

Cork ~ Learning City

Past, Present and Exploring Our Future

Executive Summary



Introduction

This document serves two purposes:

- As an Executive Summary of the full Cork Learning City Discussion Document 2017
- As an Introduction to Cork as a Learning City, that considers its current, past and future development

1. Cork Learning City – Present

1.1 Cork Learning City in 2017

UNESCO's selection of Cork as host of the third International Conference on Learning Cities in 2017 is a significant milestone in the city's development as a Learning City. The selection helps to reflect the city's progress in implementing UNESCO's key features of a learning city and positions the city at the heart of the members of the Global Network of Learning Cities. This builds on the UNESCO Learning City Award presented to Cork in 2015, as one of the first 12 cities worldwide (three from Europe) to receive this award.

Cork has a vibrant 'ecosystem' of education and learning, serving the population of the city and metropolitan area of 300,000 approx. and the wider region. The second city of the Republic of Ireland, there is a very long tradition of education in Cork – going back to the seventh century, when Saint Finbarr founded a scholastic monastery where the River Lee enters the sea on the south coast. Our city's motto is 'Statio Bene Fida Carinis' – a safe harbour for ships – and the city prides itself on being a place of welcome and inclusion for all.

Today Cork has two third level colleges – University College Cork, (Sunday Times University of the Year 2016 and 2017), where George Boole the, 'father of the computer age' taught, and Cork Institute of Technology (Sunday Times Institute of Technology of the year 2016), incorporating the National Maritime College, the Cork School of Music and the Crawford College of Art and Design, and three of the five largest Colleges of Further Education, in the country, now under Cork Education and Training Board, including the largest - Cork College of Commerce, which was founded in 1908.

Together with a wide range of primary and second level schools, early years education centres, complementary and second-chance education opportunities, initiatives tackling educational disadvantage in both formal and community settings and a thriving creative community, there is a well developed and networked learning infrastructure in the city serving its surrounding region.

In 2017 **Cork Learning City Steering Group** operates under the following structure: (See Diagram 1)

Cork Learning City Steering Group operates under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Learning, signed in 2015 by four Lead Partners:

- Cork City Council;
- Cork Education and Training Board;
- Cork Institute of Technology;
- University College Cork.

Joined by two Strategic Partners who signed in 2017:

- Health Service Executive (HSE) Cork;
- The National Association of Principals and Deputies (NAPD).

Growing Lifelong Learning in Cork (GLLiC), – the Learning City Working Group co-ordinates all activities towards the implementation of the UNESCO Beijing Declaration on Learning Cities, formally adopted by Cork City Council in April 2014, followed by the adoption of the Mexico Statement in 2016.

The Learning City Co-ordinator works closely with the GLLiC Working Group, currently made up of members of the partner organisations above and working group partners as follows:

- Central Statistics Office (CSO);
- Cork Environmental Forum (CEF);
- Cork Healthy Cities;
- Cork Lifelong Learning Festival;
- Cork Opera House;
- EcCoWeLL Cork;
- Foróige;
- CIF Construction Industry Federation;
- Learning Neighbourhoods

UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities

GLLiC has taken on the necessary tasks to support Cork City Council with the planning, hosting and additional programming for the UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities in Cork in September 2017 under a Host Country Agreement signed between Government Departments and UNESCO. This is the latest international conference or seminar hosted by the city relevant to the learning city theme, building on annual seminars during the Lifelong Learning Festival and an international EcCoWeLL conference in 2013.

Cork Lifelong Learning Festival

The Cork Lifelong Learning Festival is a weeklong event running annually in Spring since 2004 that promotes and celebrates learning of all kinds across all age groups, abilities and interests, from preschool to post retirement. In 2017 there were over 600 events held, all open to the public and all free.

Learning Neighbourhoods

Cork defines a Learning Neighbourhood as an area that has an ongoing commitment to learning, providing inclusive and diverse learning opportunities for whole communities through partnership and collaboration. Following the UNESCO Guidelines on Building Learning Cities and inspired by Peter Kearns of PASCAL¹, the GLLiC working group selected Ballyphehane and Knocknaheeny in 2015 for the pilot phase, and Mayfield and Togher joined in 2016. The programme followed by each community is co-created by residents and local leaders to promote and develop active lifelong learning.

Cork Learning City Laboratory – CLC Lab

The Cork Learning City Laboratory (CLC Lab) was established in 2017 as a 'Co-lab' or collaborative initiative, under GLLiC, that takes on the research and development function of Cork as a Learning City under an MOU signed with the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning.

CLC Lab is currently working with UNESCO and Cork based multi-media resources to develop web based animated tutorials to inform and inspire Learning Cities worldwide. CLC Lab is a structure that can be used to generate and disseminate other materials that are developed and trialled in Cork as a test-bed Learning City.

Learning City Round Tables

Stakeholders in the learning city are involved and consulted through Learning City roundtables, with 2-3 convened per annum. These provide an opportunity to engage with a wider group of stakeholders around the Learning City project.

Round Tables are designed using an EcCoWeLL² approach, and participants are invited from all education and learning partners, as well as other sectors in the city. All roles within these organisations are included - decision makers, co-ordinators, tutors and learners.

Diagram 1: Cork Learning City Structure 2017

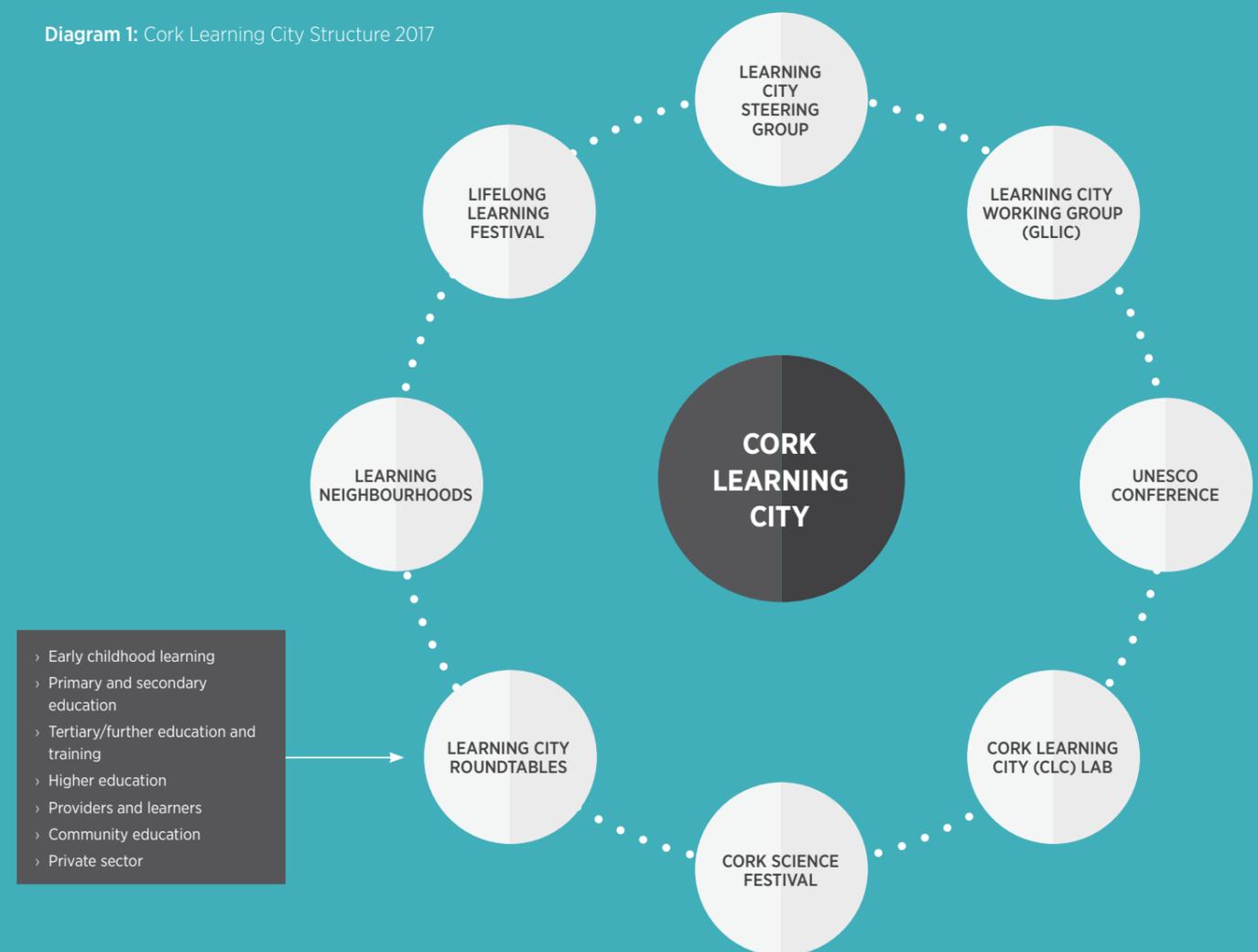


Diagram 2:
2.3 Milestones: 2002 - 2017 on the
Development of Cork as a Learning City



Cork Science Festival

The Cork Science Festival is a week-long festival of science events taking place across Cork each Autumn, offering a programme of public engagement events, community talks, exhibitions, shows and school workshops. The festival is developed by a team representing the best in research, promotion, education and industry in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics based in Cork.

"...To promote social inclusion and equality by ensuring that all residents of Cork City have equal opportunities to access, participate and engage in the social, economic and lifelong learning opportunities in the city"

Key Strategic Question:

How can Cork Learning City and its Structures and Partners learn from the past, work to maximise present opportunities and build a global learning city that addresses the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030?

Learning City Governance 2017

Cork Learning City and its structures report to governance structures within Cork City Council and within the other MOU Lead Partners as appropriate.

Vision Statement

'Lifelong Learning as the fuel for City Growth'

The vision for lifelong learning in Cork City that appears in the Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 has been adopted from the Cork City Development Plan (2015- 2021):

1. PASCAL emerged from work done by the OECD on Lifelong Learning. It focuses on Place Making, Social Capital and Learning.
2. The EcCoWeLL concept, applied in Cork City since 2012, was developed by PASCAL International Exchanges, to take a holistic approach to city development, bringing together perspectives from across a range of sectors.

2. Cork Learning City – Past: Where we have come from

2.1 Where we have come from

Cork has seen itself as a learning city since it was founded in the 7th century, the time when Ireland was known as 'the island of saints and scholars,' by Saint Finbarr. The city has always been international in outlook. It developed as a port in the time of the Vikings, received its charter in 1185 and grew, particularly in the 18th century, to become a key trading port on the international sea routes from Europe and the British Empire to the 'new world' of the Americas and Asia.

A University City since 1845 when University College Cork was established as Queen's College, some milestones in Cork's development as a learning city since then include:

- the establishment of what is now Cork College of Commerce - the largest College of Further Education in the country - by Cork Corporation and Cork Chamber of Commerce in 1908, subsequently becoming part of Cork ETB;
- the foundation of a Municipal School of Music in 1878 - the first in the British Isles, and its incorporation with the National Maritime College of Ireland, and the Crawford College of Art and Design under Cork Institute of Technology in 1993; and
- the foundation in 1946 in UCC of the first Centre for Adult and Continuing Education established in a university in Ireland.

2.2 Cork as a City of Learning 2002 – 2012

The Cork City Development Board publication *Imagine our Future 2002 – 2012: an Integrated Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development* included a Strategic Theme, one of seven, naming Cork as a City of Learning.

Its introduction to the Strategy stated:

We see learning as a life-long activity for all our citizens and not as something to be pursued only by young people. We see Cork as a place:

1. Where access to learning is available for all levels and all ages in the city.
2. Where provision addresses comprehensively the diversity of learning needs.
3. Where an ethos of quality underpins the provision of continuous learning opportunities for all citizens in the city.
4. Where the city is recognised nationally and internationally as a centre of learning and research.
5. Where available information and knowledge are catalysts for creativity and learning.

3. Cork Learning City – Exploring Our Future

3.1 Cork Learning City and the UNESCO Key Features of a Learning city

In its initial approach to planning for 2020-2030, Cork has taken the following 'major building blocks of a learning city' from UNESCO's 'Key Features of a Learning City' in the 2013 Beijing Declaration on Learning Cities:

- Inclusive learning in the education system;
- Revitalised learning for families and communities;
- Effective learning for and in the workplace;
- Extended use of modern learning technologies;
- Enhanced quality and excellence in learning;
- A vibrant culture of learning throughout life.

Among the Wider benefits of building a learning city identified in the UNESCO Declaration and 'Key features' publication is:

- Sustainable development.

3.2 Mapping Key Initiatives and Actions and Future Developments against the UNESCO framework

The following diagram represents an initial analysis of how current and future initiatives and actions, as they are currently constituted and envisaged, can contribute to the achievement of the UNESCO seven themes below.

Key Learning City Projects	Strategic Themes: UNESCO Building Blocks of a Learning City						
	Inclusive learning in the education system	Revitalised learning for families and communities	Effective learning for and in the workplace	Extended use of modern learning technologies	Enhanced quality and excellence in learning	A vibrant culture of learning throughout life	Sustainable Development
Cork Lifelong Learning Festival							
Learning Neighbourhoods							
UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities							
Cork Learning City Lab							
Cork Science Festival							
Learning Factories							
Learning City Website							
Irish Network of Learning Cities							

3.3 Learning City Key Strategic Actions 2017-2021

The following Key Strategic Actions for Learning City development emerge from an analysis of the present situation and consideration of the future and draw together many individual actions referenced in the Action Plan for the City – Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2021, and some additional areas to consider for 2020 – 2030.

Learning City Key Strategic Actions 2017-2021
<p>KSA1. Support and develop each of the identified key projects and initiatives as they are currently constituted, to strengthen their capacity, and to support each of them to address elements of the Learning City building blocks identified by UNESCO.</p>
<p>KSA2. Undertake a review of representation and structures to streamline membership of the steering group, working group and organising committees. The objectives of this review to be the reconstitution of each committee as necessary to strengthen representation, to enhance sustainability, to work closely alongside GLLiC and the Learning City partners, to maximise added value and complementarity between key projects, and to minimise duplication.</p>
<p>KSA3. Identify and strengthen areas where current key projects and initiatives could enhance their ability to deliver on the objectives under the UNESCO themes and under the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030.</p>
<p>KSA4. Work with the co-ordinator and decision making structures of each of these key projects to support the process of creating an Action and Development Plan for the years 2017-2020 and to prepare for a long- term planning process to 2030.</p>
<p>KSA5. Review the governance and representative structures annually to identify and facilitate necessary adjustments and changes.</p>
<p>KSA6. Host a series of seven half-day Round Table Seminars on each of the themes above, to bring together representatives of initiatives and key stakeholders in the sector to explore the theme and its application and relevance to unique challenges faced by Cork city. Using this initial analysis as a starting point, the session will consider the issues, and generate priorities that will form the basis of a plan to 2030.</p>
<p>KSA7. Support key projects and initiatives that address these themes in the city in future, through connecting them together with Learning City partners, and taking opportunities to increase sectoral and public awareness of their role and the work they do.</p>
<p>KSA8. To identify leaders among these projects and initiatives who will act as key strategic partners for actions under this theme, and will assist in co-ordinating actions.</p>
<p>KSA9. To work with a leadership group built on foundations through Learning City partners on the development of the Learning Factories pilot project.</p>
<p>KSA10. To develop the Learning City Website as a portal and a point of contact and co-ordination between all Learning City activities and all stakeholders.</p>
<p>KSA11. To work with lead and strategic partners on their strategic planning processes to include the learning city objectives in each strategic plan, and to include a reference in each plan to supporting the achievement of the objectives of other Learning City partners.</p>
<p>KSA12. To work with city partners to develop a network of Irish Learning Cities, and to connect with international cities and networks to support the development of Cork and each of its city partners as learning cities.</p>

How can you contribute or join us?

Engage with us through our public events, through our projects and through our website: www.corklearningcity.ie

Submissions on this plan accepted up to **31 Oct 2017**

Cover Image: **Patricia Groche** - "Cork City"

