

Agenda Item No. 4(g)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

28 July 2015

Report of the Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Environment

**DERBYSHIRE LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM CONFERENCE
2016**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To seek approval to deliver a second Learning Outside the Classroom Conference for Derbyshire in May 2016.

(2) **Information and Analysis** In April 2015, the first Derbyshire Learning Outside the Classroom Conference was held at Lea Green Development Centre for teachers and group leaders of young people across the County. This conference showcased the rich natural and built urban environments in the country, from the national parks to the world heritage site, urban centres to wildlife and countryside sites, and highlighted the opportunities for schools and groups to enrich their curriculum, teaching and learning, extending it well beyond the classroom. This conference was attended by over 130 participants and was very well received. Services from across all Council departments were represented. A evaluation of the event showed that 91% of attendees would definitely like the conference to happen again and 60% said that this should be at least every year. In order to build on momentum, it is proposed that the conference takes place again in 2016.

There are over 420 schools across the County and a wide range of other learning establishments. There are also a great number of schools in neighbouring counties who can easily travel into parts of Derbyshire to utilise the wide offer available. The conference in 2015 has already attracted additional bookings and engagement for services in the County (which continue to be monitored). Further information about bookings that result from the conference for 2016 will be captured. It is intended to encourage all of these schools and groups to use the rich County of Derbyshire to provide opportunities to enhance teaching, learning, aspiration, employment opportunities and development. The aims of this second Derbyshire Learning Outside the Classroom Conference will be to:

- provide a showcase and ‘market place’ to highlight the wealth of learning outside the classroom providers, visit destinations and organisations available across the County; and
- encourage schools within the County and outside the area to choose Derbyshire for the learning outside the classroom opportunities they offer their pupils.

Schools tend to use providers and take visits to locations they are familiar with, or that the school has traditionally used and staff often move between schools continuing to use the same locations. By providing a showcase of what is on offer within Derbyshire, it is hoped to continue to raise awareness of the wide breadth of opportunities available within the County for the young people. This will keep any associated ‘trip spend’ within the Derbyshire economy, generate income for visit and learning providers, prevent long ‘out of County’ journeys to alternative destinations and engage Derbyshire young people with their own rich environment.

It is proposed that the day will be jointly co-ordinated by Derbyshire Environmental Studies Service (planning) and Lea Green Development Centre (delivery and hosting). Representatives from across Derbyshire County Council departments and other partner organisations, who deliver learning opportunities within the County, will be invited, including outdoor and adventurous activities, residential centres, environmental education, museums, galleries, arts, heritage and Forest School, and provide opportunities for all age ranges, abilities and curriculum areas. The day will be for teachers and group leaders from across Derbyshire and neighbouring counties who work with young people. It will include a market place and a choice of workshops to develop their skills, confidence and competence in delivering Learning Outside the Classroom opportunities. It will also provide opportunities to network with colleagues from other schools and organisations.

This conference will be a cross-authority collaboration and involve all departments. As the County Council seeks to better promote its services to Derbyshire schools with an Assistant Director for Traded Services within the Corporate Resources Department, this conference will provide an excellent opportunity for all of the departments involved in Learning Outside the Classroom activities to highlight their services to their target audiences.

Over 30 different services and organisations were represented in 2015 and these, and others, have expressed an interest in attending again, clearly demonstrating that they see the value of such an event.

The Government’s “Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto” (published in 2006 and endorsed by the current government) states that *“it is not just important **what** we learn but **how** and **where** we learn it.”* Going on to say that these are *“often the most memorable learning experiences, help us to make*

sense of the world around us by making links between feelings and learning. They stay with us into adulthood and affect our behaviour, lifestyle and work. They influence our values and the decisions we make. They allow us to transfer learning experienced outside to the classroom and vice versa."

The 2008 Ofsted report "Learning Outside the Classroom – how far should you go" visited 12 establishments (including primary, secondary, special, pupil referral units and colleges) and found *"All of the schools and colleges surveyed provided exciting, direct and relevant learning activities outside the classroom. Such hands-on activities led to improved outcomes for pupils and students, including better achievement, standards, motivation, personal development and behaviour. The survey also found examples of the positive effects of learning outside the classroom on young people who were hard to motivate"*. Ofsted also suggested that Local Authorities and their partners should *"build on their successful work in assuring appropriate health and safety practices by better supporting and encouraging schools in enhancing the quality of learning outside the classroom as a means of raising achievement"*. This conference provides an additional avenue for the County Council and partners to continue this work and increase the quantity, diversity and quality of the Learning Outside the Classroom experiences of Derbyshire young people.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The conference will be cost neutral. Any financial costs incurred in delivering the conference (e.g. for catering, workshop delivery, provision of resources, etc) will be costed out in advance and used to calculate the required charge to participants to ensure that all costs are covered. Delegates will be charged the minimum amount to attend the day which meets the costs of hosting the event. The main cost for conferences such as this is normally the venue and providers of workshops. Lea Green Development Centre has agreed to host the event without charge for the building and the grounds, and it is hoped that most of the workshop providers, speakers and market place holders will, again, not charge for their services and see it as a promotional opportunity and chance to share best practice. There will be a charge for refreshments, lunch (which it is proposed will be a packed lunch) and some providers or a key note speaker. When split between the number of delegates this cost should be small and represent good value for money. Schools and organisations are used to paying for continuing professional development opportunities and conferences of this nature for their staff.

(4) **Human Resources Considerations** The organisation and co-ordination of the event will be undertaken by staff from Derbyshire Environmental Studies Service and Lea Green Development Centre staff. This will be scheduled into the team work programme and adequate time allocated. Other departments supporting or offering to showcase their work or provide workshops will also need to provide time to prepare and deliver on the day. It is hoped that by supporting the event participating services and

organisations will receive additional service use and generate additional income from new groups visiting or using their service. The Council will work in partnership with a range of external organisations to ensure a breadth and quality of provision.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

(6) **Call In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(7) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Georgina Greaves, extension 33439.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member approves the delivery of the second Derbyshire Learning Outside the Classroom Conference at Lea Green Development Centre in May 2016.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Environment