

Report of community learning and development in Aberdeen City Council

HM Inspectors carried out a Progress Visit to Aberdeen City Council in May 2024. HM Inspectors identified that the local authority and their partners were making progress in a number of areas in their community learning and development (CLD) plan. However, some improvement was required. HM Inspectors requested a report on progress on the main point for action. Aberdeen City Council and the Aberdeen Community Learning and Development Strategic Partnership (ACLDSP) submitted a report on progress in June 2025. HM Inspectors met with them in September 2025 to discuss its contents.

Main point for action: Senior leaders and CLD partners need to work together to improve the strategic governance and decision making in CLD. This should include CLD partners setting and jointly monitoring shared measures of success.

Strategic governance for the CLD plan is now the responsibility of the Community Empowerment Group (CEG). There are now clearer reporting links to the community planning partnership (CPP) and relevant committees within Aberdeen City Council, including the Education and Children's Services Committee. CLD is more clearly linked with wider CPP and council priorities. As a result, the CEG has a greater understanding of their responsibilities for oversight and reporting on CLD priorities. The ACLDSP, established through the CEG, includes new members, representing a broader range of CLD. Partners are working better together and have created new terms of reference, which set out their collective responsibilities clearly. As a result, partners understand well each other's roles and contributions. The new governance structure of the partnership includes delivery groups for each of the priorities of the new CLD plan. However, these groups are at an early stage. When implemented fully, they have the potential to widen the membership of the partnership and to provide appropriate oversight of the delivery of the CLD plan.

The CLD team, along with the ACLDSP, have taken a careful and considered approach to developing the new 2025-27 CLD plan, including significant engagement with stakeholders. As a result, partners are confident that the priorities reflect the needs and expectations of learners and communities in Aberdeen. Each priority has success measures and reporting procedures in place. However, partners understand there is a need to develop further shared measures of success. This will include setting new baselines and developing targets. Whilst there was significant engagement with learners and communities in shaping the plan, the ACLDSP recognise that there is more to do to include learners and community representatives at a strategic level. The robust process of developing the plan and the resulting wider connections with local communities are ensuring that the ACLDSP is well-placed to do this.

What happens next?

Overall, the local authority and its CLD partners are taking appropriate steps to address the main point for action and other recommendations identified during the Progress Visit. As a result, we will make no further visits to Aberdeen City Council and its CLD partners in connection with this inspection.

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HM Inspector
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