

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – JOBS, ECONOMY AND
TRANSPORT**

30 September 2014

Report of the Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Environment

**DERBYSHIRE LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM
CONFERENCE**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek approval for Derbyshire Environmental Studies Service to co-ordinate and deliver a Learning Outside the Classroom Conference for Derbyshire on 21 April 2015.

(2) **Information and Analysis** Derbyshire is blessed with some of the most diverse natural and built urban environments in the country, from national parks to world heritage sites, urban centres to wildlife and countryside sites. These present endless opportunities for schools and groups to enrich their curriculum extending it well beyond the classroom. Derbyshire County Council is committed to supporting schools in their quest to take classrooms into the world. The County Council has a range of nationally recognised services (from across all departments) working together to help this become a reality. 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 Council would like to encourage all of these schools and groups to use the rich County to provide opportunities to enhance teaching, learning, aspiration, employment opportunities and development. The aim of a Derbyshire Learning Outside the Classroom Conference would 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 across 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. By providing a showcase of what is on offer within Derbyshire, it is hoped 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'

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journeys to alternative destinations and engage Derbyshire young people with their own rich environment.

It is proposed that the day would be hosted at Lea Green Development Centre (who has agreed to provide the centre free of charge for the day). Representatives from across Derbyshire County Council's departments and other partner organisations who deliver 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 would be for teachers and group leaders from across Derbyshire and neighbouring counties who work with young people and include a market place and a choice of workshops to develop their skills, confidence and competence in delivering Learning Outside the Classroom opportunities, as well as providing opportunity 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 the appointment of a new 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.

The Derbyshire Environmental Studies Service, of the Economy, Transport and Environment Department, will co-ordinate the conference and also represent its own offer (including Urban Studies, Forest School, teacher workshops and County wide outreach work). Other Derbyshire County Council services, who will be invited to showcase, include:

- Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and Countryside Services (Economy, Transport and Environment Department),
- Lea Green and Whitehall Residential Centres,
- Adventure activities,
- Derbyshire Sports,
- Arts Development (Children and Young Adults (CAYA) Department),
- Derbyshire Record Office,
- Libraries,
- Buxton Museum (Health and Communities Department).

A wide variety of external organisations, who have a learning outside the classroom offer, will also be invited to showcase and include:

- Cresswell Craggs,
- Peak District National Park Authority,

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- RSPB,
- National Trust,
- Arkwright Society,
- Strutt's North Mill,
- Masson Mills,
- Derby Museums Trust,
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust,
- National Forest,
- Fleet Arts,
- Junction Arts,
- South Derbyshire Environmental Education Project,
- DerwentWISE.

Many of these have already expressed initial interest in taking part and contributing to such an event.

The Government's "Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto" (published in 2006 and endorsed by Government) states that *"it is not just important **what** we learn but **how** and **where** we learn it.....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"², 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"*. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and skills (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 Derbyshire Environmental Studies Service to continue this work and increase the quantity, diversity and quality of the Learning Outside the Classroom experiences of Derbyshire's 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 or provision of resources) will be costed out in advance and

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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 already 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 not charge for their services and see it as a promotional opportunity and chance to share best practice. There will inevitably be some charges for refreshments, lunch (a packed lunch is proposed) 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 County Council's Environmental Studies Service. 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.

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** 2006: Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto: <http://www.lotc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/G1.-LOtC-Manifesto.pdf> 2008: Ofsted: Learning Outside the Classroom. How far should you go? Officer contact details – Georgina Greaves, extension 33439.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That approval be given to Derbyshire Environmental Studies Service to co-ordinate the delivery of the first Derbyshire Learning Outside the Classroom Conference at Lea Green Development Centre on 21 April 2015.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Environment