7

London East
2003-2005

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Learning+Skills Council
London East

Readers please note:

• in this publication where 'we' is used,
  it refers to the Learning and Skills
  Council London East, and

• we have used footnotes in this
  publication, shown as small numbers
  in the text, to acknowledge our sources
  of information, and the research done
  by other organisations.

• Association of London Government
• Basic Skills Agency
• Business Link for London
• Capital Quality Ltd
• Chambers of Commerce
• Connexions
• DfES
• Education Action Zones
• Education Business Partnerships (EBPs)
• Employers' Organisation for Local
  Government
• Further education colleges
• Higher education institutions
• Information, advice and guidance
  partnerships (IAGs)
• Investors in People UK

• Jobcentre Plus
• learndirect
• Local authorities
• Local education partnerships
• London Development Agency
• Schools and sixth form colleges
• Society of Personnel Officers (SOCPO)
• Thames Gateway London Partnership
• Trade unions
• Training Providers (private and public)
• Unison
• Work-based learning providers

Contents

Mary Conneely
Executive Director

We are in the middle of an exciting period of change. London East's 2 million residents have seen many changes in the last 10 years. The new developments announced for the Thames Gateway show that there will be further investment and increased opportunities during the next 10 years.

In every sector there is potential for growth. The proposal for major housing development in the Thames Gateway by the Deputy Prime Minister, in February 2003, is a boost for the construction industry. The Strategic Rail Authority and Transport for London have ambitious plans to develop the transport infrastructure. Health and social care, and financial services have their own challenges to meet as legislative changes place new demands on the workforce. The cultural and creative industries are thriving, and the retail sector can continue to grow with future town-centre redevelopments planned.

Our task, with you, our partners, is to make sure that London East is ready to meet these challenges with a highly skilled workforce. The consultation paper, *Success for All*[1], in June 2002 set out the role of learning providers. It stated that "learning in an area must meet national and local skill needs… and be responsive to local employers and communities." This view was reinforced in the formal publication of *Success for All* which set out the joint plans of the DfES and the Learning and Skills Council, in November 2002, to reform the learning and skills sector and raise standards.

This series of workforce development strategies explains the issues affecting each industrial sector. Each strategy then suggests some realistic action to support the skills development of local people. The aims are to meet employers' needs, and to give individuals positive learning and employment experiences.

By delivering the actions in these 10 sector strategies, we will be helping to:

• fulfil our corporate objectives which we outlined in the Local Strategic Plan 2002-2005

• meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Council's *National Policy Framework* for workforce development

• support the objectives outlined in London's *Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA)* published by the London Skills Commission, and

• meet the aims of the Skills Strategy White Paper (2003).

We hope that all partners and stakeholders in the various sectors will help deliver the plans presented in these very positive strategy documents. This will enable local people to improve their skills and make the most of the new opportunities being created in the Thames Gateway area.

The Learning and Skills Council is responsible for funding and planning education and training for those over 16 years old in England[2].

Workforce development is one of the most challenging and exciting parts of our work, and in November 2002, the national office published its *Workforce Development Strategy – National Policy Framework to 2005*.

The *National Policy Framework* was published at the same time as the Government report, *In Demand: Adult Skills in the 21st century – part 2,* produced by the Strategy Unit. These two documents suggested action that would promote workforce development. They state that we should:

• "raise informed demand for employment-related skills among individuals and employers

• support improvements to the responsiveness and flexibility of the supply side, and

• contribute to the development of an underpinning framework of better skills and labour market intelligence, responsive vocational qualifications and improved links to the wider educational agenda."

Each sector strategy has an action plan which shows how we, at LSC London East, will take practical steps to meet those three objectives. By carrying out the action proposed for each sector, with you, our partners, we will directly contribute to delivering the LSC's goals, which are to:

• "raise the participation and achievement of young people

• increase the demand for learning and equalise opportunities through better access to learning

• engage employers in improving skills for employability and competitiveness

• raise the quality of education and training delivery

• improve effectiveness and efficiency."

This workforce development strategy for the public administration sector is one of ten sector-based strategies. Each one describes the current issues in the sector nationally and locally. They give details of the current levels of employment and skills in the sector, and suggest where improvements in skills are necessary to meet the needs of the local and national economy.

The action plan for each sector gives details of the funding opportunities that are being made available to help individuals and organisations fulfil their potential.

[1] DfES, *Success for All – Reforming Further Education and Training,* Discussion Document, June 2002;
   DfES, *Success for All – Reforming Further Education and Training – Our Vision for the Future*, November 2002.
[2] This does not include higher education provision.

Public administration and education have both been subject to significant change over the last fifteen years.

The government has sought greater efficiency and accountability from the public administration sector. Its aim has been to provide best value services, which can be delivered by a public-sector workforce, but can also be delivered by the private sector or the voluntary sector. The public administration workforce has decreased, but the numbers of people providing public services has actually grown.

London has two tiers of government. The regional dimension is covered by the Greater London Authority. It "exists to provide strategic direction for the future of London." The local dimension is provided by the Borough Councils. In London East, there are nine boroughs and the Corporation of London. The focus of this strategy is workforce development at the local level.

The public administration sector had a directly employed workforce of 1.34 million people in Great Britain in 2000 (4% of the workforce), but employs many more staff indirectly, particularly through outsourcing. The education sector had a directly employed workforce of 2.07 million in Great Britain in 2000 (8.2% of the workforce). In 2001, in London East there were 63,000 employees in the education sector with almost 45% of those in primary education. A further 5,500 are to be found in education regulation. The total public administration workforce in London East, including education, was 110,500 in 2001.

Central government published the White Paper, *"Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services"* in 2002, which increases the demands on local government to perform well and to innovate. It proposed to further develop a national framework to enable councils to deliver high quality public services, and to have that performance measured.

The government also requires that all services should be available electronically by 2005, a hugely complex challenge.

The public administration workforce is older than the UK average, and many will retire in the next ten years. Already the sector has difficulties recruiting and retaining staff, so attention needs to be paid to improving the image of public administration and the morale of existing employees.

Local authorities have been experiencing considerable skill shortages including:

• town planners

• housing officers

• engineers

• architects

• social workers, and

• environmental health officers.

There were specific skills shortages in the education subsector in London East. Schools and colleges highlighted the current shortage of qualified teachers. In particular secondary schools stressed shortages in:

• science

• maths

• design and technology, and

• modern languages.

In post-16 education there were skill shortages nationally in general technical and practical skills, advanced IT skills, communication skills and management skills, according to the Skills Dialogue.

Local survey work in London East also revealed skills gaps amongst existing staff in the public administration sector in:

• project management

• supervision, management and leadership

• contract management

• public and private partnership working, and

• IT literacy (higher level).

In the education subsector, the main skills gaps were in:

• ICT, and

• management and team leadership.

The skills supply for the public administration sector is a complex one to map. There are over 300 occupations in the sector. Many of these are at professional or associate professional level. Entry to these occupations is dependent on graduate, professional or technical qualifications. On a national basis, 42% of the local government workforce is qualified to NVQ levels 4 or 5, and a further 47% has a qualification equivalent to NVQ levels 1, 2, or 3.

A strong training culture is evident in the education sector, but there is scope for more strategic planning of training activity. Support staff need training in order to maximise their personal development and to make them more effective contributors to the school community. The skills issues that need to be addressed are:

• basic skills

• ESOL, and

• basic IT skills.

In summary, the challenges that face local government are to:

• deliver best value and manage service delivery either in-house or through service procurement

• deliver e-government

• raise the level of strategic planning capability

• develop or recruit senior management expertise to manage change

• improve the image of the sector so that public administration is seen as a positive career choice for young people

• promote social inclusion and tackle equality issues

• replace an ageing workforce, and

• recruit professional and associate professional staff to meet the skill shortages.

This strategy offers a series of actions supported by the LSC London East that will help the sector meet these challenges.

Chapter 1
The main features
of the sector

Introduction

The public sector in the UK is a very large employer. The Audit Commission Report *Recruitment and Retention*[3] estimated 5 million employees. This includes a wide range of services including the police, fire service, health, education, the armed forces and local and central government departments. This strategy acknowledges the wider scope of the public sector, but will focus on public administration and education. The health and social care sector is the subject of a separate strategy.

Public administration and education have both been subject to significant change over the last fifteen years. The government has sought greater efficiency and accountability from the public administration sector. Its aim has been to provide *best value* services, which can be delivered by a public sector workforce, but can also be delivered by the private or the voluntary sector. If local authorities use other agencies through outsourcing, or grant aid or other funding mechanisms, to deliver these services, new and different skills will be demanded from their workforces.

In the statistical analysis that follows, the outsourced work has disappeared from the public sector labour force. These employees will be part of other SIC codes.[4] On one hand, the public administration workforce will have shrunk. On the other hand, as the Audit Commission pointed out, the workforce providing public services has actually grown.

In education, the introduction of a national curriculum, the measurement of performance and the exhortations to raise standards have all had an impact on the workforce. The drive to raise standards has also given an opportunity to the private sector to manage services. In the London East area, The Learning Trust[5] now manages the services formerly provided by Hackney LEA. In parallel with the public administration sector, the workforce numbers have also changed. The striking feature here is the growth in the number of support staff in the sector. The primary focus of this strategy in respect of the education sector will be the workforce development needs of the support staff.

Finally, it should be noted that in this strategy schools, colleges and universities are being viewed as employers who have a responsibility for developing their workforces. This is in line with the approach taken in all the strategies in the series. Schools, colleges and universities by the nature of their work may also be providers of training for their own and other organisations' staff.

Public administration

London has two tiers of government. The regional dimension is covered by the Greater London Authority. It states that it "is not a traditional local authority providing a range of public services but, under the direction of the Mayor, exists to provide strategic direction for the future of London". There are five separate organisations that "comprise the 'GLA Group'; they are London Development Agency, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, Metropolitan Police Authority, and Transport for London". The local dimension is the Borough Councils. In London East, there are nine boroughs and the Corporation of London. There are specific functions to be carried out by these local authorities. They include:

art galleries and museums

local planning and building control

car parking – on- and off-street

cemeteries

economic development

education

environmental health

highways, roads and footpaths

housing

leisure and recreation

libraries

parks and open spaces

social services[6]

tourism

trading standards

traffic and transportation co-ordination, and

waste collection, and disposal.

There are only a small number of central government departments with large office presence in London East and these include the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Exports Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD).

Education

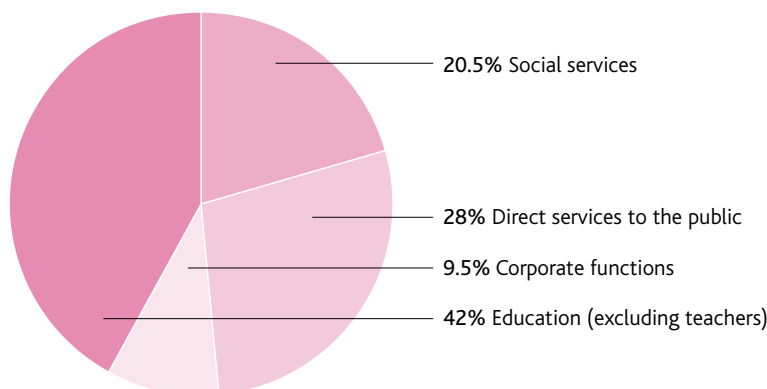There are five elements to the education service:

• nursery

• primary

• secondary

• tertiary, and

• regulation.

The nursery subsector and out-of-school clubs and playwork activity are covered in the Workforce Development Strategy for the Health and Social Care Sector. The teaching professionals at primary, secondary and tertiary level will also not be the main focus of this strategy. They may receive workforce development support through other funding streams. However, there is a significant opportunity to develop the growing support staff workforce.

The Local Government Service Skills Council proposal shows the proportions employed in different services – illustrated here in *figure 1*.

figure 1

**Local government employees
percentages of the national workforce by service area**

20.5% Social services

28% Direct services to the public

9.5% Corporate functions

42% Education (excluding teachers)

---

[3] Audit Commission, Public sector national report *Recruitment and retention – A public service workforce for the twenty-first century*, 2002.

[4] The Standard Industrial Classification is used to classify employers and employees into different industrial sectors.

[5] A not-for-profit organisation.

[6] As already indicated, Social Services is subject to a separate strategy.

The size of the sector

Public administration – Nationally

The public administration sector had a directly employed workforce of 1.34 million in Great Britain in 2000 (4% of the workforce), but employs many more staff indirectly. The drive to achieve best value services and the introduction of e-government are likely to lead to increasing externalisation of services and a further change in the shape of the workforce.

Education – Nationally

The education sector had a directly employed workforce of 2.07 million in Great Britain in 2000 (8.2% of the workforce). The drive to increase learning participation levels may increase the numbers employed in the workforce, but the types of appointments may be different from the jobs of the past. The government is planning 20,000 new Teaching Assistant jobs. This is one example of a broader trend where school support staff numbers are expected to increase.

Subregional workforce numbers – public administration and education

Table 1 (below) shows 63,397 employees in the education sector with almost 45% in primary education. A further 5,673 are to be found in education regulation. As indicated previously, not all of the 110,504 employees are within the remit of this strategy, eg the Fire Service. However, with the advent of outsourcing, not all public service staff will appear in these statistics, which are based on the responses of employers who are asked to state their type of business. Services to the public in some boroughs are outsourced to private limited companies, eg waste collection, and the employees will be recorded elsewhere in national statistics. These trends will impact on local area statistics as shown in *figure 2*.

table 1
Public administration and education employees, London East, 2001

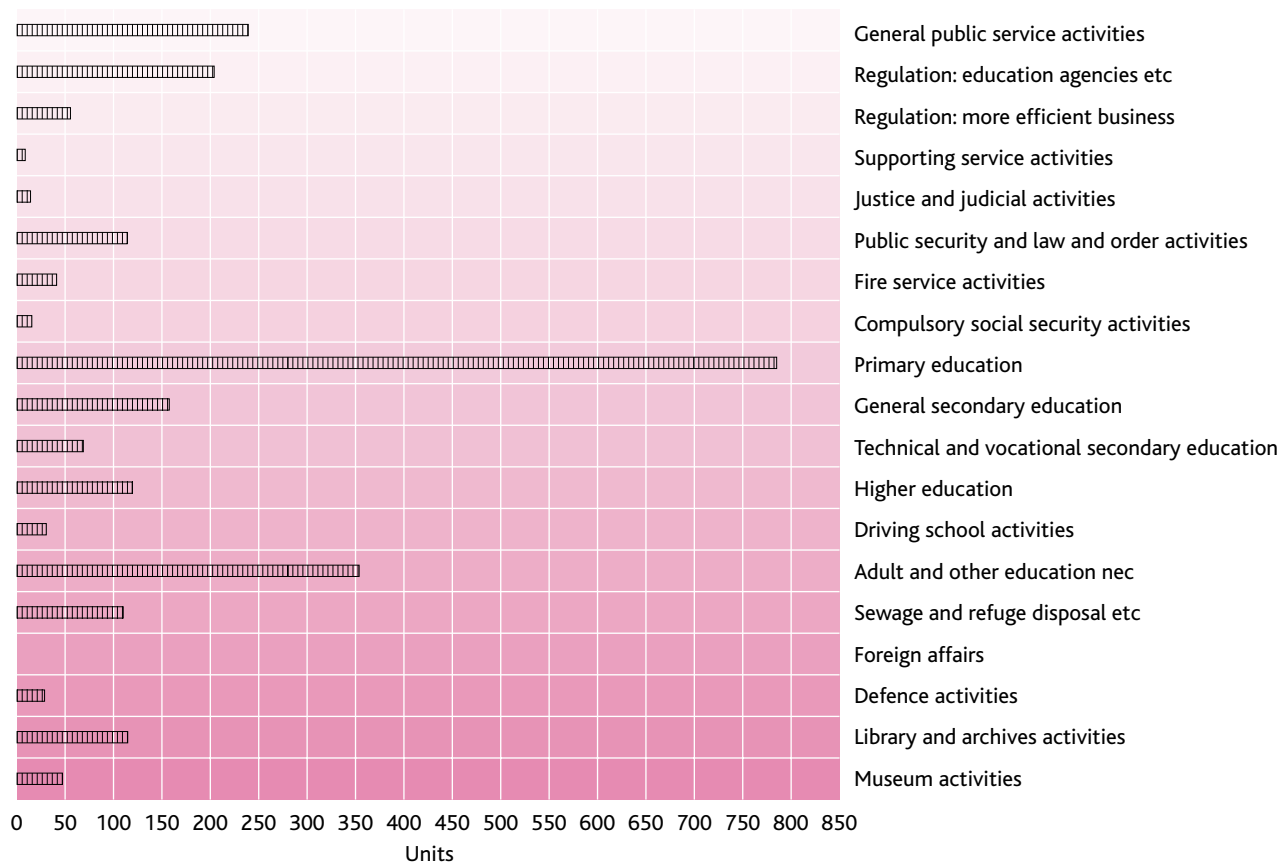|	All subsectors	Education	Public administration
General public service activities	17,131		17,131
Regulation: education agencies etc	5,673		5,673
Regulation: more efficient business	2,153		2,153
Supporting service activities	106		106
Justice and judicial activities	1,852		1,852
Public security and law and order activities	8,654		8,654
Fire service activities	1,919		1,919
Compulsory social security activities	2,586		2,586
Primary education	28,350	28,350	
General secondary education	12,784	12,784	
Technical and vocational secondary education	2,178	2,178	
Higher education	11,612	11,612	
Adult and other education nec*	8,473	8,473	
Sewage and refuse disposal etc	4,043		4,043
Defence activities	685		685
Library and archives activities	1,015		1,015
Museum activities etc	1,290		1,290
Total	**110,504**	**63,397**	**47,107**

*nec: not elsewhere classified
Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001, ONS Crown copyright (2003)

figure 2
Employees by borough, public administration
and education, London East, 2001
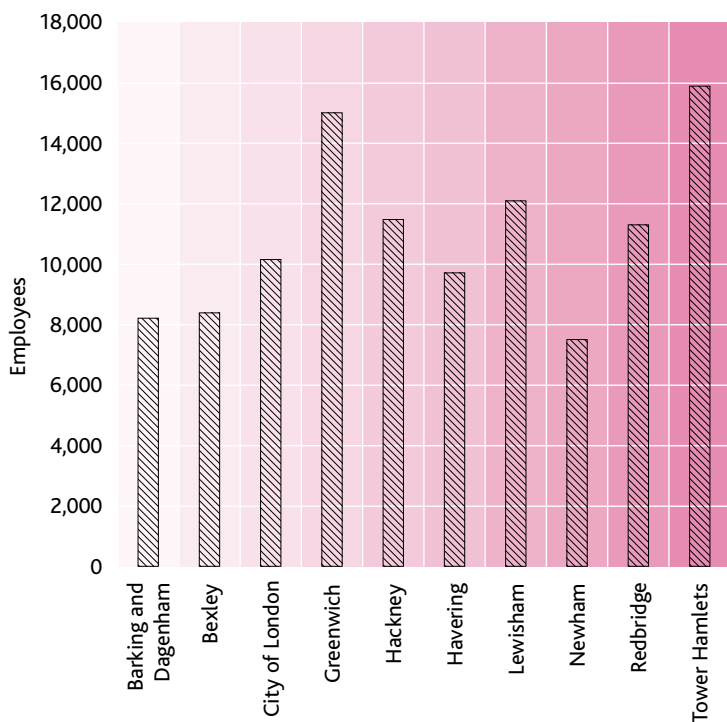
Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001, ONS Crown copyright (2003)

figure 3
Public administration and education
Total establishments by subsectors, London East, 2001

General public service activities
Regulation: education agencies etc
Regulation: more efficient business
Supporting service activities
Justice and judicial activities
Public security and law and order activities
Fire service activities
Compulsory social security activities
Primary education
General secondary education
Technical and vocational secondary education
Higher education
Driving school activities
Adult and other education nec
Sewage and refuge disposal etc
Foreign affairs
Defence activities
Library and archives activities
Museum activities

Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001, ONS Crown copyright (2003)

The forecast employment numbers for public administration and defence show that throughout the rest of the decade there will be a continuing but very modest decline in the total numbers employed. In the immediate future, there is expected to be growth in the number employed in the education service, but from 2006 onwards there will also be a decline of perhaps 500 jobs (*figures 4 and 5*).
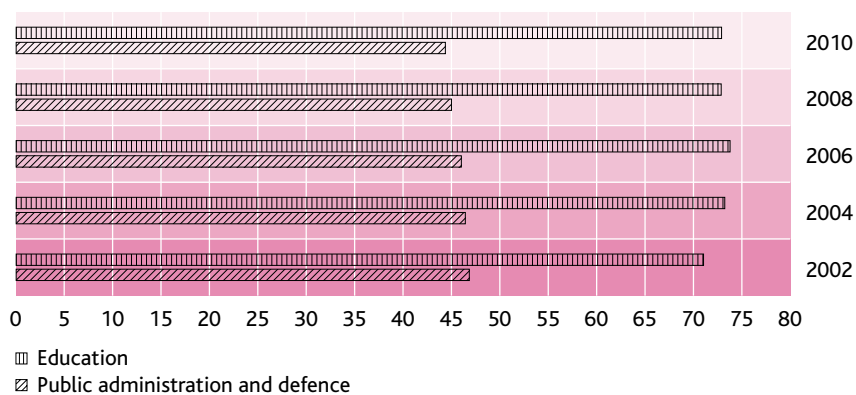
Changes in employment levels
Public administration and defence, and education sectors,
London East, 2001-2010 (thousands)

☐ Education
☐ Public administration and defence

Source: CE/IER LEFM 2002
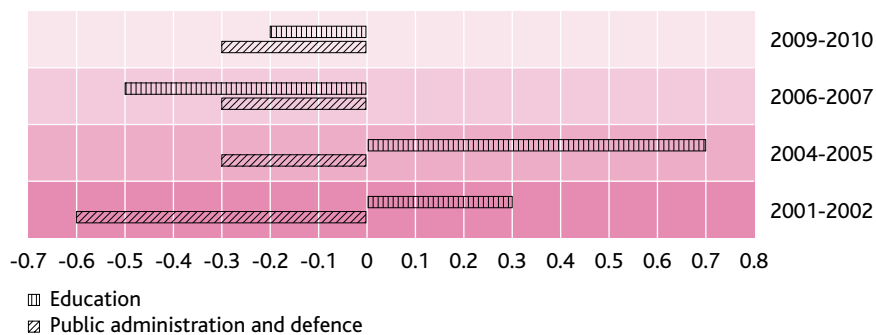
Employment levels
Public administration and defence, and education sectors,
London East, 2001-2010 (thousands)

☐ Education
☐ Public administration and defence

Source: CE/IER LEFM 2002

Case study

Investing in people – a case study.

The London Borough of Havering's Environment and Enterprise Service consists of a wide range of services (including planning, meals on wheels and street cleaning) employing approximately 1,600 full- and part-time staff based in offices and depots throughout the borough.

The executive director, Heather Bonfield, wanted to create a performance culture in the Environment and Enterprise Service so that employees felt valued, recognised, supported and developed. Heather was assisted by project manager, Colin Sargeant, in developing good business and management practices that would help staff succeed.

A special management group was established to develop activities for staff. This group also made use of workshops and master classes that were supported by the Learning and Skills Council's Workforce Development Fund.

Staff took courses in management development and basic IT. They were also offered the use of keep fit equipment and the opportunity to have health checks.

Another change that took place in the Environment and Enterprise Service was the monitoring of performance on a monthly basis. As a result of all these developments the department is much better organised, management is more effective and performance continues to rise.

All of these improvements meant that the management group could recommend to the executive director that different services within the department could each apply for recognition as an Investor in People.

13 sections and services in the Environment and Enterprise Service have now achieved IiP recognition, which both demonstrates and rewards the hard work of the staff.

Chapter 2
Changing demand levels in the sector

Public administration

Sector drivers

• Culture change

The local government sector is being asked to change. The emphasis is not on a public sector workforce, but rather on public services provided by different workforces. Public services will be delivered not only by the current public sector bodies, but also through the private and voluntary sectors that will occupy enhanced roles.

The Audit Commission notes that although there has been a decline in the number of public sector workers, there has been an increase in the numbers of people delivering public services.

The driver behind these changes is the requirement to achieve "best value for money" through the most effective providers. This includes funding to the voluntary sector to increase services to different groups, many of whom may be difficult to reach through traditional public sector employees. Local government, in total, allocated £1.1 billion in 2000-2001 to voluntary sector groups.

• Best value and performance measurement

The Local Government White Paper, *"Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services"*,[7] continued the ethos established in 1999 through the legislation that set up best value procedures. Councils have been charged with procuring quality services at best value through a vigorous procurement process since 1999. Local councils have also been required to meet statutory performance indicators set out by the Audit Commission in the seven years up to 2000-2001. The Audit Commission has not set indicators for 2003-2004[8].

"Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services" increased the demands on local government to perform well and to innovate. It proposed to further develop a national framework to enable councils to deliver high quality public services, and to have that performance measured. London Borough Councils have already been subject to "Comprehensive Performance Assessment" and measured on a four point scale.

Other measures in the White Paper included increased freedoms to be made available to the highest performing councils, and deregulation for a range of activities for all councils.

• Information and communications technology

The Government requires that all services should be available electronically by 2005, a hugely complex challenge.

Four underlying principles support the Government's strategy on e-government as identified in "E-government, a strategic framework for public services in the information age". They are:

• building services around citizens' choices

• making government and its services more accessible

• ensuring that new technology does not create a digital divide between those with ready access to electronic media and those without, and

• using information more effectively.[9]

---

[7] Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 11 December 2001.

[8] Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Best value Performance Indicators for 2003/04, 3 March 2003.*

[9] Employers' Organisation for Local Government – briefing paper, April 2003.

• Sustainable development

"The sector also has a major responsibility for sustainable development. Local authorities are charged with promoting environmental, social and economic well being for their locality. Authorities are required to lead Agenda 21 campaigns, organise waste management and promote recycling".

Issues

There are considerable concerns about the shape and capability of the public administration workforce of the future. They are as follows:

• The age of the workforce

The workforce is much older than the norm nationally. "If teachers are excluded, 29% of the workforce are over 50 and only 7% are under 25. A third of local government employees will be retiring within the next 10 years." Although the age profile of the London East population is younger than much of the UK, the problem for the public administration workforce is similar. There is a replacement demand issue that the sector needs to face in terms of recruitment and retention.

• The difficulties experienced in recruiting and retaining staff

The sector has a "poor" public image and may be regarded as unattractive to potential recruits. Many staff already employed in the sector feel that they are undervalued and not regarded as competent professionals by the general public. Even where individuals are prepared to accept this negative attitude, other factors may prompt them to leave their posts. Some staff may find it difficult to adjust to the changes taking place in local government. They may also feel that the changes have not been effectively explained, and they do not have ownership over their working lives.

The workload of employees has also to be considered. Staffing reductions in recent years through delayering have tended to increase workloads and increase levels of responsibility without increases in pay or recognition. All of this in a working environment which appears to the current workforce to have increasing levels of bureaucracy, yet brings greater demands to be entrepreneurial in approach, and efficient in operation.

There is a tension to be managed between the attitudes held by staff in the sector and potential entrants to the sector, and public administration employers who are striving to deliver a public service agenda that is high quality and giving best value to local people.

• Salary levels and local housing costs

In the local survey work carried out for this strategy, the issues of salary levels and housing costs were raised as significant deterrents to new entrants to public administration in London East. For existing workers, it was not a "push" factor strong enough on its own to persuade them to leave the public sector workforce. However, when culture changes, new skills demands and insufficient financial reward are considered together, some staff feel little incentive to stay.

• Stress and absenteeism

Employee perceptions of work in the sector mentioned above have resulted in increased stress and absenteeism, which has made it harder for those who remain in the front line.

table 2
The age of the workforce

Age range	Local Government Workforce	Whole UK Workforce
Under 25	7%	16%
25-34	19%	26%
35-49	45%	36%
50-54	14%	11%
55+	15%	11%

(information from Local Government Services Skills Council Proposal – 30th April 2002)

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Education

Sector drivers

• Drive to raise standards

The issues facing schools have been well publicised. The introduction of performance measures for both pupils and staff have increased the workloads of all members of the school community. The initiatives introduced may have been beneficial to pupils, but they have changed the demands on teachers and on the support staff who work with them.

Where local authorities have been seen to *fail*, alternative management strategies have been used, by bringing in external organisations to run education institutions.

• Financial arrangements for funding schools

Schools have the opportunity to receive funding for a variety of initiatives that can raise the income of the institution. This additional funding is welcomed, but often requires considerable paperwork in developing bids, and maintaining additional records during the lifetime of project-based activity.

Issues

• Recruitment and retention in high-cost London

Schools do face difficulties in recruitment and retention because of the high cost of living. Housing costs and the lack of housing provision for key workers are problems. Recent figures show the recruitment problem has eased slightly, but there is still a problem that middle managers may be tempted to move out of London after gaining experience in the capital.

• Use of overseas staff

Some local authorities and schools have taken steps to recruit from abroad. This has meant workforce development in terms of acclimatising education professionals from overseas to the curriculum structure and assessment framework that applies in the English education system. A task that will need to continue.

• Proposals for reform of the school workforce and the introduction of Teaching Assistants

These proposals will increase the support staff numbers in schools, and will require management skills to integrate them into the working life of schools. This is over and above the development of training programmes to support Teaching Assistant posts.

• Job satisfaction and pupil behaviour

The anti-social behaviour that some pupils exhibit has made the teaching role more difficult in some wards in London East. This reduces job satisfaction, and the added stress managing anti-social behaviour has been a factor in staff leaving the teaching profession, and may have a detrimental effect on recruitment.

• Skills shortages

The major skills shortages reported by local authorities in 2001 – on a national basis – were as follows:

Occupation	Authorities with difficulties recruiting
Social workers	62%
Occupational therapists	34%
Environmental health officers	26%
Trading standards officers	22%
IT professionals	22%
Accountants	21%
Teachers	20%
Educational psychologists	19%
Cleaners	16%
Planners	14%
Solicitors	14%
Building control officers	12%
Catering staff	9%
IT technical staff	8%
Qualified cooks	7%

(information from Local Government Services Skills Council Proposal – 30th April 2002)

Local survey work in London East carried out in the winter of 2002-2003 confirmed these trends. Local authorities were experiencing considerable skill shortages:

• town planners

• housing officers

• engineers

• architects

• social workers, and

• environmental health officers.

There was also an identified need for:

• staff managers (at all levels) who can lead Public Private Partnerships (PPP)

• project managers, and

• contract managers.

The changing nature of management in the public sector as a result of legislative changes and the need to secure best value public services requires an enhanced range of managerial skills. In this respect, local authorities are competing with the private sector for managerial expertise.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

There were specific skills shortages in the education subsector in London East. Almost without exception schools and colleges highlighted the current shortage of qualified teachers, a shortage that exists in both key stages 2 and 3. In particular secondary schools stressed shortages in:

• science

• maths

• design and technology, and

• modern languages.

Shortages were also highlighted in some support staff roles namely:

• ICT and science technicians

• good quality administration staff, and

• bursars with a knowledge of schools.

It should be noted that these shortages were more borough specific and not shortages across the whole London East subregion.

In post-16 education there were skill shortages nationally in general technical and practical skills, advanced IT skills, communication skills and management skills, according to the Skills Dialogue.[10] The number of hard-to-fill vacancies has steadily increased over recent years, and now four in every 10 vacancies is hard-to-fill. It was suggested there were low numbers of skilled applicants coming forward, and low qualifications among those that did apply.

• Skills gaps

Local survey work in London East also revealed skills gaps amongst existing staff in the **public administration** sector:

• project management

• supervison, management and leadership

• contract management

• Public Private Partnership working

• consultative skills

• presentational and representational skills, and

• IT literacy (higher level).

As indicated by the comment on skills shortages, the changing ethos in the public sector requires staff development to meet the new agenda. Outsourcing services demands negotiation and contract management skills.

The most important skills gap identified nationally is *performance management*, perhaps not surprising given central government policy towards local government, and the requirements of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process.

In the **education** subsector, the main skills gaps were in:

• ICT, and

• management and team leadership.

In post-16 education[11], skills gaps were reported among professional, technical, managerial, and clerical and secretarial staff. The skill gaps most commonly reported were:

• communication

• advanced IT or software skills, and

• management skills.

Public administration

Staff retention

Staff turnover within local authorities varies dramatically between 10-30% per annum depending on the departments and local authorities. However, specialist areas such as:

• social services

• town planners

• engineers

• architects, and

• housing officers

are experiencing acute turnover of staff.

Education

Staff retention

The teaching profession nationally lost a significant number of staff in the 1990s to premature retirement and retirement on the grounds of ill-health. Following legislative changes in the late nineties, early retirements slowed. However, according to the DfES statistics, the numbers taking premature retirement are starting to increase again, a subject which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The effects of the national trends are compounded in London East by the high living costs which lead younger teachers to move out of London after gaining initial experience.

[10] DfES, *An Assessment of Skill Needs in Post-16 Education and Training*, 2002.

[11] DfES, *An Assessment of Skill Needs in Post-16 Education and Training*, 2002.

The skills supply for the public administration sector is a complex one to map. The Local Government NTO in its Workforce Development Plan[12] suggested that local government had over 300 occupations.

Many of these are at professional or associate professional level. Entry to these occupations is dependent on graduate, professional or technical qualifications. On a national basis, 42% of the local government workforce is qualified to NVQ levels 4 or 5, and a further 47% has a qualification equivalent to NVQ levels 1, 2, or 3.[13]

Local government is therefore operating in a broad labour market and competes for some skills with the private sector. Shortages identified in accountancy, IT and for solicitors in the previous chapter may be difficult to overcome, if the private sector is offering more favourable pay and conditions of service. The public sector can gain staff when there are downturns in the economic cycle, as there have been recently. These difficulties have affected the IT industry, and the public sector could be a possible beneficiary of increased numbers of IT practitioners in the market for work.

The largest skill shortage area is Social Work[14], with local authorities dependent on the higher education sector for the initial supply of labour into professional level occupations. From the most recent figures available, the total number of students on Social Work courses at UK higher education institutions was 31,595 (2000-2001) – under-graduate and post-graduate levels combined.[15] The numbers are probably relatively small compared with demand, and given a shortage of supply, those that do qualify may seek work outside large conurbations like London. An alternative is to attract back qualified staff who have left the profession.

Similar supply problems may exist in other shortage areas such as architecture, planning and engineering where higher education courses are failing to attract sufficient numbers on to their courses at the outset, leading to insufficient supply coming on to the labour market.

One area of major skills shortage is environmental health. The press release issued by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health last August (2002) demonstrated the supply problem.

"Low awareness and misconceptions about the nature of the job have contributed to a steep decline in applications to accredited university environmental health courses, from around 300 in 1996 to around 50 in 2001. If this trend is not reversed, there could be a shortage of 1,000 Environmental Health Officers by 2005."

It also shows the work that needs to be undertaken to qualify as an Environmental Health Officer. "Students must pass a CIEH-accredited degree course, undertake practical training and successfully complete practical training, logbook assessment and professional examinations." [16]

The unwillingness of younger people to enter some professional occupations cannot be tackled by London East alone. These are national problems. Where local learning providers and the local authorities can make a very positive intervention is in the workforce development of those who are unqualified and working in the sector. The national estimate is that 10% of the local government workforce has no qualifications. Extrapolating from our local statistics, this could imply as many as 11,000 members of the workforce are without qualifications. Further study would be required to substantiate such a claim, before detailed actions could be taken.

Education

The DfES has recently published an analysis of trends in recruitment to initial teacher training, teacher retirements and vacancies.

Primary Initial Teacher Training (ITT) recruitment for 2002-03 was the highest it had been since 1993-94, and marginally exceeded targets. Secondary ITT has been below target nationally every year since 1993-94, but has recently been improving, with the gap between target and actual down to 6% for 2003-04.

Other notable features since 1998 have occurred. The numbers of early retirements was reduced dramatically in the year 1998-99 following legislative changes, but during the last four years this has started to rise again, with the number of premature retirements increasing by 44% over the period 1998-99 to 2001-02. On a more positive note, the actual numbers recruited to secondary ITT have increased significantly over recent years, and although less than target, show a positive trend. Moreover, the number of returners has also increased.

The biggest problem for the London East area is probably exemplified by the vacancies data. Although the broad supply position is improving nationally, London has the highest teacher vacancy of any English region at 2.7% (2002), and up from 2% in 1999. All other regions, except the Eastern region had vacancy rates below 1.5% in 2002.

The action plan (to this strategy) includes an initiative to support "a project that will tackle teacher shortages in the area with a particular focus on increasing the proportion of entrants from ethnic minority communities." This will be particularly important when the DfES statistics show that nationally 72% of providers of Initial Teacher Training have less than 10% of their entrants from ethnic minority groups, and over 50% have less than 5% of entrants from ethnic minority groups.

The government is currently developing the Teaching Assistants programme. This programme offers training, development and qualifications for relevant support staff. The scheme operates at a local authority level, but is within a national framework. According to Teachernet – a website developed for DfES:

"A professional standards framework and training for high level teaching assistants will be developed by the Teacher Training Agency and linked to relevant Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) modules. The standards of prior experience, experience on the job, and any training, should bring the high level teaching assistant to roughly the equivalent of NVQ level 4. It will provide a sound basis from which many high level teaching assistants could progress, in time, to become qualified teachers."

The new courses will offer qualifications at NVQ levels 2, 3 and 4 and offer three progression routes which will allow support staff to choose opportunities best suited to their interests and aptitudes. The routes are:

• pedagogical

• behaviour and guidance, and

• administration and organisation.

The first is for those supporting pupils and teachers in the teaching and learning process; the second is geared towards those acting as learning mentors who provide support to individual pupils with learning difficulties and behaviour issues; and the third could lead to higher level bursar or business manager roles.

LSC London East will look to support local authorities that that have commenced Teaching Assistant programmes through Standards Fund allocations in its subregion.

---

[12] LGNTO, *Developing a high performance culture, the Local Government Workforce Development Plan 2001-04*, 2001.

[13] LGNTO, *Developing a high performance culture, the Local Government Workforce Development Plan 2001-04*, 2001.

[14] This occupation is covered also in the *Workforce Development Strategy for the Health and Social Care Sector*.

[15] Higher Education Statistics Agency.

[16] It tells us that "accredited courses are currently offered by 11 universities and include undergraduate and postgraduate courses on a full-time or part-time basis."

Public administration

There are eight issues that need to be managed by the public sector.

- Delivering best value and managing service delivery either in-house or through service procurement.

- Delivering e-government.

- Raising the level of strategic planning capability.

- Developing or recruiting senior managerial expertise to manage change.

- Improving the image of the sector so that public administration is seen as a positive career choice for young people.

- Promoting social inclusion and tackling equality issues.

- Replacing an ageing workforce.

- Recruiting professional and associate professional staff to meet skill shortages.

Local government needs to tackle these issues through recruitment and through the enhancement of the skills base of its existing staff. One initiative has been to establish the concept of "Learning Authorities" by the sector. E-learning could be used to enhance some skills, but may not be the only answer to a workforce that needs to *embrace* a changing culture. It is one which requires multi-skilling, flexibility, updating and continual learning on the part of its workforce.

Local government has also to re-think its "job offer", and look at more flexible employment packages in terms of part-time working, working from home, and flexible retirement packages.

The skill sets that need to be developed include:

- leadership:
  - to define strategy
  - to manage change
  - to take risks and innovate

- performance management

- management of IT systems

- development of e-procurement processes

- development of e-government generally

- customer information management, including enhanced customer services

- contract management, and

- project management.

The increased involvement with the voluntary sector as a provider of public services further increases the role of local government in managing the social inclusion agenda. It is essential that the public sector develops the skills in its staff to work with local communities and with agencies who are delivering projects and programmes in those communities.

In the local survey work, basic skills needs were identified: literacy, numeracy and basic IT skills were all needed. There was some evidence of ESOL support being required, but this was not regarded as a priority for the borough councils as a whole.

Education

There are some broader issues for the London East education services. These are:

- recruitment

- retention

- management of anti-social pupil behaviour while remaining socially inclusive

- using IT effectively, and

- leadership and management.

A strong training culture is evident in the education sector, but there is scope for more strategic planning of training activity. This could be at local authority, or school management level, to ensure the skills needs of all staff are met effectively. Greater use could be made of training needs analysis to maximise the use of training budgets.

Support staff need training in order to maximise their personal development, and to make them more effective contributors to the school community. The skills issues that need to be addressed are:

- basic skills

- ESOL, and

- basic IT skills.

Finally, the introduction of the Teaching Assistants initiative will require specific workforce development activity.

We will:

- encourage all stakeholders to operate a shared approach to labour market information to ensure the employment needs of the sector are met

- work with partners to raise the profile of the public administration sector as a career path; and to publicise the value of the support staff in the education sector

- work with partners to ensure relevant and positive information, advice and guidance is available to adults and young people about careers in local government, and various employment opportunities in different parts of the education service

- support employers in public administration and education in London East to raise the skill levels of their employees, particularly in leadership and management, and IT – at all levels

- support the development of relevant continuous development programmes

- support employees in the sector who lack basic skills, IT skills, or English language skills to access appropriate learning opportunities, and

- encourage local people to access local jobs.

Standard industrial classification codes	Public administration
75.11	General public service activities
75.12	Regulation: education agencies
75.13	Regulation: more efficient business
75.14	Supporting service activities
75.21	Foreign affairs
75.22	Defence activities
75.23	Justice and judicial activities
75.24	Public security, and law and order activities
75.25	Fire service activities
75.30	Compulsory social security activities
80.10	Primary education
80.21	General secondary education
80.22	Technical and vocational secondary education
80.30	Higher education
80.41	Driving school activities
80.42	Adult and other education
90.00	Sewage and refuse disposal
92.51	Library and archives activities
92.52	Museum activities

Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2002, ONS Crown copyright (2003)