning community:

- **Is somewhere where learning is used as a way of promoting social cohesion, regeneration and economic development - strengthening economic prosperity and cohesion**
- **Promotes equality and social inclusion**
- **Protects and improves the environment towards local and global sustainability**
- **Contributes to local empowerment**

In May 2004 Cam and Dursley were selected to be one of 28 **Testbed Learning Community (TLC)** pilots throughout England. Two areas of the work of the pilot are included in this report: findings from the mapping of learning provision and learning venues in the area, and the Learning Health Check - a consultation with local residents including young people and employers.

This report will

- **inform** the ongoing development of a Learning Community **Learning Plan**
- **make recommendations** to other stakeholders involved in learning
- **provide valuable material** to help stakeholders think about their own provision in relation to local needs

The project is working with local people and local business communities to identify their needs and the learning needs of their employees. The Learning Community also aims to connect and support the economic priorities and goals of strategic key agencies and partnerships working in the area, such as the SW Regional Development Agency - FRESA, the National Skills Strategy, Vale Vision's Community Strategy, Stroud District Council, and the Local Strategic Partnership.

“sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents their children and other service users contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.”

Egan Review (2004).

## 1.1 SCENE SETTING

### Background

Testbed Learning Communities are an initiative launched in the Government's Skills Strategy White Paper. The White Paper talks about using learning and skills development to create a sustainable and socially cohesive community in which individuals are connected and involved in learning. The model is currently being developed by a partnership between GLI I Community Project, Gloucestershire Learning Partnership and Government Office for the South West.

**The aim is to create an ambitious community where organisations and people provide mutual support to help each other learn and stay motivated to reach level 2 qualifications, develop skills for life and raise the local employment skills base. There will be a focus on increasing the capacity of communities to develop their collective base of skills and learning as learning communities and to build community aspirations to encourage people to take ownership of their own learning and development.**

The project is currently managed by a management group with representatives from key organisations and agencies including the LSC, SWRDA, Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud College, Rednock School, Next Step (formerly GO-IG the Information, Advice and Guidance Partnership) and Gloucestershire Probation Service.

We currently have a partnership of 148 organisations on our TLC database. These are stakeholders and delivery partners with an interest in learning within the GLI I postcode area.

Gloucestershire County Council's Adult Continuing Education and Training (ACET) Cotswold Vale Consortium, which has been in existence in the area since 1992, formed the basis for the partnership. The Consortium meets regularly and bids for project funding to widen participation in learning in the Cotswold Vale area (Cam, Dursley, Berkeley and Wotton-Under-Edge).

## 1.2 BASELINE DATA

The Baseline Data collected for this report gives key facts about numbers of local people involved in learning from the main providers of learning in the area.

### 1.2.1 Maiden Information

Maiden provides a database containing a wide range of social, economic and service indicators, obtained from a range of sources such as the 2001 census, Police and Youth Offending Team statistics and Educational data, for each of Gloucestershire's 146 electoral wards. Significant statistics are:

- 20% approx of the population of GLI I with no or low qualifications
- Compared to Gloucestershire's Adult Education and Stroud College learner figures there are a high number of people from Ethnic Minority backgrounds and also a high number of English speakers of other languages.
- 6% self-employed people
- 7% of the population travel to work on foot or bicycle suggesting local employment, however it is important to bear in mind the dates of the statistics and decline of Mawsleys, Bymack and Listers in the area as major employers.
- Disability and ill health is a significant issue for 23% of the population of the area

*Data from MAIDeN for the Cam East, Cam West, Dursley and Coaley and Uley wards is show in Appendix 1, figure 1.1*

### Learning in GLI I

- There are 4 Primary Schools in Cam and Dursley – Cam Woodfields Infants and Junior, Cam Everlands, Cam Hopton and Dursley Primary, and 1 Secondary School Rednock
- All of the schools are involved in community work in some way and Rednock is a particularly active member of the Adult Education Consortium and The Learning Community Partnership
- The main provider of vocational training in the area is Stroud College with their outreach venue - Dursley Education Centre offering a range of OCN and non-accredited courses
- GLI I Community Project also provides a venue for some College courses - specifically Childcare Level 1 and 2 and IT and also offers a wide range of other learning opportunities and services (often with a free crèche included) for GLI I residents, including alternative therapies, after school work with young people, music technology, arts based provision, toddler groups and childcare and a range of WEA courses such as DIY for women, computer training, and training for trainers.
- There are a number of other voluntary and community groups working in the area namely Prema Arts Centre in Uley, offering arts-based courses on a staggered payment basis and Kingshill House offering mainly arts classes as well as providing a venue for some Stroud College courses.

### 1.2.2 Work-based Learning

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) are responsible for planning and funding vocational education and training. The LSC work closely with training providers to fund Work Based Learning opportunities, including Modern Apprenticeships for young people (16-25).

Figures from the Learning and Skills Council show that at end October 2004, there were 76 learners living in GLI I postcode area - 31 aged 16-18 and 45 aged 19 to 25 with 10 Training Providers and 36 Employers delivering work-based learning in GLI I.

**The majority of provision was in the Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing sectors (17 learners) with Construction (15 learners) also a popular choice.**

*Please see Appendix 1, figure 1.2 for a full breakdown of sectors and learners*

### **1.2.3. Gloucestershire Adult Education Service**

The Gloucestershire Adult Education service (Ad Ed, previously ACET) is funded by the Learning and Skills Council and Gloucestershire County Council to provide a range of adult education in the County. Ad Ed works in partnership with colleges, education providers and more than 200 community organisations to make learning opportunities more widely available to adults in the county. Ad Ed supports the County Council's commitment to social inclusion with its key priority to widen participation in adult and community learning (ACL). Ad Ed does not run classes itself but funds other organisations to run them.

Statistics from Ad Ed for the year 2003/2004 show a total of:

- 633 learners from the GL11 postcode area - 118 male, 515 female.
- 6 learners from minority ethnic backgrounds
- 71 learners with learning difficulties

The majority of learners in mainstream provision (33 in each area) were in the areas of English Languages, Communications and Visual and Performing Arts. In targeted provision, which focuses on specific target groups of older learners, unemployed and women returners the majority of learners (137) were in the area of Visual and Performing Arts and Media, 77 learners were in the area of Business Administration, Management and Professional and 70 were in Foundation Programmes.

*A full breakdown is shown in Appendix 1, figure 1.3*

### **1.2.4 Stroud College**

Stroud College is the main provider of post-16 educational opportunities in the GL11 area. The college is situated 10 miles from Dursley in Stroud and offers the usual range of college provision. There is an outreach centre situated in the town, Dursley Education Centre, the Education Centre is currently looking for new premises for September 2005.

For the year 2003/4 the College had a total of 2303 students from the GL11 postcode area. 82 % of these students were aged over 19 years of age, 1.9% were from an ethnic minority background and .3% had a disability. Most students (17%) undertook foundation programmes (skills for life – literacy, numeracy, ESOL and Adults with Learning Difficulties, 14% took ICT and 12% Business Admin, Management and Professional.

40% of students took more than one course with one student taking 21 courses in the year.

Of those that were known, 114 students had a previous level 1 qualification and 111 had a level 2. 1415 students, 61%, actually achieved a qualification.

40 students took a New Clait certificate, 29 a computer basics course and 29 ECDL. Yoga, key skills in Communication level 2 and Application of Number Level 2, ESOL intermediate and NVQ level 2 in Care all had between 16 and 22 students.

*Appendix 1, Section 1.4 shows the College breakdown of learner details*

### **1.2.5 Cam.Com**

Cam.Com, now closed and looking for potential new premises in Dursley, was part of the Stroud.Com internet centre operating from GL11 Community Project in Cam from March 2004 to December 2004. Cam.com was open for 5 hours each Monday and Wednesday at the project with 5 broadband computers available for use.

Cam.Com had 75 users in total with 49 undertaking a Cyberskills introduction to the internet course and 15 doing the Microsoft Office course. A range of OCNs from Entry Level to Level 2 were also offered.

*Please see Appendix 1, figure 1.5 for full details of Cam.Com's Learners*

### **1.2.5 Next Step - Information Advice and Guidance**

Next Step is the new name for GO-IAG, the information, advice and guidance service for adults over the age of 20. Next Step promotes learning opportunities, offers screening for basic skills and ICT and provides guidance from a range of partner organisations in the GLI I area.

As part of the Learning Community, Next Step have set up information access points at GLI I Community Project and Dursley Education Centre including a computer at the Centre with a full range of Next Step adult guidance programmes. An Advisor has been working at GLI I Community Project since November 2004 and up to December 2004 has seen a total of 15 people for Information, Advice and Guidance.

### **1.2.6 Connexions**

Connexions are a modern public service offering careers advice and guidance for all young people aged 13-19, living in England. Approximately 37 young people are currently on the local Connexions database listed as being in the NEET group (not in employment, education or training) with a GLI I postcode. The information from the connexions database is constantly being updated therefore only 21 young people have expressed interest in? areas for work:

- 4 are interested in engineering/mechanics
- 4 in building trades
- 4 in hair and beauty
- 3 in childcare
- 2 in retail/sales
- 1 each in the areas of catering, distribution, animal care and music

### **1.2.7 Learn Direct**

Learn Direct offers a wide range of flexible on-line computer based courses in IT, English, Maths, Business and Management and Languages to individuals and employers through their online centres or from home or work. There is no Learn Direct centre in the GLI I area the nearest online Centre is at Stroud College. From August 2002 to November 2004, 39 individuals with a GLI I postcode enrolled on a Learn Direct course

- 12 were male and 27 female with ages ranging from 25 to 75
- 3 learners undertook a Skills for Life course
- 1 undertook a sales and management course
- 35 learners undertook Information Technology courses
- All but one student (skills for life) completed their courses.

## 2. THE LEARNING HEALTH CHECK: Consulting Local People and Employers

### 2.1 Research Methodology

A focus group consisting of members of the partnership and management group devised questionnaire to collect qualitative and quantitative information from local employers, employees, young people and other members of the community. We were able to use the local knowledge and skills of the focus group to ensure that the questionnaire was relevant as well as discussing who to send the questionnaires to and which other groups we should include in the mapping exercise.

#### Incentives

A £50 cash prize with 2 x £20 and 3 x £10 runner up prizes were offered for the Adult and Young People's survey, an article was published in the local paper to urge people to return their questionnaire or ring to get one (we had one person contact us through this article), a freepost address was set up, although this was later than we had originally hoped and the address was not printed on the questionnaire, parents and young people were asked to return their forms to the school where they were collected.

The questions covered a range of issues including:

- current qualification levels
- issues with training
- what people were interested in learning
- what their perceived barriers to learning were
- how they valued learning and working

The young people's questionnaire included:

- views on school based learning
- out of school activities
- future aspirations

A **Skills Audit** was included as part of the questionnaire. It asked people about their interests and experience as well as if they would like to learn about or teach a wide range of different subjects.

The **Employer questionnaires** looked at recent vacancies, skills required for positions, staff training issues (including management) and ability to recruit the required personnel.

The Employer survey was undertaken in a variety of ways - face to face, hand delivered and posted - while the majority of the Adult and Young People Surveys were sent out through the local secondary school, Learning Champions (local people who are working with TLC to promote learning opportunities in the community) and major employer Renishaw.

## 2.2 Breakdown of Surveys

### 2.2.1 Employers

Total of <b>217</b> Employer surveys sent out. Total of <b>53</b> Employer surveys completed - <b>24%</b> response
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#### Analysis of Information

##### Main Survey

The majority of employers had recruited within the last year and most of those within the last 3 months, however a significant 30% of employers had not recruited for over a year. On average most employers recruited less than 2 members of staff in the year, with most positions in part-time employment and replacing existing staff (65%) rather than new posts.

Vacant posts were in a varied range of occupations, ranging from unskilled retail work, deputy playgroup leader to a skilled mechanic and business development manager. Most of the positions were in the areas of retail and service industries, illustrating the decline in the manufacturing sector in the area and showing the need for further investment in the area.

- **48% of employers had had problems recruiting the right person for the job**
- **65% of those felt the applicants lacked the necessary skills for the job**

**The most important issue for employers when recruiting were the applicants' ICT skills, with Literacy, Numeracy, Communication and specific craft skills as well as experience and presentation all having equal value.**

*Appendix I figure 1.6.6 shows the responses employers gave when asked if there were any specific problems recruiting new staff.*

- **66% felt that lack of suitable skills for the position made it difficult for them to recruit, this indicates a need for targeted work with potential employees to increase the skills base in the area.**
- Employers also commented that they received a restricted range of applicants
- There was a lack of confidence expressed in the local Job Centre who, it was felt, sometimes did not send suitable candidates for the positions on offer
- only 45% of employers answered this question

When asked about particular skills and knowledge gaps applicants had 60% of employers did not answer this question or felt that it was not applicable so only 21 employers in total responded. ICT was just slightly more important at 24% with the other areas of Literacy, Numeracy, Communication and Craft Skills all equal. Please see Appendix I Table 8 for a full breakdown of responses.

Surprisingly, 22 % of employers felt that they would not be recruiting in the future, possibly relating to lack of growth of business or very small number of staff employed.

48% of the 44 employers who answered the question "Do you think you will need a higher skills base in the future?" said that they would need a higher skills base.

**Apart from specific job related skills and qualifications, employers wanted their staff, both new and existing, to have well developed IT skills, be reliable, honest and flexible and have good numeracy, communication, time keeping and customer service/telephone skills.**

Appendix 1, figure 1.6.8 shows that employers' knowledge of training in the local area - relating to the sorts of qualifications and skills they were looking for in their employees - was varied. Only one respondent commented that Business Link was able to provide training.

**The majority of 44% of employers did not know of any training available locally, while only 35% were aware that the local college provided training.**

Most employers who answered the question "If training was available locally, would you encourage your existing employees to become better trained?" said they would encourage their employees to train and 91% felt that providing training benefited their business.

**89% said that staff did not have to pay for training with most training being provided on-site and in the employer's time.**

**This is a very positive finding and we need to ensure that relevant local training opportunities are available for employers to access for themselves and their employees.**

Only 11 employers offered modern apprenticeships and 19 employers said they would consider offering work placements for adults

#### **Requests from Employees regarding training**

- AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians) – Day release with Gloscat
- Sales training
- Dealing with difficult people
- IT
- ICT and Communication
- First Aid Training
- Business studies – HND
- Special Educational Needs

### **Employer training needs**

14 out of 34 employers who answered the question felt that they themselves could benefit from the following areas of learning but the cost and time of training were barriers:

- IT
- Health and Safety
- Business studies
- Marketing
- NVQ4 – Old Fashioned Barber Skills, Nails and Beauty
- Health and safety in the workplace
- Spreadsheets – Excel
- Management Skills
- Childcare and Education

### **Barriers to learning**

**When asked about barriers to learning for employees and local people, employers felt that childcare and travel were the main issues with time of training a major consideration and the lack of local affordable training on offer.**

### **Other comments from employers:**

- “The cost of training for the business in terms of time and money needs to be considered”
- “Better basic skills should be taught at secondary school (English, Maths, handwriting, spelling etc)”
- “An internet search for training in the local area came up with no results”
- “Training needs to be flexible and cost is a major consideration as is the quality of training.”
- “There is a big problem with rules and regulations eg redundancy, interviewing etc”
- “Notice needs to be taken of employer views”
- “Advice from other employers was to not recruit local people as anyone of any worth would already be employed in Bristol/Gloucester and those left were unemployable!”
- “For small employers there is an issue with working hours – the director has to do all the jobs when people on holiday or sick.”
- “The old Tech college was good“
- “Childcare for employees' children is an issue as is travelling to certain areas for specific courses. The cost of courses is also an issue for us as employers as we are a registered charity”

**38 individual employers said they would like to be kept informed about The Learning Community and Learning Opportunities available for themselves and their staff.**

## Renishaw

Renishaw is a major employer in the manufacturing sector of people from the GL11 area, It employs 186 people from the GL11 area, 173 of these being full-time and 13 part-time. Based on a vacancy list of 89 positions, the skills levels of the positions were broken down as follows:

Unskilled	13%
Semi Skilled	27%
Skilled	60%

Renishaw gets a very high response to job advertisements and is considered by the local community a good employer to work for. The company processes approximately 500 speculative CVs each month.

Employees' training is discussed at their annual appraisals where skill deficiencies are identified and training agreed. Where required, Renishaw offers training in all categories of employment paid for by the company and carried out in company time. Training is provided by a wide range of about 50 training organisations, from Universities to establishments offering basic skills training. This includes on-site training.

It was felt that employees from the unskilled and semi-skilled sector did not buy into the "Learning for Life" philosophy, comments included:

"People generally train to get a certain position. Once in that position and their life becomes comfortable, stable and relatively secure, they do not see the need to train any further unless requested to do so."

"More and more companies are only training their employees to do the job they are employed to do. This attitude has evolved from the need for companies to be leaner in order to be competitive in their particular market place. Having an individual away from their bench or workstation costs the company a lot more than just the cost of the course - it could also be thousands of pounds in lost production."

## 2.2.2 Individual Residents Survey distribution

Total of **1701** Adult surveys sent out  
Total of **138** Adult surveys completed  
**8%** response

### Analysis of Information

- Most people who responded to the survey were working - 52 part-time, 53 full-time
- 30 people were unemployed with 66% of those being unemployed for over 6 months (these figures included people not working and those on the sick)
- The age range reflected this with 67% of respondents aged between 36-59, 15% between 26-35, 12% over 60 and only 6% between the ages of 18-25

### Work

Most people work and live locally, *Appendix 1 figure 1.7.1 below illustrates where people work in relation to where they live* 67% of those who answered the question “How would you classify your work?” (80% of the total) classified their work as skilled with only 14% feeling they worked in unskilled position.

A positive 86% of those respondents felt that they enjoyed their work, particularly the social aspect of working (32%) and found it challenging and stimulating however 36% said they needed the money and comments included “I would be unlikely to find anything else as well paid”.

### Learning

- Most people who completed the survey had undertaken some kind of learning at some point after leaving school, with 82% of people saying it had made a difference to their lives
- 23 people had not undertaken any learning at all
- 96 people said they would consider training now

The sorts of learning options taken by people ranged from work specific NVQs up to Level 4, teacher and tutor training, basic IT courses, leisure courses in languages, OCNs, professional qualifications, degrees, masters and PhDs.

### Why learn?

Learning for fun was top of the list with 30% of respondents identifying this option, contrasting with 26% who wanted to undertake training in order to do their job better.

**20% ticked the Skills for life Box “Something which would help me personally (spelling, maths, computers etc)”** confirming the MAIDeN figures of approximately 10% of the population of Cam and Dursley having low levels of Literacy and Numeracy.

**A total of 24% of respondents wanted help to either get a job or get a different job.**

*Appendix 1, figure 1.7.3 illustrates the responses in full.*

## Barriers to training

For the 33 respondents who said they would **not** consider training at the present time, over half felt that time was a major barrier, with cost was the next consideration. These responses confirm what employers had felt were the main barriers for their employees accessing training. Written comments on this question said that learning venues were too far away when considering the family (possibly relating to Higher Education) and that time with family was a major consideration. *Appendix 1, figure 1.7.4 illustrates the responses to this question.*

It is interesting to note the new Spring Term 2005 free classes at the Dursley Education Centre are all very well attended.

## Interests

Appendix 1, figure 1.7.5 illustrates the areas of training respondents were interested in, comments also included TEFL Training, working with animals and Health and Safety Training. The majority of respondents (16%) were interested in computer skills- word processing, spreadsheets, internet, database and DTP; artistic skills- design, painting and drawing, flower arranging, crafts and card making came next with recognised qualifications- NVQs, OCNs Level 1-,) and languages- Spanish, Italian, Greek, Portuguese, English and Polish high on the agenda

## Community Skills Audit

The Skills Audit asked both young people and adults to tick boxes to indicate if they were

- interested in
- keen to learn about *or*
- experienced and keen to train in particular subject areas.

The main headings were:

- 'Muscle Stuff' – building, carpentry, plumbing etc
- Young People – working with children, young people, those with behavioural difficulties
- DIY – painting, decorating etc
- Sports – playing, refereeing
- Transport – driving, mechanics
- Being Creative – Arts, music, dance, drama etc
- Administration – accounts, email, computing etc
- Knowledge/Experience – disability matters, environmental concerns etc

**This information will help us all determine what people are interested in outside of their working life and what sorts of things will engage them into learning. It will also give us a databank of people who are interested in training others.**

Interestingly, **environmental matters** and **working with young people** score high on the interest areas with environmental matters again being something 13 people were keen to learn about.

**Word Processing, computing and e-mails were noted as the skills most people wanted to learn**, this was especially encouraging as these were also the skills employers wanted from employees. *A full breakdown of the results is included in Appendix 1, figure 1.7.6*

There was a definite correlation between what employers wanted from their employees and what our survey respondents were Keen to Learn - particularly **ICT skills**. There was also a lot of interest in **working with young people, music & craft/art based activities**, and particularly interesting were results for **Environmental Matters**, 2nd highest in the interest and 5th highest in Keen to learn.

## 2:2:3 Young People Survey Distribution

Total of **1400** Young People surveys sent out  
Total of **386** Young People surveys completed – **27.5%** response

### Analysis of Information

Surveys were sent out to Rednock School pupils year 7 to year 13. Responses were broken down into age groups as follows:

Age	Year	No. Respondents	% of Total
11-13	7-8	105	<b>27%</b>
14-16	9-10	117	<b>30%</b>
16-19	11-13	95	<b>25%</b>
16-19	Not at school	10	<b>2%</b>

### Young People's feelings about learning

An overwhelming 87% of young people said that they enjoyed learning and the majority felt that practical activities and using a computer were the best methods of learning for them. 84% felt that what they were learning was relevant to them.

*Appendix 1, figure 1.8.1 illustrates the answers given when asked "which method is best for you to learn?"*

Comments from young people about the sort of learning they enjoyed backed up the figures. They said they preferred group learning, practical, creative, active visual activities and relevant learning opportunities which related to areas they saw themselves in both in working and life situations.

- Self learning, games for learning and groups discussions and debates as well as learning through a variety of media including videos, computers and the internet were also mentioned frequently.
- Physical work, being outdoors (even for more conventional subjects) and trips and visits were also important to young people to help them learn.
- Manufacturing and Technology were quoted as areas of interest for some young people.
- Teachers needed to be able to respect and communicate well with young people and "take a joke"

**Subjects young people currently enjoy included art and drama (mentioned the most), physical education, French, History, Maths, English and Technology.**

### Preferred methods of learning

- “You can learn new skills and now in year 10 you get respected more and they treat you as adults”
- “It has to be bright and colourful with pictures, I find this easier to learn”
- “Yes- when you actually do stuff instead of just sitting there and copying things off the board”
- “Learning new skills for later life”
- “Learning where you can choose what you want to do”
- “Enjoyable topics studied for enjoyment rather than exams”
- “Because it will help me to get a job”
- “I enjoy learning interesting facts about things that will occur in everyday life and are interesting”
- “Drama and other things where you actually do stuff yourself”
- “Keeps my mind working in a good way”
- “Activities where you can actually see what happens”
- “Fun learning that I can see will help me”
- “PE as it’s a break from the others”
- “Enjoy class work fun things help to learn more”
- “I enjoy learning when I can get up and have an actual part in the lesson like doing things individually”
- “Historical and controversial facts”
- “Learning languages”
- “Learning that’s tailored to my interests”
- “Learning up to date subjects like business and economics”
- “New skills in different subjects”
- “I enjoy all learning because I know it will help me in the future”
- “doing practicals help me concentrate”
- “I need qualifications to get a job”
- “New things”

Very few - 13% -didn't enjoy learning. Those who didn't, when asked why, commented:

- “No because I get in a mood and I don't get on with my work”
- “Too hard”
- “Boring and never do anything fun and exciting”

### After-School Activities

- The majority of young people asked did after-school activities.
- Sports comprised the main after-school activity young people were involved, with Orchestra and Art groups being second favourites.
- Science club was mentioned as was media club, horse riding, skateboarding, Warhammer and dance.
- Socialising was a main reason for attending after-school activities

For those who didn't engage in after-school activities reasons given were bullying, tiredness, not much free time, have to work after school, too much homework, other commitments and can't be bothered, *Appendix 1, figure 1.8.2 gives a breakdown of the students reasons for not participating in after school activities..*

### **Activities requested**

Appendix 1, figure 1.8.3 illustrates the responses young people gave when asked if there were any other activities they would like.

Written requests included:

- dance and music
- drama
- boxing
- sports
- exam club (to help people learn for exams)
- singing
- sculpture
- more affordable activities
- horse riding
- Japanese
- mountain biking
- public speaking
- creative arts activities
- 3D artwork
- Egyptology
- climatology
- guitar
- 3D computer animation

### **Interests outside of School**

Young People showed that they had a wide and varied range of interests outside school with the most popular being:

Singing, dancing, horse riding, skating, surfing, computer games, sports, socialising with friends, travel, reading, computer chat rooms, hunting and outdoor pastimes and mixing music.

Other popular activities were:

- Surfing
- Motorbikes
- Dinosaurs and space
- Skating
- Geology
- Bmxing
- Mixing on decks x 3
- Violin and reading
- Horse riding x4 and friends
- Snowboarding and mountain biking
- Table tennis model kit building
- Foreign travel
- Dursley operatic /drama and piano
- Sailing and windsurf
- Hunting
- Outdoor activities

When asked what subjects they would like available at school there was no shortage of ideas,.

*A full breakdown of responses is included in Appendix 1, figure 1.8.4*

There was also requests for a range of leisure type activities such as paintballing, skateboarding, rock climbing/abseiling, motocross, horse riding, food tasting and pub games like snooker

### Is learning boring?

Most young people felt that learning was only boring sometimes. In fact only a very small minority felt it was definitely boring and that depended on the teacher and the relevance of the subject, also sitting and writing out of a book and not enough group work made the lesson boring.

#### Comments:

- “No – it will help me get a good job”
- “No - I choose subjects that I'm interested in”
- “No - because its relevant and will be useful in the future”
- “Most teachers try to make lessons interesting”
- “There is so much to learn. Some is boring but most is very fun”
- “No – we do different things every lesson”
- “No – keen to learn”
- “No – my teachers make learning interesting”
- “No –I try to get involved so less boring”
- “No - I like being challenged and stimulated”
- “No – because I want to make the most of my life”
- “No – because I'm learning with my friends”

“Sometimes, depending on the subject”

“Sometimes learning and writing out of a book is boring”

“Sometimes – lots of writing and listening, not enough group and practical”

**When asked how learning could be made more interesting young people again asked for more practical work and relevant lessons to the type of work they may get as well in more say in how they learn.**

*Appendix I, figure 1.8.5 gives the breakdown of responses young people gave to this question and figure 1.8.6 shows the responses to the question “how can learning be made more interesting?”*

### How do you see your future?

When asked where they saw themselves in 5 year's time, it was positive to see that young people had high aspirations with the majority of respondents seeing themselves at university or working in a well-paid job.

The full results of the question are set out in Appendix I, figure 1.8.7

#### Comments to this questions included:

- “Theatre of arts school”
- “Police officer”
- “Playing pro rugby for Gloucester RFC”
- “Backpacking - if not a wood chippy”
- “Drama school - become an actor”
- “Enjoying my job and having fun”
- “Doing an apprenticeship”
- “Countryside management”
- “RAF”
- “Earning a good income”
- “Fashion designer”
- “Heating engineer”
- “A sailing instructor”
- “Well paid job!”
- “Running my own business”
- “Engineer in army”
- “Army”
- “On the farm”
- “Going to own my own race yard and be a jockey”

### **General Comments from Young People about Learning and School**

“Some teachers favour people”, “To offer a better variety of technology things for everyone”

“I hope to get a good job, I know that won't happen as soon as I leave school but it should come along soon”

“I think coursework is piled on at the start of yr 10 and should be introduced slowly”

“It needs to be more fun”

“More trips”, “Lessons outside might make it more interesting”

“Only teach us the lessons we need to get the job we want”

“I feel like falling asleep because we're in the classroom all the time”

“I think each pupil should be given a big list of careers there are in the world saying what qualifications are needed for each”

“Is homework really a necessity?”

“Singer”

“I would like to know which subjects you need to get certain job”

“I think teachers shouldn't act like they are higher than you and exercise their power”

“Too much homework and revision”

### **Skills Audit Information**

Young people were mostly interested in practical subjects, **decorating and painting** and media, **video and film**, however **working with young people, sports, internet and car driving** also all had high scores. The highest Keen to Learn score was for craft based activity, **Pottery** with Video/Film, **Music, Painting and drawing** as well as **working with young people** scoring highly.

*Appendix 1, figure 1.8.8 gives a breakdown of the areas most young people were interested in and Appendix 1, figure 1.8.9 the same information but sorted by areas people were Keen to Learn in.*

## 2.3 MAPPING LEARNING PROVISION

### 2.3.1 Methodology

Prior to The Learning Community (TLC) there was no database of learning opportunities in the area .

The mapping exercise aimed to:

1. identify existing learning opportunities and venues in the TLC area
2. identify potential new providers of learning
3. identify and map venues of learning
4. map providers of learning in the 'travel to learn' area

- The ACET Cotswold Vale Consortium was used as a starting point to map existing provision
- Members of the Consortium were asked to complete a membership form which asked about the type of provision, childcare and travel facilities, disability access, geographical area and target groups
- This data collection form was also sent out to all people who came to the launch with the aim of identifying existing provision and the potential for new provision in the area.
- Larger FE and HE establishments in the 'travel to learn' area were also included in the list
- A form was sent to all the Schools, Clubs, Halls and Churches in the local area which asked for a variety of information covering available resources, space available, cost, childcare facilities and disability access

### 2.3.2 Existing Provision

The TLC partnership of **152** members includes a wide selection of learning organisations, as well as some individuals, key agencies and stakeholders from both the local area and county-wide.

**68** of these members are also members of the Gloucestershire Adult Education Cotswold Vale Consortium and were asked to complete membership forms for TLC.

**44** Membership forms were returned and were entered onto the on-line directory, **Can Do Exchange** - an internet community managed by the Scarman Trust. The TLC is on the site as a 'Can Do' community.

Organisations were given a password and username and asked to update their resources online. Training is planned for members, free of charge to help them access and use the directory as well as encourage groups to take advantage of other benefits offered by the Can Do Exchange. This will ensure information is clearly categorised, kept up to date and obtainable in a variety of ways - as a paper-based printout, through the internet and through the specific TLC community. Information can be found on [www.candoexchange.org](http://www.candoexchange.org)

Organisations in the Travel-to-Learn area have been identified through the TLC mapping exercise. It was felt that as they were large organisations with a complete range of provision on offer, they would only be included in name. These are:

- University of the West of England
- University of Gloucestershire
- Internet-based training - Learn Direct
- Aim Higher
- Open University
- Gloscat
- Cirencester College
- Hartpury College
- Filton College
- Worker Educational Association (WEA)

These organisations will be contacted and asked to complete a form for submission onto the Can Do Exchange under a the specific area of travel-to-learn.

### **2.3.3 New Provision**

Two organisations who were not members of the existing partnership were identified through the mapping exercise:

- Cam Congregational Church which runs a very successful youth project and
- Learn Direct who have had 39 learners from the GL11 postcode area

There are 10 Work-Based Learning Providers working with employers or learners from the GL11 area. These have not been contacted at this present time - please see recommendations for further information.

There are also a number of new groups of learners in the GL11 area including the Portuguese community, South African community, speakers of English as a second language and minority ethnic groups under represented in learning, traveller groups, young offenders, disadvantaged families and specifically people on Disability benefit. It is recommended that these groups are targeted through TLC learning opportunities.

### **2.3.4 Learning Venues**

24 forms were sent out requesting information on venues of learning in the GL11 area including:

- What room/space do you have available for hire
- What is the cost?
- Disabled Access?
- Childcare Facilities/Ofsted?
- Kitchen Facilities?
- Other information – setting up/taking down etc

9 completed forms were returned and relevant information about the venue has been entered onto the Can Do Exchange. There is a considerable range of services and space available from a variety of different venues in the area, much of it underused at present.

### **3. EXIT STRATEGY**

There are a number of elements of The Learning Community which have worked successfully and should be considered for continuation when the main TLC funding ends in March 2006.

#### **Learning Champions**

The Learning Champions are currently being managed by GLII Community Project's Development Worker who is also employed part time by TLC. We need to consider what sort of impact Learning Champions have had on their local community and in engaging people into learning as well as the impact being a learning champion has had on them.

Funding would need to be sought for the part time salary of someone to continue their management and support as well as expenses and small incentive payments. This role could be combined with a volunteer support worker.

#### **The Partnership**

The existing Adult Education partnership, the Cotswold Vale Consortium has been managed by the Local Development Worker employed by Stroud College and funded through Adult Education. The TLC partnership is wider than the Cotswold Vale Consortium but this could still easily be managed by the Local Development Worker. With more hours this post could also incorporate other areas of TLC.

There is also food for thought around keeping an independent local area co-ordinator of learning, who would not be linked to any providers and who would be able to bring together all types of learning, including schools, family learning, and work based learning and college provision in the area

Vale Vision could provide the steering group for this partnership with a representative from the Consortium attending the Vale Vision steering group. This reflects the way the Consortium is currently working with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) linking into the Creating Wealth Syndicate and providing support for learning.

#### **Membership**

A pilot membership scheme has been agreed for piloting in the Cam and Dursley area as part of TLC. If this is successful it may be an area Stroud College could take forward and develop or there could be a link with Stroud District Council Smart Cards.

#### **TLC branding and publicity**

A lot of work has gone into branding TLC and promoting the concept of learning in the local community. This area as well as the TLC website would fit well with Vale Vision's community strategy.

#### **Measuring the Impact of TLC**

It is important to put measures in place to assess the impact of TLC on the local community within the next 5 years. This is something that can be discussed through the evaluation and at the management group and which could be taken forward by Vale Vision, Gloucestershire Adult Education and Stroud College.