

Essex Learning and Skills Council Annual Plan 2006-07

May 2006

**Of interest to National, Regional and
Local Learning and Skills Colleagues**

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1. Our Vision

Foreword from the Chairman and Executive Director of LSC Essex

We welcome the opportunity, on behalf of the Council and staff of LSC Essex, to introduce our fifth annual business plan, which sets out the priorities and actions on which we will focus our attention and funding for 2006/07. Delivering these local actions will be our contribution to the delivery of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSCs) Regional and National priorities. In 2005 we established a three year vision:

"There will be a skilled and responsive workforce in the LSC Essex area that will enable individuals, employers and communities to benefit fully from economic regeneration, growth and new business opportunities"

Having reviewed this vision, in the context of what has been achieved in the last year, we believe that it is still relevant and appropriate to roll forward into this annual plan, and probably those developed in the foreseeable future. There is no doubt that a great deal has been achieved but this ambitious vision will not be realised in the short term. It will require sustained effort on behalf of all those involved in the learning and skills sector in Essex and significant funding from both the LSC and a wide range of stakeholders. We are determined to make this vision a reality and this plan tells you how we will move forward towards that goal in 2006/07. The following strap line captures the motivation that will drive us forward.

'Essex – better off for learning'

As with previous years, we will embrace new challenges with optimism – an attitude that we have cultivated since our inception in 2001. We will continue to strive for continuous improvement in everything we do and will challenge the conventional ways of working to ensure incremental step changes in our progress. The Grant Letter from the Secretary of State, received in November 2005, 'raised the bar' once again to maintain the momentum of learning and skills achievement, by signalling heightened levels of expectation. The achievement and participation of young people continues to be a key priority, with a focus on providing them with a stronger foundation for adult and working life. We must also significantly increase the achievement of basic skills and platform skills for employability at Level 2; and ensure that people can access strong progression routes to Level 3 and beyond. At the same time we must continue to support the achievement of the Higher Education (HE) target; improve support and access to education and training for disadvantaged learners and, notwithstanding the need to change the pattern of learning for adults, we will safeguard Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL).

We firmly believe that by creating an innovative learning infrastructure we will be able to build on our recent successes in delivering these national and regional priorities and with 11 Centres of Vocational Excellence in Essex we are well on the way to achieving this. Employers must be central players in the implementation of this innovative approach with much more involvement in the way that learning is designed. We intend to achieve this by making sure that the successful employer engagement gained through the National Employer Training Pilot (NETP) is taken forward with even greater focus in the roll out of the National Employer Training Programme 'Train to Gain'.

The LSC Essex response to Strategic Area Review *'Making it Happen'* will remain a cornerstone of our work this year, providing a clear direction for locally delivered action to address local need. It is testament to the insight of all of the strategic partners that led that review and the subsequent response document, that all of the reforming actions we are committed to taking forward have a clear strategic fit with emerging learning and skills policy. We are greatly encouraged by this collaborative partnership

working, which will place us in a strong position this year but we must learn from the examples of excellence demonstrated by many of our learning providers and make sure that their cutting edge developments are part of a coherent whole. This will ensure that all learners have the opportunity for appropriate progression in education and training, wherever they live and learn.

One of the biggest challenges that we, and the whole learning and skills sector, face is the imperative to rebalance public and private investment in the cost of learning so that it better reflects the benefits and financial returns for learners, employers and communities. We signalled our intention to do this in the 2005 LSC Essex Annual Plan when we cited this strategic objective as being a key contributor to the achievement of our 3 year vision. This year we can translate that strategy into action as we move urgently to implement the new funding strategy '*Priorities for Success*' which constitutes a radical change in our funding approach, including the realignment of resources to support our Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets, apprenticeships and roll out of National Employer Training Pilot (NETP).

All those involved in learning across Essex, from classroom assistants, teachers, and lecturers to Children's Services Authorities, have a key role to play in making our vision a reality. By working together we will give all of our learners the opportunities they deserve, to help them to realise their potential and to contribute to their own success, the success of businesses and the success of the Essex community. We want to reaffirm the commitment we have made to you to fulfil our leadership role in bringing greater drive and ambition to the reform of learning and skills in our county.

Chris Paveley
Chairman

Alison Webster
Executive Director

2. Our Priorities

2.1. We have published our second Annual Statement of Priorities which will take us further forward in our aim of transformation. Our six priorities for 2006/07 are to:

1. Ensure that all 14-19 year olds have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities
2. Make learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers, young people and adults
3. Transform the learning and skills sector through agenda for change
4. Strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development so that we provide the skills needed to help individuals into jobs
5. Improve the skills of workers who are delivering public services
6. Strengthen the capacity of the LSC to lead change nationally, regionally and locally.

Learning and Skills Council - East of England Regional Statement of Skills Priorities

This statement of priorities has been developed to reflect the commitment to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare young people in the East of England to be the workforce of the future • Up-skill the present workforce • Support the unemployed to gain the qualifications necessary to re enter the labour market • Respond to the needs of individuals and employers 			
In addition to the sectors reported in the Annual Statement of Priorities we have agreed with partners the following sectors on the basis of level 2 and level 3 needs which are of importance to the East of England:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The built environment/construction • Logistics • Health and Social Care • Retail • Hospitality <p>In addition, the following sectors have been identified as important both to certain elements of the Regional Economic Strategy and partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing and engineering • Land based 			
National Priority	Regional Skills Priorities	What does success look like/Regional Targets	Key Partners
N1 Ensure that all 14 – 19 year olds have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities	R1 Increase the relevance of learning for young people and their attainment.	a. 53,000 19 year olds qualified to level 2 by 2008 b. 132,500 16 – 18 year olds in structured learning by 2007 c. Jointly produce with partners area prospectuses on all learning opportunities for young people, for their information and their parents. d. Increase the amount of vocational learning undertaken by young people by developing links between schools and industry, and strengthen work related skills development.	Connexions Employers Higher Education Local authorities Schools, FE and work based learning providers Education Business Link Organisation
N2 Making learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers, young people and adults	R2 Develop clear routes to appropriate learning for employers, young people and adults	a. Commence Train to Gain: April 06: Cambridgeshire & Essex August 06: Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk b. By 2009 14,775 employers engaged Which will include 8,000 hard-to-reach employers c. Agree with partners the delivery of the flexible elements of Train to Gain and a shift in the balance of provision d. Implement the regional impartial skills brokerage service with a focus on priority sectors, including public services .See also 1C above	Employers and employer organisations including Sector Skills Councils HE liP uk Jobcentre Plus Local authorities EEDA East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership

N3 Transform the learning and skills sector through agenda for change	R3 Transform provision to ensure a better fit for employer and employee needs in the region with a focus on our regional priority sectors	a. Improve the quality of LSC funded provision including the leadership of the post-16 sector and aligning provider development plans to regional priorities. b. Produce Regional Sector Skills agreements for each agreed sectors c. Develop provision which will support the achievement of the following sector targets	Centre for Excellence in Leadership Colleges, independent training providers, schools Lifelong Learning UK Sector Skills Councils
		Qualification	
		Information and technology qualifications (ITQ)	
		school support staff (SSS)	
		Onsite assessment and training (OSAT) construction	
		Business improvement techniques (BIT) engineering	
N4 Strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development so that we provide the skills needed to help all individuals into jobs and lifelong employability	R4 Ensure all individuals can access the skills and qualifications they need to improve employability	a. 84,000 Skills for life achievements gained between 2004 and 2007 b. Develop and roll out the L2 entitlement strategy for each local area c. Maintain current levels of provision for Personal and Community Development Learning d. Implement the New Deal for Skills for Jobcentre Plus clients e. Lead a regional consortia approach to access public funding that supports education and training in local communities, with at least one new provider receiving mainstream funding during 2006/07	Colleges, Schools and providers Employers and employer organisations Higher Education liP uk Jobcentre Plus NIACE EEDA EoESCP Trade Unions Voluntary and community sector National Offender Management Service
N5 Improve the skills of the workers who are delivering public services	R5 Develop responsive learning pathways for public services	a. Include public services within the Train to Gain model including links to Apprenticeships b. Implement the regional early years strategy c. Implement Year 2 of the Skills for Life pilot project in partnership with EEDA	Colleges, schools and providers Government Office EoESCP EERA Trade unions
N6 Strengthen the LSC to lead change nationally regionally and locally	R6 Lead the development of responsive provision in the context of the regional economy	a. Implement the agreed statement of skills priorities b. Develop an effective rapid response approach to enable the delivery of relevant and timely training to employers c. Engage partners and employers in the development of the CoVE's and Skills Academies across the region	Regional intelligence centre (RIC) EoESCP CoVE's Skills Academies SSC's

2.2. Locally, we will work towards achieving the commitments made in both the National and Regional Statements of Priorities. A summary of local activities and measures of success are contained within the key actions section of this plan

Our Targets

3.1. Under priority 1, for young people:

- Increase the proportion of 19 year-olds who achieve at least Level 2 by 3 percentage points between 2004 and 2006, and a further two percentage points between 2006 and 2008, and improve attainment at Level 3.

Nationally we need an additional 31,000 young people to gain a Level 2 in 2005/2006 compared to 2003/2004 and a further 22,000 in 2007/2008 compared to 2005/2006.

In Essex we need an additional 500 young people to gain a Level 2 in 2007/2008 compared to 2005/2006.

3.2. Under priority 2, for adults:

- Reduce by at least 40 per cent the number of adults in the workforce who lack an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent qualifications by 2010.

Nationally, in 2006/07 we need to increase the numbers of full Level 2 achievements through further education and work-based learning to 117,000 [NB excludes NES and NETP elements]. In addition the roll out of the National Employer Training Programme will increase the LSC contribution to this target.

In Essex we plan to deliver 2,620 full Level 2 achievements through further education and work-based learning in 2006/07. That is an increase of 343 compared to 2005/06.

3.2.1. Under priority 2, for adults:

- Improve the basic skills of 2.25 million adults between 2001 and 2010, with a milestone of 1.5 million in 2007.

In Essex we need 9,139 learners to achieve Skills for Life qualifications in 2006/07.

3.3. Underpinning both priorities 1 and 2, for Apprenticeships:

- The LSC has agreed a new Performance Indicator for Apprenticeships. The aim is for 75 per cent more people to complete their apprenticeships in 2007/08, compared to 2002/03.

Nationally we aim to raise the number of completions to 70,000 in 2006/07 supporting the achievement of Level 2 and Level 3 qualification targets.

Locally we aim to raise the number of completions to 2,013 in 2006/07.

3.4. We also work with key partners to contribute to the following targets:

- Increase the proportion of young people and adults achieving a Level 3 qualification.
- Reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training by two percentage points by 2010
- Increase participation in Higher Education towards 50 per cent of those aged 18 to 30 by 2010.

4. Our Values

4.1. Our values set out for us the way we work.

- **Trust:** the LSC has to be world-class at partnership and so we believe trust must be at the heart of the LSC.
- **Expertise:** we demonstrate expertise and true leadership in every aspect of our work. We have complete understanding of the communities we serve and of what is needed by business in terms of current and future skills.
- **Ambition:** we are ambitious for ourselves, in the goals and objectives we set, but more importantly we are ambitious for the communities we serve, for employers and for individuals in education and training.
- **Urgency:** we want to bring drive and urgency to the learning and skills sector, to tackle long-standing issues swiftly and professionally and to be responsive and fast moving.

4.2. Together, our four values will ensure the LSC can provide leadership and direction at a time of great change. Our plan sets out how we will deliver our national and regional priorities in a local context highlighting what actions will be critically important in local delivery and what our contribution to the national targets will be.

5. A Context for Delivery

5.1. Geography and Demographics

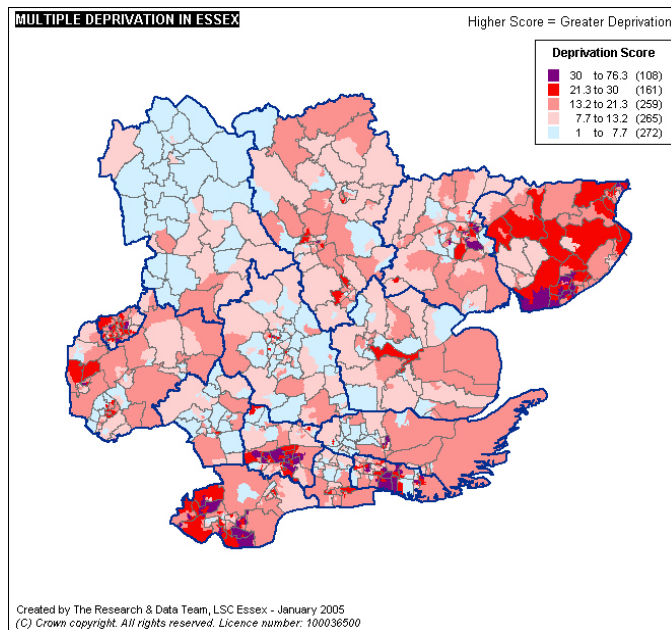
Essex is a large and diverse growth area with a mixed urban and rural landscape. It consists of 12 local authority districts and 2 unitary authorities, with a combined population of over 1.6 million, mostly concentrated in the largely urban south. 30% of the people in the East of England live in Essex and 12% of these live in the Thames Gateway South Essex Area. In terms of ethnicity, 94% of the population are classified as White British.

5.2. Wealth and Deprivation

Essex is perceived as affluent but the true socio economic structure is more complex. Extremes of wealth and deprivation exist with deprivation ranging from the 102nd most deprived area to the 32,458th least deprived area in the country.

5.3. The Economy

The economy is buoyant; contributing £20 billion to the regional Gross Value Added (GVA) and unemployment remains at very low levels. Essex has no predominant industries. Small to Medium Sized Enterprises are the bedrock of the economy. 84% of all businesses in Essex employ 1-10 employees which equates to 24% of all employees. Skills shortages and gaps prevail across all sectors with results from the National Employers Skills Survey (NESS) 2003 showing that 46% of Essex businesses with vacancies found them hard to fill. The close proximity to London is significant - 17% of workers living in Essex commuting to London.



5.4. 3 Gateways

Essex is unique in having 3 major international Gateways. The 3 economic regeneration growth areas of the Thames Gateway, the Haven Gateway and London, Stansted, Cambridge and Peterborough Growth Area present Essex with significant economic and social change, which if realised, will provide huge economic and development opportunities. The challenge is to ensure that local people and businesses derive maximum benefit from these opportunities.

Thames Gateway - Nationally and regionally, the LSC is working closely with central government, local government, Regional Development Agencies, Government Offices, Jobcentre Plus, higher education and other partners to deliver the regeneration of the Thames Gateway. The 3 local offices of the LSC – Essex, Kent & Medway and London East currently invest some £560m p.a. to support nearly 400,000 learners but the challenge is huge – currently 18% of the existing population have no qualifications. Moreover, 34% of residents are only qualified to below Level 2. Yet 60% of the new jobs are expected to require skills at or above Level 3. The new Thames Gateway Skills Action Plan will ensure that our investment in skills across the Thames Gateway will successfully underpin the delivery of the overall aim to build 120,000 new homes and the opportunity of 194,000 new jobs being created by 2016. We will use this plan to guide both our activities – focusing our resources and our efforts to address the regeneration programme as part of our overall strategic objectives agreed with government.

Haven Gateway - The Haven Gateway sub region, which includes parts of Essex and Suffolk, is also experiencing significant development and regeneration, including £300million investment in the Port of Harwich, which is the second largest port in the UK: the redevelopment of Colchester Garrison with 2,600 new homes, sport, leisure and community facilities; £17m plan for a Visual Arts complex; the regeneration of North Colchester; and the redevelopment of Hythe Port to provide a research park and

new railway station at the University of Essex and 1,500 new homes. The sub region has received a significant boost with the recent statement from the Deputy Prime Minister that he is minded to support the expansion of both Harwich and Felixstowe ports.

Stansted M11 Gateway - Passenger numbers for Stansted totalled 20.9 million in 2004 which represents an increase of 75% since 2000. Current planning permission allows growth up to 25 million passengers and subject to planning permission with the existing runway there is potential for growth of a further 10 million passengers. LSC Essex is responding to this growth through priority sector activity in Logistics, Retail and Hospitality and Health and Social Care.

5.5. The Learning Infrastructure

The learning infrastructure comprises 46 x 11-16 schools, 56 x 11 – 18 selective and non-selective schools, 37 Special Schools, 22 Independent schools, 11 FE Colleges, 3 Local Authorities delivering adult learning through a network of 11 Adult Community Colleges and other centres, 4 Work Based Learning Consortia including 27 WBL Providers, 1 Direct and 14 Lead and Feed WBL Providers; and 5 pupil referral units. We also have 2 prisons in Essex. 14 of the providers deliver further education - seven general FE colleges; 3 sixth form colleges; one higher education institute; and three local authorities – all of which, with the exception of the local authorities, predominantly deliver 16-18 learning on a full-time basis. In the case of the 3 sixth form colleges the mode of delivery is almost exclusively full-time and, therefore, incurs a disproportionately high cost per student when compared to a general FE college.

In response to the consistently low 16-18 participation in parts of the South of the County (Thurrock has one of the highest drop out at age 17 rates in the country) coupled with the increasing skills demands arising from the economic development of the Thames Gateway, an overhaul of existing FE arrangements has been implemented by the local colleges, who are now engaged in conducting an FE Review with a consultant, independent of the LSC, which will include capital developments. On a wider scale, and as part of a 5 year strategy, we intend to have an FE Estate fit for the 21st century with college facilities and processes among the very best. We have already completed major capital projects in 3 colleges and have plans in place to improve 3 more.

6. Key Learning and Skills Issues – Young People

The remainder of this section is a distillation of the key learning and skills needs and issues identified in the recent Strategic Area Review of Essex, Southend and Thurrock and strategic analysis undertaken since then as part of the LSC Business Cycle. This provides an overview of the context for delivery of the LSC Essex Annual Plan 2006/07.

6.1 Young People - Target Position

16-18 Participation									
	2003/04 Actual	2003/04 Planned	Variance	% to Plan	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Planned	Variance	% to Plan	2005/06 Planned
FE	20,619	21,591	-972	95%	22,433	22,159	274	101%	23,253
WBL	2,487	3,034	-547	82%	2,755	3,211	-456	86%	2,864
Total	23,106	24,625	-1,519	94%	25,188	25,370	-182	99%	26,117

Source - 2001/02 - 2003/04 Scorecard; 2004/05 FE - F04 Learner file, Oct 05 freeze; WBL AiL Final Month 12 Main Aims Only

Level 2 at 19				
	Number of learners who have reached the level 2 threshold by age 16 (i.e. by the end of 2000-01)	Number of learners who have reached the level 2 threshold by age 17 (i.e. by the end of 2001-02)	Number of learners who have reached the level 2 threshold by age 18 (i.e. by the end of 2002-03)	Number of learners who have reached the level 2 threshold by age 19 (i.e. by the end of 2003-04)
Essex	9,932	11,293	12,221	12,739

Source: Fisher family trust administrative dataset 2004

Level 2 @ 19 Cohort Analysis						
2004/05 (Actual)						
	FE		WBL		Total	
	Nos.	% of All	Nos.	% of All	Nos.	% of All
16-18 All Learners	22,438		2,755		25,193	
16-18 Full Level 2 Learners	4,096	18%	2,229	81%	6,325	25%
16-18 Full Level 2 Achievements	2,133	10%	746	27%	2,879	11%
2006/07 (Planned)						
16-18 All Learners	23,261		2,998		26,259	
16-18 Full Level 2 Learners	4,250	18%	2,398	80%	6,648	25%
16-18 Full Level 2 Achievements	2,250	10%	810	27%	3,060	12%

NEET							
Dec-05							
		2004		2005		Variance	
		%	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume
Essex	NEET	7.1%	3,724	7.6%	3,572	0.6%	-152
	Not Known	6.4%	3,627	13.3%	7,207	6.9%	3,580

Source: Connexions

Full Apprenticeship Framework Success Rates						
	Apprenticeships		Advanced Apprenticeships		Total	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Essex	36%	42%	31%	24%	36%	36%
Regional	39%	40%	40%	32%	39%	37%
National	41%	40%	41%	34%	41%	38%

Source : ILR Final Month 12 2004/05

Skills for Life				
16 - 18	Learners taking up basic skills/skills for life	Proportion of learners towards targets	Success rate	Learners achieving to targets
Essex	9,421	93%	38%	3,340
Regional	30,813	90%	53%	14,729
National	313,327	91%	54%	154,757

Source: Skills for Life data from the Sept 05 freeze

6.2. Demand Issues – Young People

Despite substantial growth in **16-18 participation** in recent years, the LSC Essex area still has the second lowest 16-18 participation out of the 47 LSC areas in England. This prevailing situation, together with a growing population trend (15-19 population will grow from 96,000 in 2003 to 105,000 in 2009) means that we must continue to grow 16-18 provision to meet both stimulated demand and demand from the growing cohort. Demand for post 16 Level 1 and 2 is also relatively high, which also inflates 16-18 participation as young people progress through achievement levels. Take up of EMA has been strong and is set to grow further in 2006/07. It is also worth noting that growth in FE has not been as a result of displacement in participation in school sixth forms – this has also grown from 2004 – 2005 by 2%. In view of the 16-18 demand issues it is encouraging that Essex has been successful in its bid for a new 14-16 Engagement Pilot for the Thurrock area.

We must achieve this growth within a local context where learning is not as highly valued as it is elsewhere in the country. This cultural issue relates to steady low levels of unemployment, the availability of high numbers of low skilled, low paid jobs within the economy, which young people, in large numbers, take up at the age of 16. These young people, many of whom do not have a Level 2 or equivalent qualification when they leave school, effectively cease to engage in any further learning leading to a recognised qualification with serious consequences for the achievement of all many of our PSA targets and the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) target. In view of these cultural issues, it is encouraging that Essex has been selected as one of the areas to run the **Learning Agreement Pilot**, which will target young people in jobs without any structured learning leading to a recognised qualification. The recent decision to classify Essex as a 'hotspot' following the Prime Ministers Development Unit (PMDU) review of L2 at 19 also reflects the challenges we face.

6.3. Supply Issues – Young People

The conclusions drawn from the Strategic Area Review (StAR) and more recent analysis of the **curriculum mix** in Essex shows that young people do not currently have access to a full range of opportunities underpinned by impartial advice and guidance and that the 14-19 curriculum is insufficiently flexible particularly at age 14-16. The curriculum offer of neighbouring providers is still often un-co-ordinated and there is evidence of duplication of delivery in some subjects and qualifications in the 16-19 range. Examination of the curriculum mix also shows a mismatch between what is being offered to young people and the skills needs of our priority sectors. As the table below shows, there is particular issue relating to enrolments on courses to support the Transport and Logistics sector, which will need to be addressed quickly in view of the significance of this sector in our Gateways and the prospect of the opportunities coming from the Olympics.

Shift change in enrolments in priority sector areas 2003/04 to 2004/05

16-18	2003/04	2004/05	% Variance
Construction	1,123	1,224	9.0%
Retail	107	118	10.3%
Health	3,633	6,002	65.2%
Transport (Logistics)	142	110	-22.5%

Source : ILR F05 2003/04; ILR F04 2004/05 (October 2005 Freeze)

Whilst government funding priorities will continue to guarantee a place in education and training for all young people (16 -19), we must ensure that the mode of learning offered, i.e. **full time or part time provision**, meets the employment requirements and preferred learning styles of different young people. If we simply focus on growing full time 16-18 provision without also developing flexible part time provision for those that will be better suited to it, we will run the risk of purchasing high cost provision which may not achieve the step change we need in demand from the NEET group and the group that enter jobs without training). Each year approximately 4000 young people fail to go into some form of structured learning after leaving school at age 16.

In terms of **Apprenticeships** there is a marked difference in volumes of delivery- with providers in the South of the County faced with high demand and providers in the North of the County reporting lower than expected demand. Generally, there has been a shift in recruitment patterns for Apprenticeships. Providers are more selective because of the emphasis on full framework completion. Locally providers have confirmed that 50% of learners recruited in previous years would not now successfully fulfil the assessment criteria, which means that we need to find a pathway solution to enable these young people to access an appropriate vocational route.

7. Learning and Skills Issues - Adults

7.1. Adults - Target Position

Adult Participation								
	2003/04 Planned	Variance	% to Plan	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Planned	Variance	% to Plan	2005/06Planned
FE	65,900	-65,900	0%	61,021	69,369	-8,348	88%	54,093
WBL	2,049	-2,049	0%	1,909	2,065	-156	92%	1,818
Total	67,949	-67,949	0%	62,930	71,434	-8,504	88%	55,911

Source - 2001/02 - 2003/04 Scorecard; 2004/05 FE - F04 Learner file, Oct 05 freeze; WBL AiL Final Month 12 Main Aims Only

Adult Full Level 2 - 2004/05				
	Learner Numbers	% of Total	Funding	% of Total
Essex	2,607	4.27%	£3,380,876	9.87%
Regional	10,716	4.33%	£13,786,490	9.63%
National	176,582	5.74%	£216,360,066	10.85%

Source: Corporate Reports, Jan 2006. All adult learners on full level 2 courses

Skills for Life				
19+	Learners taking up basic skills/skills for life	Proportion of learners towards targets	Success rate	Learners achieving to targets
Essex	15,093	37%	67%	3,746
Regional	58,693	34%	74%	14,487
National	660,308	40%	68%	176,853

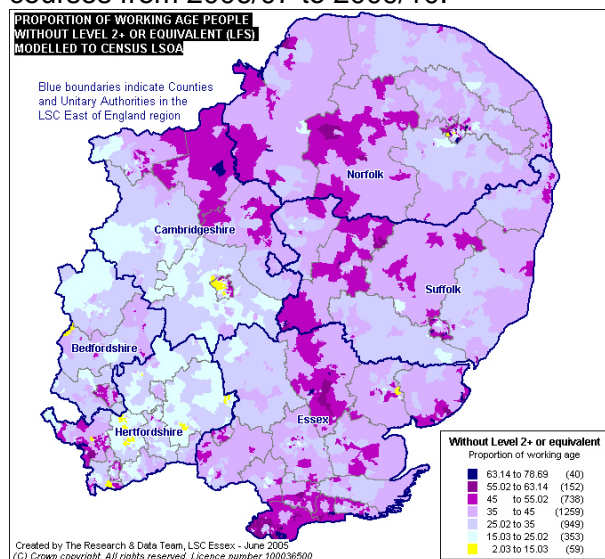
Source: ILR, September 2005 basic skills freeze

LSC Essex did not achieve its 2004 Skills for Life target and whilst achievement progress between 2004 and 2005 has improved significantly on previous years, we must reach a point where an additional 8,330 people achieve accredited Skills for Life qualifications in each of the next 2 years, to meet the 2007 target. This is a critical target for Essex and, because we have the largest population in the Region, it is imperative that we 'raise the bar' further to make a stronger contribution to achieve our regional Skills for Life goals.

7.2. Demand Issues - Adults

In 2004/05 only 4.5% of all LSC Essex 19+ FE learners were enrolled on Full Level 2 courses. Many of the factors that contribute to low 16-18 participation also apply to adult level 2 achievement. Low unemployment, the lack of a learning culture; the ability of the workforce to maintain steady employment patterns within a low skilled labour market; and low commitment to learning within our predominant SME economy, are strong 'forces' that need to be addressed as we strive to change attitudes to learning and realise our ambitious targets. As this annual plan is a rolling plan it will show how we intend to steadily drive up the percentage of FE learners on Full Level 2

courses from 2006/07 to 2009/10.



Driving up participation in **Skills for Life** learning activity, whilst challenging, has not in itself presented the greatest challenge. The real challenge has been to engage people in skills for life activity that leads to accredited qualifications and the challenges relating to this apply to both the demand and supply side. We have seen that people will consider enrolling for non accredited provision without the pressure of gaining a qualification at the end but that far fewer people want to gain an accredited qualification. This situation must be reversed quickly so that we can make up lost ground and hit the 2007 target.

The Transition from Employer Training Pilot (Profit from Learning) to the National Employer Training Programme (Train to Gain). In 2002 the Employer Training Pilot (ETP) was launched and Essex was selected as one of the first pilot areas. Since then it has become one of the most successful pilots in the country. The pilot, which was branded 'Profit from Learning' served to test an offer to employers comprising a range of financial incentives and support designed to encourage them to release staff to take Skills for Life and NVQ Level 2 training, delivered flexibly, at a time and place to suit their needs. The new National Employer Training Programme (NETP), branded 'Train to Gain', will build on the lessons learned and success of this early work. LSC Essex, working with LSC Cambridge (the other pilot areas in the East of England Region), is therefore developing plans to ensure a smooth transition into the NETP service. This involves a self assessment of current activity to see how we can improve or adapt to inform the development of the NETP, which in Essex will start from April 2006. NETP will provide a single offer to employers that is based on delivering demand led skills and while the core elements are Skills for Life and Full Level 2, brokers will identify total skills solutions at all levels and the employer will be required to make financial contributions above Level 2.

L2 Entitlement - One of the main aims of the 2005 Skills White Paper is to raise national skill levels to enable individuals to realise their potential and work has already begun in addressing this goal. For low skilled adults, an estimated 6.6. million in the national workforce, an entitlement to training for a full Level 2 qualification has been trialled in the South East and North East Region. From August 2005, this entitlement to training has been extended to the whole of England. This Annual Plan identifies the target group and sectors that we will focus on in Essex.

Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) – will be developed mainly with Local Authority partners to ensure that demand for this type of provision (some of which will be safeguarded) will be met. This will include: first step learning, Skills for Life; skills for work; learning for personal development and well being; learning for active citizenship and/or community learning; and skills for independent living.

7.3. Supply Issues - Adults

Since its inception, LSC Essex has funded a mix of accredited and non accredited Skills for Life provision, which in the last 2 years it has sought to rebalance in favour of accredited provision. There is no doubt that the majority of our providers have found this change very challenging and that some have not met their or our expectations in terms of the significant shifts they need to make. The recent purchasing decisions of LSC Essex have reflected these issues and future decisions will continue to reshape the Skills for Life learning offer and thus equip our communities and workforce to progress to Level 2 and beyond in an increasingly competitive labour market and growing economy.

In October 2005, the LSC issued the document *Priorities for Success*, which was produced as an early warning to providers that the success in the post 16 sector in driving up recruitment, retention and achievement means that funding for 2006/07 and beyond, on current planning assumptions, will not be sustainable. The document set our proposals to stay within budget and continue to grow in target areas. The main impact will be on adult learning as we withdraw most funding from very short courses and increase fee contributions rapidly with a vision that learning costs (except Skills for Life and first full Level 2 qualifications) will be shared equally between employers, learners and the state. Funding for adult learners will be broadly maintained, though planned provision will shift towards longer courses for those seeking skills for employability and further progression in learning. The policy will enable the roll out of NETP and will ensure that Adult Community Learning (ACL) will remain a key element of LSC Essex's

portfolio of adult learning provision, including a broad and balanced offer of PCDL. However, this funding policy will challenge the supply side, especially here in Essex where the ratio of youth and adult funding per capita is already heavily weighted towards 14-19 provision and where FE 'other provision' has already reduced in recent years.

8. Our Priority Sectors

The four local priority sectors of Construction; Logistics and Transportation; Retail, Wholesale Trade and Hospitality; and Health and Social Care, demonstrate different stages of Sector Skills Agreement development and agreed sectoral needs but the following data provides an insight into why they are priorities.

8.1. Retail, wholesale trade and hospitality sector – key facts

- Large employment sector with 165,000 workers, many with low skills levels.
- 50% of people employed in this sector are qualified to below NVQ Level 2.
- A primary destination sector for school leavers entering employment.
- Only 600 (7%) WBL learners were engaged in retail related training (04/05). Of these, 236 were in retail, 43 in warehousing and distribution and 321 in hospitality and catering.
- The picture for FE is 490 enrolments for retail related courses (04/05 year to date). Of these, 148 were in retail courses, and 342 in hospitality and catering.

8.2. Construction sector - key facts

- The sector has skills shortages and gaps.
- Crucial sector to support the major infrastructure, population growth and regeneration projects in Essex, including our Gateway and the Olympics.
- One in three people working in the sector in Essex have no qualifications and a further quarter are only qualified to NVQ Level 1.
- The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) estimate that Essex will need an additional 15,000 new recruits in the sector between 2003 and 2007, equivalent to 3,000 new recruits each year.
- Take up of WBL and FE falls well short of the projected demand with only 360 (7%) of WBL learners engaged in training for the sector (04/05) and 2440 FE enrolments (04/05 year to date).

8.3. Transport and logistics sector – key facts

- Skills shortages and gaps continue to exist within this sector.
- Only a fifth of workers are qualified to NVQ Level 3 or above.
- Less than half of workers have either no qualifications or are qualified to NVQ Level 1.
- Developments in the transport and logistics sector will increase the demand for skilled workers e.g. Shell Haven, Harwich and Felixstowe Ports and Stansted.
- Only 136 (3%) of WBL learners engaged in training for this sector and 691 FE enrolments ((04/05).

Skills Academy for Logistics

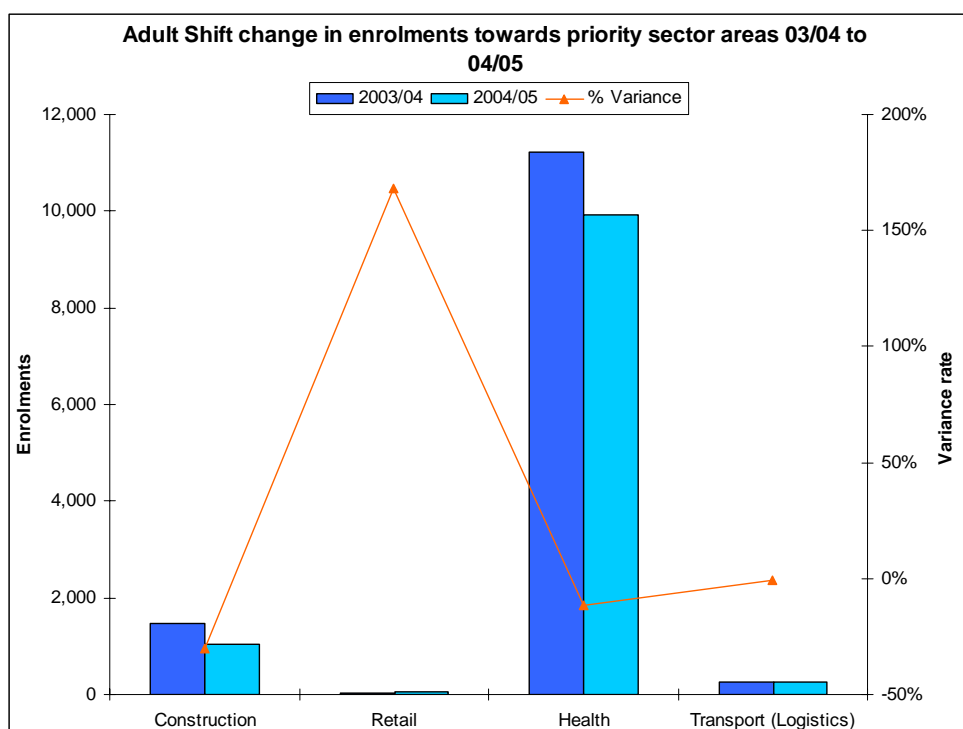
LSC Essex is acutely aware of the importance and needs of this sector given the county's road/rail infrastructure, including the sea and airports that form the Gateways. The significance of the sector has increased in view of the Olympics as the effectiveness of this sector will be central to the success of the Games, and it is likely, based on the experience of other host nations, that much of the growth in business development resulting from the Olympics will be sustained thus bringing long term benefits to Essex and the East of England Region.

The development of CoVEs and our drive to establish a Regional Skills Academy in Logistics, incorporating all facets of logistics linked to the Sector Skills Council's structure of learning hubs, will be instrumental in responding to sectoral needs.

8.4. Health and social care sector – key facts

- National drive to increase the number of staff employed in the health care sector.
- A minimum of 50% of care home staff to be qualified to Level 2 by 2005.
- The 50% care home staff target for 2005 has still to be met.
- 24% of health & social work businesses in Essex have staff with skill levels lower than needed and 7% believe that 30% or more of their staff are not fully proficient.
- Only 288 (5%) of WBL learners were engaged in training for this sector in 2004/05.
- There were 12,763 enrolments in health and social care (04/05 YTD).
- Local authorities and the NHS allocate nearly £4billion on workforce development but the majority is invested in managers and professionals. In the NHS only \$55 million is earmarked for NVQ training.

8.5. Shift change in adult enrolments in priority sector areas 2003/04 to 2004/05



9. Provider Capacity

In 2005 the LSC published the LSC *agenda for change* Prospectus in response to the challenge of developing an effective, efficient and dynamic FE sector. Since then we have received further advice in the form of the Foster Review of FE and the Leitch Review on Skills, both of which will be aligned to *agenda for change*. Whilst it is our intention to extend *agenda for change* principles to the whole of the learning and skills sector, in 2006/07 we will focus on moving the FE sector forward to a position where:

- The majority of provision in Essex is ranked as good or higher. Our current position is that provision is generally satisfactory across the provider base, with 55% of providers deemed to be satisfactory in Leadership and Management and 45% are graded as good. Only one provider has been awarded an unsatisfactory grade.
- Employers and learners rate the training that is available and which they receive as good, although satisfaction rates in Essex are not as high as elsewhere in the Region. We must consider this in the context of very high drop out rates at age 17 in parts of the LSC Essex area.

- FE colleges collaborate with schools and a whole range of other providers to deliver the very best education and training opportunities. FE colleges and Local Authorities ACL providers are proactively engaged in the 14-19 Planning Groups we have established to develop new curriculum that will align to the economic and social needs of their locality but there is still some distance to travel before we will see tangible evidence of real collaboration.
- As part of a 5 year strategy, we will have an FE Estate fit for the 21st century with college facilities and processes among the very best. We have already completed major capital projects in 3 colleges and have plans in place to improve 3 more. In addition we are reviewing FE in South Essex, which will include capital developments.
- Colleges and Local Authority ACL providers are highly regarded by all of their stakeholders. Currently we know that there is still a lot of work to be done before we can assume this. We will, therefore, encourage all of our providers to use the LSDA Health Check to move their employer engagement and stakeholder satisfaction rates forward.
- FE colleges need to change the mode of learning and qualifications they offer in some curriculum areas, in particular, Business Improvement Techniques (BIT), which offers modern day engineering techniques; On Site Assessment Training (OSAT), which offers the construction sector new modes and access to learning; Information Technology Qualification (ITQ), which offers a pick and mix approach to the build up of IT qualifications; and School Support Vocational Qualification to develop the skills of these key workers.

The key risks that could significantly impact on the capacity of our provider infrastructure to deliver our priorities and targets in 2006/07 are:

- The ability of the sector to effectively engage with employers in the context of NETP; Skills for Life in the workforce; engaging more employers in the provision of Apprenticeship places; the provision of more full cost adult provision; and delivering more flexible work place provision for young people.
- The challenge of reversing the downward trend in take up of Apprenticeships.
- The ability of the sector to manage the implication of 'Priorities for Success', particularly the increase in fee assumptions and greater focus on first Full Level 2 provision and the changing pattern of adult provision that will be publicly funded.
- The impact on performance in FE Colleges due to their inability to recruit and retain staff and capacity to develop a workforce development strategy in the twelve months timeframe recommended by the Foster Review of FE.
- Provider's financial and land capacity to enable the capital renewal needed to keep pace with growing demand and the new vocational offer.

In Essex there are currently no FE colleges that are classified as 'in financial difficulties'. As part of our general management of risk, we continuously monitor the financial health of our colleges by reviewing their financial forecasts and holding financial planning meetings in the Autumn.

10. Regional Skills Priority and Provision Analysis Matrix - 04/05

Under 19	High		Medium		Low		Total	
	£ and Enrols	%	£ and Enrols	%	£ and Enrols	%	£ and Enrols	% of Overall
Likely to contribute	30,312,986	38%	10,716,202	14%	22,634,524	29%	63,663,712	81%
	47970		7749		20292		76011	
Potential to contribute	2,867,453	4%	571,153	1%	926,448	1%	4,365,054	6%
	4448		1041		4724		10213	
No longer eligible for LSC funding	375,178	0%	38,635	0%	12,148	0%	425,961	1%
	1415		151		56		1622	
Other (eg UFI and Unclassified)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	0		0		0		0	
Entitlement	0	0%	10,285,170	13%	0	0%	10,285,170	13%
	N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A	
Totals	33,555,617	43%	21,611,161	27%	23,573,120	30%	78,739,897	100%
	53833		8941		25072		87846	

19 and Over	High		Medium		Low		Total	
	£ and Enrols	%	£ and Enrols	%	£ and Enrols	%	£ and Enrols	% of Overall
Likely to contribute	10,514,430	35%	3,229,476	11%	4,447,293	15%	18,191,200	61%
	21613		12272		6178		40063	
Potential to contribute	7,558,358	25%	1,485,126	5%	868,398	3%	9,911,881	33%
	25173		7567		2671		35411	
No longer eligible for LSC funding	1,356,994	5%	331,545	1%	45,082	0%	1,733,622	6%
	11077		3866		205		15148	
Other (eg UFI and Unclassified)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	0		0		0		0	
Entitlement	0	0%	180,159	1%	0	0%	180,159	1%
	N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A	
Totals	19,429,782	65%	5,226,306	17%	5,360,773	18%	30,016,862	100%
	57863		23705		9054		90622	

10.1. Skills Matrix Commentary

Under 19

Overall the majority of this provision is likely to contribute towards targets, with 81% of 16 – 18 provision in this area. Also 38% of overall provision is in a high priority area for Essex priority sectors, indicating the curriculum offer is coming more into line with the future needs of the county. However 29% of provision, likely to contribute, remains in low priority sectors. 43% of the overall funding for 16 - 18 is towards our main priority sectors, with 30% in low priority areas.

19 +

While the proportion of provision at 19+ that is likely to contribute to targets is 61%, a further 33% of adult provision has the potential to do so in the future. Also it is encouraging that over 70% of provision is in either the high or the medium priority sector areas and the majority of this being in High priority sectors (60%). Given the high rate of provision in priority areas, just 18% of adult funding is in the low priority areas.

11. The Key Changes Needed 2005/06 – 2006/07

The analysis of the context within which we are working and the identification of headline issues in relation to supply, demand and the capacity of our infrastructure to deliver our priorities and targets, has determined the key changes that in LSC Essex we need to make as a matter of urgency. These key changes do not respond to all 6 of our national priorities, this response is captured in the next section (Key Actions). Whilst this is a rolling plan with a three year horizon, there are some changes, such as changes to the percent of adult provision that leads to a first full Level 2 qualification, that will take longer – these longer term milestones are therefore included here.

11.1. We will ensure that 14-19 year olds have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities (P1) by:

- Achieving a 4% growth in 16-18 learner numbers by continuing to shift the balance and mix of provision towards vocational learning especially at levels 1 and 2 and through innovation in part-time provision.
- Transforming 14-19 learning by responding positively to the Implementation Plans of local 14-19 Planning Groups seeking to provide new learning opportunities and pathways to local careers.
- Reducing the number of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) by 2 percentage points and the number of year 11 destinations that are classified as 'not knowns' by 7 percentage points, by November 2006.
- Reduce the number of 16-18 year olds in jobs without structured training by engaging 2000 young people in the Learning Agreement Pilot in 2006/07 and a further 2000 young people in 2007/08.
- Improving Apprenticeship framework completions by 5%.
- Developing 'in county' provision for disabled learners aged 16-25 who currently travel 'out-of-county' for their learning through the 'Improving Choice' Pathfinder.

11.2. We will make learning demand led (P2) by:

- Increasing the number of FE adult learners participating in a first Full Level 2 qualification by 207 from 2005/06 to 2006/07 and then by a minimum 5% increase each year until 2009/10.
- Growing and developing new provision in the 4 priority sectors (Construction, Transport and Logistics, Retail, Wholesale Trades, Hospitality and Health and Social Care) especially through the successful operation of CoVEs to meet the skills demands of the economic Gateways and 2012 Olympics.

11.3. We will strengthen the role of LSC Essex in economic development (P3 and P4) by:

- Substantially increasing the number achieving Skills for Life accredited qualifications to 9,139 people by July 2007. We will achieve this by shifting the ratio of learners engaged in provision leading to a qualification to 80% by July 07.

11.4. We will stay within budget and continue to grow in target areas by:

- Shifting the balance of government, employer and learner contributions to the cost of learning by increasing the fee assumption by 5% in FE and encouraging growth in non-LSC funded provision.

What we have delivered so far and our planned changes for 2006/07 (sheet 1 of 2)

SUMMARY OF YOUNG PEOPLE (16-18)	2004/05			
	Learners			Funding £
	Volumes of learners	In-year achievement s (volume)	In year achievement Volume (%)	
FE Total Learners	22,453		69%	78,416,142
<i>of which...</i>				
<i>Learners on Skills for Life target qualifications</i>	7,972	3,181	39.9%	
<i>Learners on a full Level 2 qualification</i>	3,886	2,483	63.9%	
<i>Learners on a full Level 3 qualification</i>	10,090	5,33	49.9%	
School sixth form	10,772			49,500,744
Work Based Learning	12 month average in learning (volume)	Framework achievement s (volumes)	Framework success rate	Funding £
WBL Total Learners	2,682		36%	8,563,525
<i>of which...</i>				
<i>Learners on an Apprenticeship</i>	2,276	638	28%	
<i>Learners on an Advanced Apprenticeship</i>	403	107	26.6%	
Entry to Employment	Learners			Funding £
	Volume s (starts)	Numbers in learning	Av. length of stay (weeks)	Pos've destination s
All E2E	1,200	1,10	22.1	681
				5,589,577

2005/06				
Learners				Funding £
Volumes of learners	In-year achievements (volume)	In year achievement Volume (%)		
23,798		70%		90,989,739
8,511	4,000	47%		
4,474	2,832	63.3%		
10,867	5,773	53.1%		
11,193				53,873,224
12 month average in learning (volume)	Framework achievements (volumes)	Framework achievement / 12 month AiL		Funding £
2,835		30%		8,048,153
2,368	707	29.9%		
465	153	32.9%		
	Learners			Funding £
Volumes (starts)	Numbers in learning	Av. length of stay (weeks)	Pos've destination s	
1,570	1,43	20.4	682	5,386,999

2006/07				
Learners				Funding £
Volumes of learners	In-year achievements (volume)	In year achievement Volume (%)		
24,671		71%		95,282,276
8,537	4,398	51.5%		
4,682	3,105	66.3%		
11,428	8,062	70.5%		
11,439				60,841,336
12 month average in learning (volume)	Framework achievements (volumes)	Framework achievement / 12 month AiL		Funding £
3,412		32%		9,397,769
2,876	989	34.4%		
488	188	38.5%		
	Learners			Funding £
Volumes (starts)	Numbers in learning	Av. length of stay (weeks)	Pos've destination s	
1,761	1,698	20.3	858	5,139,899

Green header indicates underpinning data is complete

Red header indicates underpinning data is incomplete

What we have delivered so far and our planned changes for 2006/07 (sheet 2 of 2)

SUMMARY OF ADULTS (19+)	2004/05				2005/06				2006/07			
	Learners		In Year Achievement Volume (%)	Funding £	Learners		In Year Achievement Volume (%)	Funding £	Learners		In Year Achievement Volume (%)	Funding £
	Volumes of learners	In-year achievements (volume)			Volumes of learners	In-year achievements (volume)			Volumes of learners	In-year achievements (volume)		
FE Total Learners	61,137		64%	31,220,886	48,092		65%	29,109,233	42,531		66%	25,639,507
<i>of which...</i>												
<i>Learners on Skills for Life target qualifications</i>	5,782	3,672	63.2%		5,799	3,899	67.2%		6,692	4,695	70.2%	
<i>Learners on a full Level 2 qualification</i>	3,351	1,713	47.5%		3,191	1,914	57.5%		3,398	2,151	61.5%	
<i>Learners on a full Level 3 qualification</i>	1931	721	37.3%		2,436	1,395	57.3%		2,387	1,405	58.9%	
Adult and Community Learning	32,719			7,157,731	29,796			7,409,709	27,557			7,091,000
Work Based Learning	12 month average in learning (volume)	Framework achievements (volumes)	Framework success rate	Funding £	12 month average in learning (volume)	Framework achievements (volumes)	Framework achievement / 12 month AiL	Funding £	12 month average in learning (volume)	Framework achievements (volumes)	Framework achievement / 12 month AiL	Funding £
WBL Total Learners	1,747		36%	4,216,611	1,760		35%	3,108,489	2,024		36%	3,505,732
<i>of which...</i>												
<i>Learners on an Apprenticeship</i>	1,003	368	36.7%		1,109	363	32.7%		1,204	469	39%	
<i>Learners on an Advanced Apprenticeship</i>	728	170	23.4%		936	413	31.8%		860	367	36.4%	
<i>Learners on Skills for Life target qualifications (ALL AGES)</i>	638	325	50.9%		1,239	618	49.9%		2,447	1,217	49.7%	
ETP / NETP	Volumes of learners	In-year achievement (volume)	In Year Achieve /Volume (%)	Funding £	Volumes of learners	In-year achievement s (volume)	In Year Achievement Volume (%)	Funding	Volumes of learners	In-year achievements (volume)	In Year Achievement Volume (%)	Funding £
	951	628	66%		541	443	81.9%		360	311	86.4%	
Discrete* activity, eg fully ESF, or LIDF funded provision	2,263	2,107	93.1%		6,193	5,845	94.4%		3,436	3,264	95%	
Budgets	FE	WBL	E2E	SSF	ACL	ETP/NETP	Development Funding	Capital	Administration	Other Programme Budgets		
2004/05	116,463 (AY)	13,772 (AY)	5,249 (AY)	52,023 (FY)	6,806 (AY)	8,862 (FY)	8,615 (FY)	3,392 (FY)	2,941 (FY)	6,157 (FY)		
2005/06	124,270 (AY)	14,434 (AY)	5,636 (AY)	55,972 (AY)	6,902 (AY)	14,936 (FY)	7,264 FY)	1,987 (FY)	2,827 (FY)	4,144 (FY)		
2006/07												

12. Key Actions

Action	Measure of Success (all 06/07) unless otherwise stated)
NP1: Ensure that all 14-19 year olds have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities	
1.1. Develop 14-19 Learning by taking forward the essential development areas under the statement "To change young people's lives through learning". <ul style="list-style-type: none"> position LSC Essex as key partner in Children's Trusts and Children and Young People's Strategic Partnerships (CYPSPs) in conjunction with the 3 Local Authorities (LAs), implement the pan Essex learner entitlement align our capital plans with that of our 3 LAs and East of England Development Agency (EEDA) to secure joint investment in state of the art facilities through our relationship with LAs, influence strategies to support improvements to school sixth forms developed by our local School Improvement Partners improve the strategic fit of local 14-19 provision to priority sector skills support the development of the Gateway Process ahead of the implementation of Diplomas Implement new 14-16 Engagement Pilot in Thurrock to engage those at risk of drop out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16-19 participation planned number of 24,670 met. Reduced drop out in FE and Schools, particularly at age 17 NEET reduced by 2 percentage points and 'not knowns' by 7 percentage points, by 11/06 11 x 14 -19 Planning Groups Implementation Plans received by 31 July 2006 1 additional Planning Group to address 14-19 implementation for students with additional needs Web based Area Prospectus in place explaining learning opportunities for young people 16-18 FE enrolments and success rates in 'areas of learning' that support priority sectors increased by 5% and 3% respectively ESF funded 14-19 pilot targets met. 14-16 Engagement Pilot targets still to be agreed.
1.2. Purchase appropriate provision to support new Learning Agreement Pilot we lead with Connexions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Agreement Pilot Target of 2000 participants in 2006/07
1.3. Implement the PMDUs Action Plan for Level 2 at 19 – the Essex Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 2 at 19 target of 4,680 learners met Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) take up increased by 1000 to 11,000 ESF Level 2 funded targets met.
1.4. Further develop the capacity of the Work Based Learning (WBL) Consortia to improve the performance of WBL and Entry to Employment (E2E)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of apprenticeship frameworks increased to 2,013 with 8% more frameworks in priority sector areas of learning Increase the number of entrants for the National Apprenticeships Award to 40 Success Rates in FE and WBL increased by 1% and 2% respectively.
1.5. Use European Social Fund (ESF) to develop a multi entry, flexible Foundation Level Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federation of Essex Colleges (FEDEC) ESF Flexible FE targets met.
1.6. Steer 14-19 skills Local Area Agreements (LAAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LAA targets set and in year milestones met
1.7. Contribute to Improving Choice Project and implement Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD) National Review recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity of local LLDD provider network increased by Aug. 2006 with 12 Improving Choice learners by Sept. 06

NP2: Make learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers, young people and adults	
2.1. Manage transition risks from Employer Training Pilot (ETP) to Train to Gain to ensure that valuable ground gained in terms of employer and workforce engagement is maintained and strengthened.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 businesses engaged in Train to Gain.
2.2. Build on the Essex Employer Engagement Project to enable providers to develop their business offer to better reflect the needs of as predominantly SME employer base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500 businesses supported by Skills Brokers • Successful employer engagement demonstrated by meeting 32.5% income generation target • 7 of our 11 FE colleges achieve designated Quality Mark
2.3. Implement the 4 Sector Engagement Plans developed in 2005 for Essex's Priority Sectors 2.3.1 Reverse the negative trend in enrolments for courses supporting the Transport and Logistics Sector (all ages) and the Construction Sector(adults)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector engagement plans agreed with the 4 Priority Sectors in Essex and in-year milestones met. • 100 new employers investing in Level 3 and Level 4 provision in priority sectors • 120 new employers offering apprenticeships
2.4. Offer more integrated training programmes by extending the Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) Network and ensuring it links to the National Skills Academies and Regional Hubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoVE network in Essex develop collaborative vocational offer by March 2007 • Regional Logistics Hub Development Plan implemented with in-year milestones met
2.5. Establish multi-agency geographical Adult Learning Consortia, building on best practice from the 14 – 19 Planning Groups, to deliver a balanced, sustainable and affordable adult learning offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Learning Consortia in place by October 2006.
2.6. Develop provision to better meet the needs of disabled adult learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New LLDD in year targets for adult learners met
2.7. Use Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMS) to monitor and measure change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All LSC funded providers have a set of EDIMS in Development Plans by June 2006.
2.8. Co-lead with BBC Essex our 5 th Champions of Learning 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate 220 entries for Champions of Learning
2.9. Sponsor the Countywide Business Awards 2006 managed by Newsquest Essex Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countywide Business Award Ceremony held in May 2006
2.10. Ensure that employers have access to up to date information about local provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer's Guide to Training updated before launch of 'Train to Gain'.
2.11. Apply principles of A4C to improve learner satisfaction with their learning experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Learner Survey and Connexions Survey show improvement in learner satisfaction rates.
2.12. Key contributor to the Regional ESF Olympics Prospectus (6million)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC Essex providers delivering regional Olympics ESF funded activity in 06/07.

NP3: Transform the learning and skills sector through agenda for change

<p>3.1. Agree and implement, through FEDEC, the Association of Essex Colleges and the LSC Essex/LA Forum, a coherent, integrated reform programme in the FE Sector, within the context of <i>agenda for change</i> and the key recommendations in the Foster and Leitch Reviews.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC Priorities transparent in all LSC funded provider development plans • All LSC funded providers align self-assessment and planning activities to LSC Business Cycle
<p>3.2.. Continue to drive forward the requirement of <i>Success for All</i> by:</p> <p>Driving forward the reforms arising from the Strategic Area Review;</p> <p>Undertaking case conferences for all providers in scope for Annual Planning Review to assess risks, strengths and weaknesses;</p> <p>Driving up performance in terms of leadership and management by encouraging all of our providers to take advantage of Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) consultancy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum levels of performance published and disseminated to all providers by Dec 06 • More robust and comprehensive self assessments provided to LSC by LSC providers by November 2006. • First class leadership in Essex providers demonstrated by improved inspection grades in leadership. • Value for money measures and local benchmarking implemented as part of the Annual Planning Review (APR) • All FE and WBL providers use LSDA Health Check in 2006/07
<p>3.3. Continue to lead the Review of FE in South Essex in response to the Strategic Area Review as set out in <i>Making it Happen</i></p>	<p>In year milestones are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Board in place • Preferred options presented to Strategic Board • LSC review chosen options • LSC submission to Secretary of State • Implementation Plan
<p>3.4. Continue to renew the FE Estate to achieve 21st century accommodation of all students; and work closely with Southend on Sea Local Authority to plan for the new vocational centre in the Thames Gateway South Essex area, jointly funded by ODPM and DfES.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC Essex Capital Plan approved by February 2006 with a rolling programme of development, including a minimum of 4 applications in 2006/07 • Contract with Prospects College for new vocational provision in place by 09/06
<p>3.5. Continue to support the alliances between FE providers and local business to address skills gaps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures of employer engagement agreed and met within provider development plans
<p>3.6. Negotiate the provision of new qualifications to be offered by LSC funded providers, including BIT, OSAT, ITQ, and School Support VQ.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESF funded (value 0.5. million) OSAT project targets met • Provider's development plans demonstrate commitment to new modes of learning and qualifications.
<p>3.7. Support the development of a regional hub for logistics as part of the proposal for a National Skills Academy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bid for Skills and Logistics by 04/06. Business Plan by 08/06 and Academy established by 09/07.

NP4: Strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development so that we provide the skills needed to help individuals into jobs

4.1. Deliver Level 2 Entitlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2620 adults gain a full level 2 qualification during 06/07 • Learner support funding levels for adults agreed and planned take up achieved • ESF funded Level 2 targets met.
4.2. Continue the implementation of the 2005-2007 LSC Essex Skills for Life Delivery Plan to achieve further 'stretch' in the achievement of the PSA target, including SMART use of Family Learning and Literacy (FLLN) funding, Wider Family Learning (WFL) fund and Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) fund.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance of accredited/non accredited Skills for Life delivery redressed by target ratio of 80:20 in favour of accredited. • 9,139 Skills for Life qualifications achieved in 2006/07 • Skills for Life brokerage techniques promoted to 100 employers • Skills for Life Practitioners Network re-established by June 2006 • ESF funded Skills for Life targets met.
4.3. Develop a Skills for Life Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Centre to increase the qualification level of S4L tutors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD Centre opened by September 2006 with target of 150 S4L trainer qualifications
4.4. Manage handover of current JobcentrePlus Skills for Life provision (including ESOL) to the LSC Essex portfolio of provision and support implementation of <i>New Deal for Skills</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC Essex/JobcentrePlus Action Plan in place by end of April 2006
4.5. Embed high quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in all LSC Essex funded provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4976 individuals receive IAG advice and 280 receive IAG enhanced advice
4.6. All LSC Essex funded providers accredited to IAG Matrix quality standards, within framework agreed by the Essex IAG Strategic Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All providers gain or re-gain IAG Matrix standard during 06/07
4.7. Influence Ufi provision to better align it with local economic development skills gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ufi contribute 517 towards the 8,300 S4L target
4.8. Improve the breadth/quality of provision for offender client group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Prison and Partnership Plan in place by July 2006
4.9. Implement Essex action plan drawn from <i>Working Together</i> to ensure the VCS can contribute to the economic development agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Local Authorities delivering ACL and 9 FE colleges build reference to partnership work with VCS in 06/07 development plans
4.10. Steer adult skills Local Area Agreements (LAAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex LAA Block 4 targets and measures align with LSC Essex's targets and priorities
4.11. Influence the learning and skills elements of Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Community Plans to deliver LSC priorities at local authority level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 14 LSP Community Plans and Action Plans align to LSC Priorities
4.12.. Proactively lead the learning and skills elements of Gateway Economic Development Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway skills plans refreshed and in year targets met, including ESF funded targets
4.13.. Steer Investing in Community (IiC) Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IiC Plans reflect LSC skills priorities

NP5: Improve the skills of workers who are delivering public services	
5.1. Agree skills development plan with Strategic Health Authority to target those without a Level 2, including sub contracted services such as cleaning and catering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development plan with Strategic Health Authority in place by September 2006 • 500 low skilled workers targeted in health sector with a target of 250 achieving S4L qualification and 150 achieving L2
5.2.. Extend our reach to low skilled workers, through new Trade Unions partnership agreements and targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshed action plans and targets with Trade Unions by June 2006
5.3.. Improve the skills of the childcare workforce within the Thames Gateway South Essex and Haven Gateway sub regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 childcare workers in each of the two Gateway targeted with 150 achieving L2 and 50 achieving L3 through NETP • ESF funded targets met.
5.4. Deliver apprenticeships in targeted public sectors organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 apprenticeships offered to targeted public sector groups in 2006/07
5.5. Reach agreement with FEDEC and Local Authority Adult Community Colleges that they develop skills plans for this priority group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEDEC Public Sector Plans by December 2006 • Local Authority Public Sector Plans by December 2005
NP6: Strengthen the capacity of the LSC to lead change nationally, regionally and locally	
6.1. Develop new Partnership Teams to deliver first class leadership and management, supported by new business processes, through <i>agenda for change</i> Theme 7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal restructuring by September 2006 • 4 geographically based partnership teams in place by September 2006 • 1 Economic Development Team in place by September 2006
6.2. Align LSC Essex plans to develop the skills of the children's workforce with the Integrated Children's Services Workforce strategies of our 3 Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages and transparent outcomes agreed by September 06.
6.3. Learning from the evaluation of the Business Cycle, further improve our negotiations with providers at strategic and curriculum planning level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Teams implement Business Cycle phases in line with identified best practice across the Region
6.4. Embed equality and diversity through the identification, development and dissemination of good practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC Essex partnership teams influence the regional forums taking forward the Race Equality and Employment Standard.
6.5. Utilise skills of non executives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC Essex council members designated as ambassadors in the context of their interests, skills and experience by September 2006
6.6. Consult and communicate key policies to strategic stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC Essex performance published and disseminated by January 2007 • LSC Essex Strategic Briefing by Dec.06

13. Our Delivery Resources

13.1. Partnership Working

A central theme of our work has been the development of effective relationships with partners. Our relationship with you has been built on trust and we intend to exercise this trust with responsibility, with commitment and with energy. Whether you are working in a school, college, work based learning, local government, the voluntary and community sector or the broader business sector, we will continue to debate and listen to your views on how best we can achieve our objective to transform the lives of people in Essex.

Whilst there is no doubt that we rely upon our entire network of partners to achieve our learning and skills ambitions, there are some specific partners, networks and groups that we will depend upon to help us to deliver the six priorities in the coming year. And as we move ahead with our ambitious transformation *agenda for change Theme 7*, the LSC partnership teams will work very closely with them to ensure that together we make real and lasting progress in local areas.

Priority One: *Ensure that all 14-19 year olds have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities* - we will look to the Policy Executive Group (PEG) to continue to provide strong and effective leadership for the reforms of the 14-19 phase of education. The Pan Essex Strategic Group (PESG) to oversee the implementation of a pan Essex learner entitlement and the eleven 14-19 Local Area Planning Groups, through their local area implementation plans, to transform the 14-19 experience for young people in their learning localities. These three complimentary layers of partnership will provide the interface with the emerging Children's Trusts and make sure that national, regional and local 14-19 developments are taken forward in a cohesive manner. Our long standing partnership with the Connexions Service will continue to be pivotal to the achievement of this priority as will our strong links with the higher education institutions, on which we depend to develop strong progression pathways Higher Education Institutions.

Priority Two: *Make learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers, young people and adults* –in addition to the provider base, each part of which will play a crucial role in this, we will call on the Business Link operator in Essex, and the economic development agencies, such as the Essex Development and Regeneration Agency; Thames Gateway South Essex, Haven Gateway and M11 etc to support the business dimension to this priority. At regional level, we will continue to work closely with EEDA and the Regional Skills Partnership to maximise impact and success in terms of skills. The Aim Higher Partnership and JobcentrePlus will be instrumental in driving up demand from individuals as will the Trade Unions with their creative interventions in the workplace. We will co lead with Connexions the much needed Learning Agreement Pilot which will target young people in jobs without structured training leading to qualifications.

Priority Three: - *Transform the learning and skills sector through agenda for change* – in many ways this priority cuts across the rest because it is the means by which many of the LSC's ambitions will be achieved. Partnership working at this level will be all about managing relationships with and between providers and working with them to find solutions to very challenging issues relating to radical changes, including funding changes. We have made an excellent start, in large part due to the excellent partnerships that have developed with the Federation of Essex Colleges, our 3 school associations, the WBL Consortia and the emerging Adult Consortia. New partnership protocols with JobcentrePlus, NOMS and the Voluntary and Community Sector (Working Together) move

us on even further, so we are confident that this challenging priority will be achieved and demonstrated with tangible and impactful results.

Priority Four: *Strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development so that we provide the skills needed to help individuals into jobs* – the significant economic growth already planned for Essex overlaid with the plans for the forthcoming Olympic Games means that we are already well positioned in all of the key partnerships set up to lead this regeneration. Some of the most significant partnerships we have are linked to the 3 Local Authorities. For example, we are working closely with Essex County Council to negotiate a Local Area Agreement with the Government Office, which will set agreed target outcomes relating to *Children and Young People* and *Economic Development and Enterprise*. The achievement of these targets will be dependent upon the capacity of the 11 local borough and district authorities, through the leadership of their Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), to deliver the agreed outcomes. LSC Essex, as a member of all of the LSPs, has played a key role in developing priorities and outcomes to ensure that LSC funded learning and skills provision contributes to the social and economic well being of our local communities. We are also working closely with the 3 steering groups leading the development of *Investing in Communities* and of course the partnerships that are driving forward regeneration within the 3 Gateways including the Thurrock Area UDC FE/HE Review Group and the Thames Gateway Area Education and Skills Commissioning Board. We also need to build on the success of our relationship with the National Offender Management Service.

Priority Five: *Improve the skills of workers who are delivering public services* – we recognise that in a County as large as Essex we must take a targeted approach to our very large and diverse public sector. We therefore intend to focus this year on the Health Sector and on driving up the skills of those working with children within the Haven and Thames Gateway sub regions. Our strategic relationships with the Strategic Health Authority, Thames Gateway South Essex, Haven Gateway, the 3 Local Authorities; and the 14 borough and district councils with therefore be crucial in taking forward this challenging work. We will also ensure that the relevant Sector Skills Councils, including Asset Skills, are fully engaged in the planning and review of developments and the relevant trade unions.

Priority Six: *Strengthen the capacity of the LSC to lead change nationally, regionally and locally* – the Annual Statement of Priorities confirms our commitment to working locally and how we have already started to re-align some of our functions and processes at the regional level to enable more effective and efficient delivery on the ground here in Essex. We recognise that we must transform ourselves if we are to deliver the sort of strategic changes we expect from our partners and that is why we have built an additional 7th theme into *agenda for change*, which will bring about that transformation. The focus of Theme 7 is on achieving better quality and more consistent delivery at a local level through partnership teams of highly skilled and experienced education and training professionals, working closely with partner organisations. In Essex there will be four partnership teams led by an Area Director and they will manage partnerships across the following four geographical areas:

Geographical areas to go in once final structures agreed

In recognition of the scale of the regeneration in the LSC Essex area, there will also be one Economic Development Partnership Team that will work at pan Essex level.

13.2. The role of LSC Essex Council

LSC Essex Council Members play a key role in the development of the LSC Essex Annual Plan, overseeing its development in Council Meetings and monitoring its achievement through periodic performance reports, but also through the leading role they play in the communication and dissemination of our strategies and plans at planned events and through their own networks. They also play a proactive role in key forums, including:

- EEDA
- Thurrock Urban Development Corporation
- Thames Gateway Partnership
- EST Connexions Management Group
- IAG Strategic Board
- LSC Essex Audit Committee
- LSC Essex FE Capital Committee

13.3. Working with Governors

LSC Essex currently works with the Corporation Boards of FE and Adult Community Colleges in two ways. In terms of FE colleges we host 2 annual dinners for College Principals and Chairs of Corporations. In terms of Adult Community Colleges we attend the AGM hosted by Essex County Council for the Chairs of Corporations of Adult Community Colleges in Essex, but also involving the Chairs of Adult Community College Corporations in Southend and Thurrock. We also meet and consult with nominated representatives from the Association of School Governors in Essex, Southend and Thurrock. However, we acknowledge that our interface with governors is generally not structured and is normally institutionally based. As part of the implementation of Agenda for Change Theme 7, we intend to formalise relationships with governors and work with them on a cross sector geographical basis.

13.3. Offender Learning

We will continue to develop existing Community Provision within the regional OLASS framework as captured in the ETE (Education, Training and Employment) Pathway Delivery Plan produced in March 2006 as part of the NOMS (National Offender Management Service) Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan.

In Essex we will continue to work in partnership with Essex Probation Service to ensure that the updated Essex Probation Plan, finalised in March 2006, continues to reflect the current and future needs of local offenders. Following the introduction of OLASS on 31st July 2006, planning for 06/07 will focus on increasing participation and achievement in education and training for offenders in custody and the community, and redesigning provision to support this."

13.4. Equality and Diversity

The Council will ensure that activities take account of the changing demography of the region, through more positive use of planning and funding to achieve greater equality and diversity. Due regard, however, will be given to the differences in some of the population characteristics particular to Essex. For example, whilst 8.6% of people in the region came from ethnic minorities, the Essex figure is just 2.9%. The increase in the ten years to 2001 was just 1.1%, but it is acknowledged that with the inward migration expected from the Thames Gateway and Olympics development in the south of Essex in particular, where workers will be recruited from outside the locality, this situation is likely to change steadily in the medium term. Population increase is already an issue in areas of Essex - four of the eight local authorities in the region that experienced population increases of over 10%

between 1991 and 2001 are in Essex. In respect of other demographic characteristics, issues around gender, disability, deprivation and social inclusion will align to those experienced in other areas of the region.

The Council will ensure that planned activities take account of its duty to promote equality of opportunity in relation to race, gender and disability and our responsibilities under other equality legislation including the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and European regulations relating to sexual orientation, religion or faith and age (due to come into effect in 2006). Our actions and activities which are covered in this plan will be underpinned by, and reflect, the Council's Race Equality Scheme.

13.4.1. Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs)

Work is currently underway to produce a set of EDIMs for the East of England Region for 06/07. Equality and Diversity management information has already been produced, which will be analysed in January 2006. At a local level, research is being carried out in Essex to establish base-line information and work with providers will commence in Spring 2006 to agree individual EDIMs for 06/07 which are aligned to regional and local targets. Internally, we can report modest progress on our workforce profile against Essex targets:

For senior women in band 3 and above our achievement is 50% against the target of 51%
For the proportion of men in band 1 our achievement is 4.2% against the target of 10%.
For the total number of BME employees our achievement is 1.3% against the target of 3.2%
For the total number of BME employees in band 3 and above, our achievement zero against the target of 15%.
For the total number of employees who consider themselves to have a disability, our achievement is 2.7% against the target of 5%.

The Learning and Skills council recognises its statutory duties under Race Equality legislation and emerging duties around Disability and Gender Equality. The local office will work in partnership with colleagues at Regional and National level to support the process of Equality Impact Assessments across all functional areas.

13.5. Learners with Learning Difficulties and / or Disabilities

Under the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the Council has a specific responsibility to consider the needs of young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are robust arrangements in place to ensure that this group of learners have access to suitable provision that meets their needs and where appropriate the additional support required.

'Through Inclusion to Excellence' - The report of the Steering Group for the Strategic Area Review of the LSCs planning and funding of provision with Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities outlines a vision of change and transformation for the education and training provided for this group of learners.

The Report provides a focus for key LSC activities in this area over the next five years. LSC Essex is part of the LSC East of England **Improving Choice Pathfinder Project**, which places it in pole position to take forward the recommendations from this significant review. To date the Pathfinder had allowed us to develop provision for LLDD in local colleges in this current year, enabling learners that would have had to go out of county to residential colleges to access learning, or who would have dropped out of learning on leaving school. The project is successfully bringing together the relevant organisations so that appropriate curriculum and support arrangements can be put in place.

During 2006/07 a range of capacity building activities will be implemented so that colleges can access LLDD matrix funding, which until now has only been available to specialist colleges, none of which are located within the East of England Region.

13.6. Health and Safety

The health and safety of learners is a fundamental value for the Learning and Skills Council. We believe that learners are entitled to learning that takes place in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. Our policy is to adopt a “best practice” role with regard to the promotion of learner health and safety, by applying the following four core principles:

- to expect that colleges and other providers funded by the Council will fully meet their legal obligations and “duty of care” to learners;
- to seek assurance that colleges and other providers have suitable and sufficient arrangements for learner health and safety;
- to take appropriate action where expected standards are not met or maintained;
- to promote the raising of standards for learner health and safety through support, and challenge, as appropriate.

13.7. Sustainable Development

The LSC has issued a strategy for sustainable development (SD) entitled “From Here to Sustainability”. The LSC is committed to promoting and disseminating this strategy and implementing the actions in it. We need to do this so that the learning and skills sector, and the LSC itself, know what is meant by SD, appreciate why SD is so important and understand why today’s learners need to acquire skills for sustainable development (SD skills).

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