
Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date:	12 May 2009
Report By:	Corporate Director Education & Social Care	Report No:	EDUC/53/09/IF
Contact Officer:	Ian Fraser	Contact No:	01475 712761
Subject:	St Stephen's Enterprise Centre – Progress Report		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to give elected members information on St Stephen's Enterprise Centre, Port Glasgow. As part of the budget process elected members decided to accept responsibility for the revenue costs of the Enterprise Centre and asked for further information on the Centre.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report outlines the progress that has been made with the Centre and gives a further indication of the current activity from January 2009 to the present. The Centre is at the hub of enterprise activities within Inverclyde and this through projects such as the 'Recruit' has been shown to be very successful. The report also summarises some potentials for future development and these will be considered within the existing budgets of Education Services.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee note the contents of the report on St Stephen's Enterprise Centre and approve, in principle, the scope for development.

Ian Fraser
Corporate Director Education & Social Care



St Stephen's Enterprise Centre Port Glasgow

**Progress Report
April 2009**

Inverclyde
council

Foreword

The result of an innovative, collaborative approach to learning and enterprise between Inverclyde Council, Scottish Executive, Scottish Enterprise, European Funds (URBAN II) and most importantly private sector business partners (IBM, T-Mobile, National Semi-Conductor (UK) Ltd) the Enterprise Centre was officially opened in March 2004 by then DFM Jim Wallace. The initial partnership funding package of £350,304 Capital and £404,226 Revenue was to fund the Centre to March 2005, however, further funding packages and close financial management saw the partner funding finance the Centre until June 2008.

The Centre has constantly been well utilised by the wider community and proved to be an invaluable resource to the people of Port Glasgow and more recently Inverclyde as a whole.

The Centre was subject to a vigorous evaluation process on behalf of Scottish Executive in April 2005. The evaluation was extremely positive but highlighted two main areas for particular praise, the staff that run the Centre and the warm, welcoming, modern learning environment.

Purpose

Due to European Funding legislation the Centre was established to serve the wider community of Port Glasgow, however, it was not long before the Centre had exceeded the initial project targets in terms of number of users, registered learners, and support to job search clients that the service was made available to anyone living and/or working in Inverclyde.

The Centre offers a number of courses (mainly IT based) to a wide range of clients as well as providing job search support and CV builder courses for students and the community. First class facilities for meetings, presentations, launch events and training are constantly in demand. Advance booking for facilities is now highly recommended.

As well as the provision for community use the Centre also provides the schools of Port Glasgow with access to the facilities and delivers a "Virtual Work Experience" programme to every S2 pupil in St Stephen's and Port Glasgow High School annually, although this programme places a great demand on staff resources the programme has been highly commended by Future Learning and Teaching (Flat) and has proven to support and develop essential skills and attitudes all young people must have – self confidence, communication, presentation, problem solving and the ability to work with others and take responsibility.

Progress

The Centre has since opening met or exceeded all targets and fully met all funding partner criteria. All facilities are always in high demand and courses ever-popular. Detailed below are the latest figures from March 2004 to March 2009.

Number of Centre Users/Visitors	11,781
Total Number of Learners	5,896
Registered Learners (Adults)	446
Adults assisted to become labour market participants	473
Number assisted to positive transition (FTE or Work)	52
Number of Pupils participating in Virtual Work Experience	980

Partnership Working

The Centre has continually developed by harnessing a positive ethos to partnership working, engaging key partners in activity and services. These partners include Jobcentre Plus, James Watt College, Reid Kerr College, Careers Scotland, WorkAble, Haven, Adult Literacies, Inverclyde Employability Project, Remploy and Institute of Chartered Management.

A number of companies and organisations (including most Council Services) utilise the Centre including T-Mobile, Careers Scotland, BAA, IBM, Riverclyde Homes, Riverside Inverclyde, Scottish Enterprise, PSYBT, Social Work, Community Education, Schools of Ambition, Education Services, Personnel, Economic Development, Foster Carers etc, etc.

Current Activity (January 09 – Present)

Centre usage continues to grow both in terms of learning opportunities and use of facilities. There are currently 9 Adult Learning classes running each week with approximately 10 in each class. Learners are currently participating in Basic Computing, Intermediate Computing, Digital Photography, Web Design, Internet & E-mail, Desktop Publishing, PC Passport and ECDL. In addition to these “formal” classes the Centre continues to offer a “drop in” facility where learners can pop in and use hot desks to continue their work.

Again, both St Stephens and Port Glasgow High Schools have undertaken the Virtual programme for every S2 pupil (approx 200) and senior students continue to use the Centre to complete CVs and/or UCAS applications.

Use of Centre facilities continues to be popular with rooms booked on a daily basis

The Centre also plays a key part in the continual development of Enterprise in Education (DTS) work being undertaken across the Authority.

The Centre reflects the Council direction statement: **Building Inverclyde through excellence, ambition and regeneration.**

Staffing

There are currently 3.6 FTE staff employed directly within the Centre:

Jackie Fallon, Development Officer
 Richard Robbins, IT Tutor
 Laura Morgan, Admin Assistant (PT)
 Yazmin Tait, Admin Assistant

Staff run and administer the Centre and also provide invaluable support to the whole DTS Enterprise agenda supporting, delivering and administering all the work and events delivered centrally for our schools.

In addition Robert Lamb, Enterprise Development Officer and Jan Cannon, Principal Teacher (Primary/Early Years Enterprise & Citizenship) operate from the Centre and benefit greatly from the support of the wider Enterprise Centre Team. Both of these salaries are funded directly via DTS ring fenced funding.

Scope

The Centre is always keen to explore ways to further engage learners, provide learning opportunities for LA staff, support and/or facilitate events and ensure the facility is fully utilised.

In the past the Centre has investigated the possibility of “charging” for courses and or facilities however LA Accountant felt that this would not be feasible as charging would deem the project liable for VAT and therefore not be financially viable.

The centre does however provide services and facilities at no charge to many LA service departments providing indirect savings to overall budgets. As the Centre employs a FT IT Tutor there would also be scope to deliver a number of courses for staff which at present may be outsourced at a cost to external providers such as JWC.

Whilst the Centre has always been busy, there is still an opportunity to market the whole facility to a wider audience. Although this may have minimal cost implications it may lead to more registered learners, encourage more people to contribute to the economy by becoming job ready and engage further employer partners to support the wider enterprise agenda across the LA. Building Inverclyde through excellence, ambition and regeneration will certainly depend on the people of Inverclyde adopting a more positive approach to lifelong learning, the Centre provides the ideal learning environment to help promote and develop this positive attitude to lifelong learning. The Centre is said to be more conducive to learning than some other venues and is seen by many as less intimidating or stressful than signing up to a course at college. Of course, many of the Centre learners then progress onto FTE and or training/employment.

There is also scope to look at further expanding the “Virtual Work Experience” programme to schools out-with the Port Glasgow area, vocational coursework options could also be explored and delivered via the Centre as could courses on school to work transition, job search – applications, CVs etc. Whilst transport costs may be a barrier to a roll out of school programmes it is not something that should be dismissed.

Robert Lamb
April 2009