Glasgow as a Learning City

Glasgow first adopted the designation of a Learning City in 1999, and the concept continues to be a driving force in the city’s development. The City has pursued that general objective of promoting learning in many ways, covering many facets of the life of the city, and the learning city remains one of the 5 main priorities of the City in its current strategic plan. This presentation will highlight several of these, and allow the conference to explore a broad approach to the learning city idea, consistent with the theme of the Conference organisers.

The decision by Glasgow to become a learning city was seen as a logical response to facing up to the challenges of the loss of traditional industries, and to wanting to compete in the developing knowledge-based economy of the 21st century. The central place given to lifelong learning was also in the spirit of the traditions of a city whose oldest university had been built on the traditions of the Scottish enlightenment to bring opportunities for learning to the broader community.

The showcase will span initiatives in education, in community development, in the development of the City’s Resilience strategy, and in relation to cultural development. It brings together too the contributions of different agencies to the overall objective of providing learning opportunities for all. Presentations will be led by Maureen McKenna, Executive Director of Education for the City of Glasgow, and will include contributions from Andrew Olney, Head of Communities and Libraries, Glasgow Life, Alastair Brown, Chief Resilience Officer for the City of Glasgow, and Professor David Gaimster, at Glasgow University and Director of the Hunterian Museum in the city.
Glasgow continues to build on its success as European City of Culture in 1988 through its promotion of a wide range educational, community learning, cultural and sporting events, for example as host city for the Commonwealth Games in 2014. Its museums and cultural facilities adopt an open inclusive approach and form an important contribution to the creativity and vitality of the City.

- **Education: Maureen McKenna** - Maureen will introduce the presentation around the theme of the learning journey for people from pre-school through school and on to continuing education. The city sees itself as a nurturing city, encouraging learning on an inclusive basis through all stages and widening access to further and higher education opportunities. She will describe several major initiatives in the city towards this goal.

- **Communities: Andrew Olney** - Glasgow Life is a charity which delivers cultural, sporting and learning activities on behalf of Glasgow City Council with a vision to inspire Glasgow’s citizens and communities to lead more active and richer lives through culture and sport. Andrew will describe initiatives taken by Glasgow Life to promote learning in the community through libraries and community-based learning centres.

- **Resilience: Alastair Brown** - Glasgow, like all cities, faces a number of major challenges. In Glasgow’s case the legacy of declining heavy industries has left its mark and presents major issues as the city seeks to secure its place in the 21st century world economy. Glasgow was one of the first cities to join the Rockefeller Foundation programme of Resilient Cities. It will shortly be publishing its Resilience strategy. Alastair will describe the work which has been undertaken in the city in the preparation of the strategy.
Cultural development: David Gaimster - Glasgow has one of the highest concentrations of cultural and heritage collections in the UK, if not in Europe. Glasgow Museums are the largest civic service in the UK, and the Hunterian at the University of Glasgow is among the largest university collections and by far the most extensive in Scotland. This rich ecology of museums and galleries enriches the learning journey for all from primary through to higher education and on to lifelong learning. The new Kelvin Hall development, with its unique partnership between civic, university and national institutions re-enforces Glasgow’s learning city ambitions.

Bringing the strands together
The showcase will end with a discussion chaired by John Tibbitt, PASCAL Head of Policy, which will aim to explore the opportunities and benefits which arise from this cross-sector approach to the learning city.

Presenters
Maureen McKenna OBE, Executive Director of Education, Glasgow City Council has responsibility for learning across the city.
Andrew Olney, Head of Communities and Libraries at Glasgow Life
Alastair Brown, Head of Sustainability and the Environment - Glasgow City Council
David Gaimster PhD, Director - Hunterian Museum, Glasgow University, the largest university museum service in Scotland and the nation’s oldest museum.