

CLD Standards Council Consultation Response

March 2021



Consultation on the Accounts Commission's priorities and work programme for 2021 and beyond

Response from the Community Learning and Development Standards Council Scotland

A. Do you think the Commission has identified the right priorities and topics for its work?

The CLD Standards Council (CLDSC) agrees that the priorities and topics identified provide an appropriate overall framework for the Commission's work. Within this, the CLDSC believes a stronger focus on a cluster of cross-cutting issues would add further value to the work programme.

The CLD Standard Council proposes the role of local authorities (and the wider public sector) in supporting the development of the capacity of individuals, families and communities (both of place and interest) as a cross-cutting theme for the Commission's work. In focusing attention on community empowerment and lifelong learning, this theme reflects the perspective and particular interests of the CLDSC, but we believe it is of real significance for the Commission's wider interests and for progress across a spread of the National Outcomes.

The Commission's continuing focus on community empowerment is very welcome, as is the intention to examine progress made in relation to "the capacity for community empowerment and Community Learning and Development". The CLDSC proposes that explicit priority should be given to embedding the focus on community empowerment in work across many of the other work areas identified, from Covid-19 spending and supporting the local economy to health and social care integration to climate change. The CLDSC's report *Engage, Educate, Connect, Empower: CLD, Resilience and Recovery*¹ illustrates this point and others made in this response.

In designing the approach to auditing community empowerment, the CLDSC believes that it is important to consider how individuals and communities are supported to develop their capacity, the learning processes that underpin this, and the workforce and skills requirements that flow from it. This consideration will assist in identifying *how* community empowerment is relevant to disadvantaged people and communities and enables them to build confidence, develop skills for positive change, engage effectively with councils and other service-providers, and deliver their own projects; and as a result, will assist councils and their partners to strengthen their work on community empowerment and maximise the effectiveness of resources used for this.

The CLDSC sees success in community empowerment and lifelong learning as closely linked. As in relation to community empowerment, the CLDSC believes that a focus on lifelong learning has a key role in improving the outcomes achieved by local

¹ [Engage, Educate, Connect Empower: CLD, Resilience and Recovery | CLD Standards Council for Scotland](#)

CLD Standards Council Consultation Response

March 2021



authorities and that this should be reflected in the audit process. Examples of aspects of the Commission's work programme where an explicit focus on lifelong learning would be beneficial are:

- City Region and Growth Deals: the supporting information provided for theme one, economic recovery and growth, notes that "employment and skills are a focus of many [City Region and Growth] deals and this will inform potential work around skills and training". These initiatives need to be closely linked with work to engage people who are at a distance from the labour market if they are to be inclusive of people experiencing deprivation and who have benefited least from the formal education system. The role of CLD and of local strategies linking the work of CLD and colleges has an essential part to play in achieving this inclusion, and the CLDSC believes that there should be a specific focus on these aspects within the audit programme.
- "Education outcomes" are identified as one of the Commission's policy priorities and outcomes; within the list of topics under theme 2, this is stated as "school education outcomes". The CLDSC believes that a more holistic approach to education outcomes is needed. The experience of the pandemic has re-highlighted the importance of learning that takes place out of school, as outlined in the report of a survey into CLD practitioners responses to the pandemic and resulting lockdown².

The forthcoming Lifelong Learning Policy (as set out in the Programme for Government) will provide an underpinning framework for the types of development advocated here and the CLDSC believes that an audit focus on lifelong learning in the areas outlined, and in others such as climate change and health and social care, has a key part to play in ensuring that the policy has a positive impact.

As a final point, the CLDSC proposes that the cross-cutting focus on supporting the development of the capacity of individuals, families and communities through community empowerment and lifelong learning should be reflected in the Commission's work on workforce planning.

B. Do you think the timing and sequencing of the work programme is right? Are there any areas that could be brought forward or moved back?

No comments.

C. Do you think there are any other areas the Commission should be considering?

As outlined in A above: we think the areas proposed fit within the priorities and topics identified by the Commission.

² [Pandemic and lockdown: how CLD practitioners have responded | CLD Standards Council for Scotland](#)