

Learning and Skills Council

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Local Strategic Plan 2002-05

Berkshire

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> Chairman's Foreword

Over the next three years we at the Berkshire Learning and Skills Council have a tremendous challenge and a great opportunity to make a difference to post-16 learning. We cannot do this alone and we need to work closely with our partners to improve quality and performance. To achieve our objectives we have to create a change in the way our learners, providers, employers, communities and services engage with each other. This document sets out, at a local level, our challenges, targets and priorities and key activities for the period from 2002 to 2005.

Berkshire as an area is characterised by high levels of productivity, income, employment and skills. Its economy is one of the most dynamic in the UK. It is also a highly diverse area with a number of key issues to address in learning and skills, both generic and localised. These include lower than might be expected levels of literacy and numeracy and Level 3 achievements by young people, and some small areas where there are complex and multiple disadvantages. We have highlighted a number of key challenges that form the basis of our work over the next three years.

Our key targets for 2004, which reflect the national priorities and our local challenges are:

National Targets	2000 Base %	2004 Target %	% Change	Number Change
80% of 16-18 year olds in structured learning	82.5	85.5	3.6	2,956
85% Level 2 by age 19	78	85	8.9	900
55% Level 3 by age 19	52	58.2	11.9	721
Raise literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults				12,645
Adults at Level 3	50.4	58.4	15.8	34,056

In addition we have a number of key local outcomes for 2005. These include:

- 60% of learners in provision graded by LSC standards as good or excellent.
- All FE colleges involved in Centres of Vocational Excellence.
- A high quality, flexible and comprehensive range of 14-19 provision in place.
- Increased numbers of employers with liP from 350 to 500.
- Increased investment in training by small and medium sized organisations from 37% to 43%.

The issues and priorities we have outlined should give you a clear understanding of what we think we should be doing over the next three years. You will know each year how well we are doing because we will publish an annual business plan that will show our progress towards achieving our targets and lay out our one-year operational priorities.

Our plan must be dynamic. This is the start of a challenging task to improve skills and learning in Berkshire. We are committed, however, to the strategies and priorities set out in this Plan and firmly believe that, working with partners, we can make a real difference.



Tom Melvin
Chairman
Berkshire Learning and Skills Council

> 1. Our Remit

1.1 Background

Launched in April 2001, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is a new organisation responsible for the planning and resourcing of all publicly funded post-16 education and training, except Higher Education.

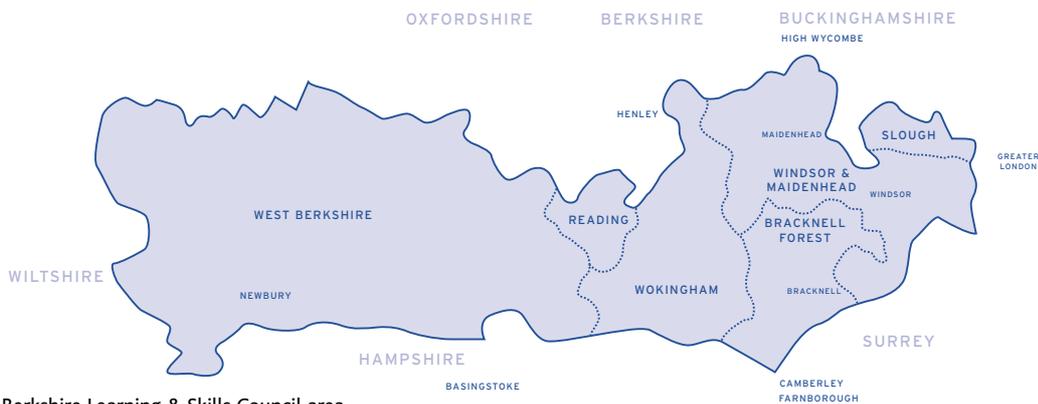
The Council is a single national body with 47 local Learning and Skills Councils across England. This structure allows for local implementation to meet the local needs of learners, providers, communities and the economy, within a national framework.

The Learning and Skills Council works through a range of providers and partners but does not deliver education and training itself. In 2001 it took over many of the functions previously run by Training and Enterprise Councils and the Further Education Funding Council and also assumed responsibility for funding Adult and Community Learning. From April 2002, school Sixth Forms also fall within the remit of the Council. Its annual budget is around £6 billion and it supports close to five million learners each year.

It is expected that these responsibilities will change over time. For example, the recent Government policy developments in education for 14 to 19 year olds include an important role for the Learning and Skills Council.

1.2 Introduction

We at the Berkshire Learning and Skills Council have responsibility for post-16 learning provision outside Higher Education within the area of the six Berkshire local authorities. An outline of the area is below:



Berkshire Learning & Skills Council area

The Learning and Skills Council has or shares responsibility for the following:

Further Education	Funding the five Further Education (FE) colleges in Berkshire.
School Sixth Forms	Planning and funding Sixth Forms within schools. Responsibilities will be shared with the Local Education Authorities.
Work Based Learning for Young People aged 16 to 25	Funding Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships (FMAs and AMAs) and linked programmes through contracts with training providers.
Adult and Community Learning	Planning, funding and coordinating the work of Local Authorities, Learning Partnerships, voluntary and community groups and the range of adult education delivered by colleges.
Workforce Development	Working with employers to expand the skills and productivity of their employees and achieve the Investors in People standard.
Education Business Links	Funding the work of local organisations that bring schools and colleges closer to employers.
Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults	Ensuring that information and guidance on learning opportunities are available to all, through contracting with the Careers Service and Local Authority based partnerships.
Local Discretionary Funding	Developing focused projects, research and innovation through the use of the Local Initiative Fund and the European Social Fund.

1.3 Mission, Vision and Aim

The mission and vision of the national Learning and Skills Council, set out in the Corporate Plan for 2001-04, are as follows:

- our **mission** is to raise participation and attainment through high quality education and training which puts the learner first;
- our **vision** is that, by 2010, young people and adults in England will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world;
- at a local level, Berkshire Learning and Skills Council's **aim** is "to provide people who live or work in Berkshire with high quality learning opportunities which help them play a full part in their community, maximise their potential and further strengthen the local economy."

1.4 Key Tasks

Our key tasks were first set out in the Learning and Skills Council's Remit Letter from the Secretary of State for Education and Employment in November 2000 and have been reiterated in the Corporate Plan for 2001-2004 and the grant letter to the Learning and Skills Council for 2002-03. These are:

1. Increasing the participation and achievement of young people.
2. Increasing the demand for learning by adults.
3. Maximising the contribution of education and training to economic performance.
4. Raising standards in teaching and learning, and ensuring equality of opportunity for all.

1.5 The Role of the Local Learning and Skills Council

The local Council's work includes:

- delivering Berkshire's contribution to the national Learning and Skills Council's targets;
- producing local strategic and business plans based on sound identification of local priorities and learning and employment needs;
- developing, supporting and extending partnership and collaborative working that contributes to, or benefits from, the local Council's plans and targets;
- raising the quality of local learning provision, to improve the retention and achievement of learners;
- receiving reports of local Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspections; and endorsing action plans resulting from these;
- supporting the development of providers' strategic and operational plans so that there are links with the local Council's plans and targets;
- allocating formula-based and discretionary funding to:
 - support the development of flexible, responsive and high quality provision and successful learning providers;
 - ensure local learning provision meets the needs of our diverse community; and
 - widen participation in learning for all;
- implementing an Equality and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan to tackle under representation and under achievement, in consultation with key partners and local community groups;
- promoting learning opportunities and the benefits of learning;
- promoting workforce development and achievement of the Investors in People standard, working in partnership with the Small Business Service;
- identifying and targeting priority skill needs of employers to promote value added growth in the local economy;
- contributing to the national and regional learning and skills agenda.

1.6 Delivery

We will plan, fund and support the delivery of high quality, accessible and relevant learning in a strategic and cost-effective way to raise the level of investment in the knowledge, skills and contribution of individuals who live and work in Berkshire and who own and run businesses here. This is the surest way of improving the competitiveness of local businesses and giving everyone the opportunity to share in the benefits of economic growth.

The message is clear: we must deliver results. The national Learning and Skills Council will ultimately be judged on its record in achieving its remit and targets.

There is some flexibility in how we deliver these results locally and we need to ensure that all of the available resources address the issues and challenges of Berkshire. Both the Local Initiative Fund (LIF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3 Programme will allow us to support innovative approaches to the delivery of our learning programmes and achievement of our objectives. It is our intention to target these funds at key identified priorities from 2002-03 (outlined in Annex 3).

1.7 Partnerships

Collaborative activities are a vitally important aspect of the way in which we will operate and we will work closely with a wide range of partners to achieve our objectives. This includes all organisations that share a role in planning, organising and delivering post-16 learning and related activities.

Our current providers are those partners with whom we have a funding or contracting relationship and who are deliverers of learning opportunities. These include five FE Colleges, one adult education institution, 26 Work Based Learning providers and, from April 2002, 45 school Sixth Forms funded through six Local Education Authorities.

We look forward to strengthening our complementary relationship with Local Education Authorities in which the Learning and Skills Council and the authorities have a shared strategic planning responsibility for schools and where Local Education Authorities are directly responsible (with schools themselves) for the individual quality of Sixth Forms. Our relationship with schools as providers is different from others in that we work with and through their Local Education Authorities. Therefore any reference in this plan to schools as providers takes account of this.

We will work collaboratively with Local Strategic Partnerships to address issues faced by people and communities with multiple disadvantages. These partnerships are being established to bring congruence in community planning for all sectors in each Local Authority area (for example, health, welfare, employment). One of their key tasks is to produce a community plan. We will also seek to strengthen the role of the community and voluntary sector in learning and to work closely with Local Learning Partnerships.

Our contribution to the economic growth of the region will be in partnership with the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and other regional bodies. Our plans and activities will reflect key skills priorities of the Regional Economic Strategy as it relates to Berkshire.

We will continue to play a supportive role in the development of the emerging Connexions service as it becomes responsible for the guidance and support needed by

the young people of Berkshire. Our respective roles will be set out in a localised memorandum of understanding, which will focus on:

- joint work on our shared targets of improving participation and achievement in learning of 16 – 19 years olds;
- membership of the Partnership Board and working groups; and
- data sharing.

Co-location and secondments will assist close working relationships. The Berkshire Connexions Partnership is due to be launched during 2002-03.

Much of our other partnership work is based on protocols and statements of arrangement that clarify our relationships and guide our joint working. By working this way, there can be shared use of expertise, less duplication of effort, better established communication mechanisms and more efficient and effective organisations. The Learning and Skills Council is keen to build on the many examples of good practice that already exist across Berkshire. We recognise the complexities of partnership working and understand the need to develop mutual trust and co-operation with our partner organisations in all our work. The development of joint ownership of work is essential in creating true partnerships.

Our other partners include the Employment Service, the Careers Service, the Berkshire Business Education Alliance, Education Business Partnerships, Skills Sector Councils, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, Higher Education, employer representative organisations, trade unions, Business Link Berkshire and Wiltshire, the health service and the police.

The diagram in Annex 1 illustrates these relationships.

1.8 The Local Planning Framework

In order to guide work on these key tasks, each local Learning and Skills Council has developed a Strategic Plan running from April 2002 to March 2005. This Plan is based on the Corporate Plan developed in 2001 by the national Learning and Skills Council and on consultations with our stakeholders, local learners and partners. The Berkshire Strategic Plan contributes towards national goals, regional Public Service Agreement targets and it also aims to ensure that education and training provision meets local economic and social needs. Wherever possible this Plan indicates shared priorities relating learning and skills to wider employment, regeneration and social policies.

People travel in and out of Berkshire to work and learn. Businesses recruit and provide services across the region, nationally or worldwide. It is, therefore, essential that the Berkshire planning framework also contributes to, and is supported by, the regional agenda.

We are working with other local Learning and Skills Councils in the South East to set region-wide priorities that are reflected in all strategic plans. This has the benefit of enabling us to:

- share thinking and activity on common delivery strategies to overcome barriers in achieving the Learning and Skills Council's mission in the region;

- collaborate with SEEDA, Government Office for the South East (GOSE), the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and other government agencies on steering key drivers and initiatives;
- work with partners, identify gaps in provision against regional priorities; and
- maximise the use of resources available regionally.

The six common areas that will be taken forward as key regional priorities are listed below. The Learning and Skills Councils will work closely with regional partners to progress these priorities and also ensure that there is cohesion and synergy to planning and delivery.

In taking these priorities forward Learning and Skills Councils are committed to ensuring that equality and diversity will underpin every aspect of the LSC's work, and that e-learning will form a key component in developing solutions that are responsive to the needs of the learner and employer.

1. Research and Intelligence

- 1.1 Develop a coherent, partnership approach to research encompassing LSC sub-regional and regional partnerships exploiting both top-down and bottom-up approaches.
- 1.2 Develop a consistent regional approach to definitions and measurements including common additional targets.

2. Marketing of Learning and Skills to Individuals and Employers

- 2.1 Develop a regional marketing strategy, aimed at both learners and employers, that is agreed and shared by key regional partners including IAG, Connexions and SEEDA.
- 2.2 Set up a regional group of key partners to develop the strategy, agree roles and take forward the implementation.

3. Basic Skills

- 3.1 Develop a regional strategy for the delivery of Basic Skills, working closely with key regional partners.
- 3.2 Capture and apply local area best practice across the region.

4. Retention and Achievement of Young People

- 4.1 Develop an entitlement for all young people aged 14-19 in the South East.

5. Adult Development for the Workplace

- 5.1 Develop joint regional approaches to workforce development, exploiting the added value that partnership working will bring.
- 5.2 Take forward a South East workforce development project that will identify the key trigger points for engaging with employers.

6. Provider Capacity

- 6.1 Develop provider excellence through working closely with regional partners in the development of specialist provision, including Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), Specialist Schools and New Technology Institutes (NTIs).
- 6.2 To raise provider quality through coordinated regional action and sharing of best practice.

We will also work with SEEDA to support the development and implementation of their Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) which sets out a plan in which regional partners, led by the Regional Development Agency, will address the skills and employment needs of employers and individuals in a region.

1.9 Resources and Funding

The majority of Learning and Skills Council activities are funded from the DfES via an annual funding agreement with the national Learning and Skills Council. Most strands of activity (including FE, school Sixth Forms and Work Based Learning) are funded mainly through nationally agreed formulae. Discretionary funds are allocated to enhance or expand delivery. Further funds may be available locally through involvement with other Government bodies, agencies such as Regional Development Agencies, European funds and other sources. Learning and Skills Council funding also can provide providers and partners with an opportunity to lever in funds directly.

Annually, the budget of Berkshire Learning and Skills Council is close to £94 million. This amount will vary each year depending on a range of factors such as national funding rates, local population trends, changes in local learning provision and the outcome of bids for discretionary and European funds. Capital funds are in addition to this.

The diagrams below show our total budget by main budget headings and the numbers of 16-18 year olds in Government-supported learning in Berkshire.

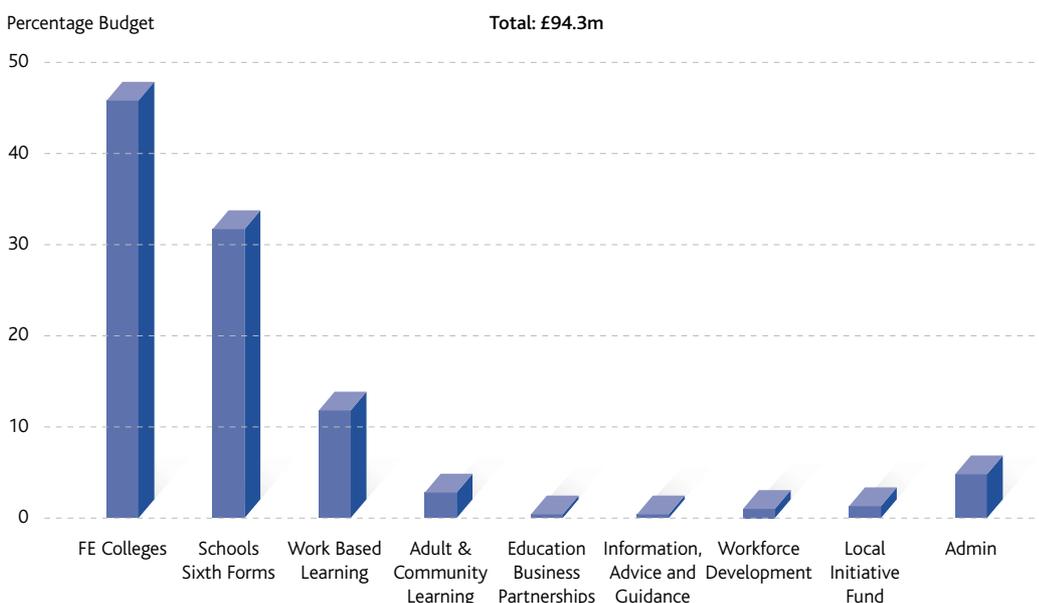


Diagram 1
Berkshire Learning & Skills Council – Projected Budget 2002-03

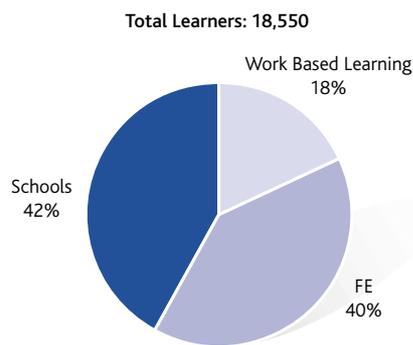


Diagram 2
Proportions of 16-18 year old learners, 2000

1.10 Our Style

It is important that everyone understands how we want to work. Listed below are some of the tenets on which we base our arrangements and dealings with our partners and stakeholders. We aim to:

- **Champion and promote learning** and raise the aspirations of our providers and learners;
- **Demonstrate a clear commitment to listening and responding**, supporting this through formal and informal processes, partnerships and networks. We aim to respond to needs proactively and with speed;
- **Base our actions on sound information, research and consultations;**
- **Aspire to the highest standards** and be demanding of both providers and ourselves;
- **Build on existing good practice**, nationally, regionally and locally;
- **Identify and implement creative solutions to problems** and barriers faced by learners and providers;
- **Be transparent and open in our decision-making;**
- **Take managed risks** in order to benefit local learners;
- **Recognise and address the diversity of Berkshire residents and workers** by working closely with communities to address issues through local or regional actions;
- **Promote equality and inclusion**, by seeking to include marginalised groups and communities in learning activities and to address key employment priorities in areas of greatest need;
- **Improve effectiveness and efficiency** to ensure that sufficient and appropriate resources, including staff, are in place to meet all our objectives and to give the taxpayer value for money.

Our internal infrastructure is designed to deliver this style and Annex 4 provides more details on our organisational developments.

1.11 Local Organisation

Berkshire Learning and Skills Council is based in Reading. It has a Council of 13 members, including the Executive Director, which is responsible for influencing the strategic direction and for evaluating the work of the organisation (see Annex 2). The local Executive Director is Jay Mercer and he is supported by a team of 80 staff who work in three directorates.

Operations – responsible for allocations, funding and contracting for providers, performance, quality and standards improvements.

Strategy and Planning – responsible for equality and inclusion, strategic and operational planning, marketing and communications, research and evaluation, partnerships and discretionary funding.

Corporate Services – responsible for finance, audit, management accounts, human resources, secretariat services, facilities and information and communication technology (ICT).

The annual Business Plan for Berkshire Learning and Skills Council includes more details of the organisational structure.

1.12 Consultation Process

The development of the three-year Strategic Plan was informed by a series of stakeholder events, partnership meetings and consultations, and analyses of provider strategic plans and local data. These took place throughout 2001 and early 2002.

The draft Plan was considered by the Council and was then used as the basis of a series of local consultation events – one in each of the six Local Authority areas in Berkshire, with specialist events for a number of groups including FE, Work Based Learning providers and community and voluntary sector organisations. Alongside this we ran a written consultation exercise and the draft Plan was available on the internet. In addition, where requested, we met with individuals or organisations to discuss the draft Plan.

The local events were well attended with participants including representatives of schools, colleges, private training providers, Higher Education, local authorities, Learning Partnerships, employers, employer body representatives, Connexions, Careers Service, Employment Service, voluntary and community organisations, regional organisations (such as Government Office and SEEDA) and neighbouring Learning and Skills Councils. Examples of participating representative organisations are the Community Council for Berkshire, local Councils for Voluntary Services, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Colleges in the South East. Feedback received through the consultation exercise was helpful, informative and supportive.

It will be important to continue this dialogue with stakeholders to ensure that we understand as well as possible the views, suggestions and concerns of learners, employers and partners. We will achieve this in a number of ways. For example, we have set up a number of task groups, led by Council members, through which specialist expertise can steer our work in specific areas such as basic skills and ICT. In addition we are looking to many partnership organisations including Learning Partnerships, employer bodies, Connexions and provider groups, and networks such as voluntary and community organisations, to inform and advise us.

1.13 Evaluation Strategy

To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of post-16 learning provision we will regularly evaluate all aspects of learning for which we are responsible. The evaluation activity will be designed to provide timely and accurate measures that can be fed back to all interested agencies.

The aims are to measure progress towards agreed objectives, confirm that quantity and quality of provision is at agreed levels, that provision has a net beneficial impact and where appropriate monitor our progress in achieving both local and national targets. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that we achieve value for money.

This evaluation programme itself will be applied consistently to both our statutory and discretionary programmes and projects. The strategy will be the main tool for local programme development and enable us to benchmark our performance against others. Wherever possible, we will set up evaluation processes that minimise or reduce bureaucracy. Examples of the evaluation activity that we will follow are provided below:

Evaluation Activity	Frequency
Provider Performance Review	Regular
Berkshire Review	Annual update
National Learner Survey	Annual
Local Work Based Learning Satisfaction Survey	Annual
lIP Activities with Berkshire LSC	Ongoing
Self-Assessment Report by Berkshire LSC	Annual
Evaluation of LIF and ESF Projects	As required

> 2. Issues and Challenges for Berkshire

2.1 The National Context

There has been a sharp improvement in performance in education and training in recent years against the national "previous best". Both participation (meaning engagement in structured learning) and achievement of young people and adults in England are at historically high levels. We can build on recent improvements in attainment in local schools at ages 11 and 16 and on the large increase in the post-16 staying-on rates.

Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests that learning and skills levels in the UK still lag behind those of the key competitors such as the United States, Germany and Japan.

- In 1998, 68% of 17 year olds in the UK were participating in full or part-time education and training, compared to an 83% average figure in the European Union and 89% in the OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) countries.
- In recent years, there has been little growth in the qualification levels of the existing adult workforce. Furthermore, the growth in qualifications gained by young people has favoured academic qualifications. Most of the growth in vocational qualifications gained by young people has been below NVQ Level 3.
- In the UK, 27% of adults have a vocational Level 2 qualification¹, compared to 41% in France and 58% in Germany. 17% of adults have a vocational Level 3 qualification², whilst in Germany the figure is 52%.
- 7 million people nationally have poor literacy and numeracy skills (basic skills), often defined as the "ability to read, write and speak in English, and use Mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general"³.

The UK economy has now been growing for the last 8 years – longer than at any time since the Second World War. This growth is forecast to continue, albeit at a lower rate than we have seen in the last few years, and will be led by service sector industries. Improved levels of education, learning and skills are needed to support and maintain this growth in the economy.

¹ Level 2 equivalent qualifications are 5 GCSEs at A*-C, an intermediate GNVQ or a Level 2 NVQ

² Level 3 equivalent qualifications are 2 A levels, 2 vocational A levels at A-E grades or a Level 3 NVQ

³ Moser Report, 1999

2.2 The Berkshire Context

Berkshire is a diverse area in terms of economic and learner performance, and patterns of disadvantage. Information about local areas within Berkshire is summarised in Annexes 5 and 6.

Berkshire People

Berkshire's population is growing and an increasing proportion of the workforce is 45+. Now close to 800,000, the population has increased by 6% since 1991, with the greatest growth in the Bracknell Forest and Reading areas. The population is forecast to increase over the next decade by a further 7%. Growth will result from both migration to the area and demographic increases. There will be a short period of growth in the numbers of school age children and a sustained growth in the proportion of the older population. The diagram below indicates the distribution of this growth and highlights the age groups where there is most growth.

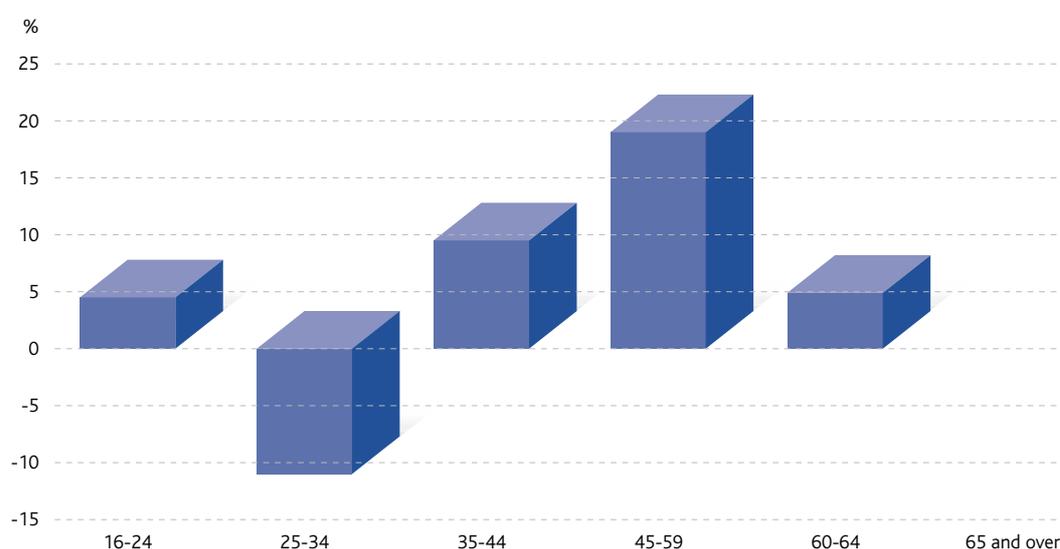


Diagram 3
Age group percentage changes in the workforce 2000-2010

These trends, coupled with predicted further changes in economic activity rates, will lead to a workforce composition markedly different from that of today. The outcome of this will be a need for employers to revise their training and recruitment practices. In addition, individuals will need to continue to learn throughout their life in order to maintain employability and meet the changing skill requirements of employers.

High levels of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and income are characteristic of much of Berkshire. Productivity, wage and employment rates are very high. Workers are 50% more productive per head of population than the UK average and the average income of residents is over £26,000, which is about 20% above the national average. Average levels of employment, and the economic activity rate⁴ (now at 83%) have been consistently higher than the regional rates for the last eight years. Unemployment rates in 2001 were below 2% throughout Berkshire.

⁴ "Economic activity rate" is defined as the number of people of working age who are employed, self-employed or unemployed divided by the total working age population, commonly expressed as a percentage.

Patterns of disadvantage across Berkshire. There are significant areas of disadvantage in parts of Slough and Reading and smaller patches in all other parts of Berkshire. Over 20% of Berkshire residents live in areas with deprivation ratings above the national average. Small communities with significant needs are located across Berkshire. Deprivation factors are sometimes masked by the relative affluence of the area. Some of the most advantaged wards are positioned next to those areas which are the most deprived on national indicators, making the gaps between sectors of the community very significant. In some areas, there are increasing problems of young people growing up in households where no one has ever worked. These areas also often suffer from relatively higher mortality and higher teenage pregnancy rates. Slough is now one of the ten areas with the highest mortality rates in England and a virtual Health Action Zone has been established to help address this issue.

Berkshire's population is diverse. Berkshire is a diverse area with its population in the east having a profile close to West London boroughs and to the west, rural communities. Within Berkshire's overall prosperity there are pockets of multiple deprivation in which deprivation levels are higher than the national average. An estimated 11% of the population of over 16 year olds has either a disability or long term limiting illness. The economic activity rate of this group is only 20%.

17% of families in Berkshire are headed by a lone parent, usually a woman. Their main barrier to employment is affordable and appropriate childcare.

The Berkshire population is predominantly white with 9.5% of minority ethnic origin, mainly comprising people of Indian and Pakistani heritage. The proportion varies across Berkshire, with 27% of minority ethnic origin in Slough and 9% in Reading, compared with fewer than 3% in Bracknell, West Berkshire and Wokingham. An estimated 11.5% of the workforce and 12% of under 15s are of minority ethnic origin.

Unemployment throughout Berkshire is very low although it is higher in certain groups such as minority ethnic communities and in some wards, where young white, Afro Caribbean and Pakistani males are particularly affected.

Long-term unemployment is defined as the number of unemployed people who have been unemployed for 6 months or longer. In Berkshire the November 2001 unemployment figure was 5660, of which 1440 individuals were long-term (25%). This compares with South East and national rates of 30% and 35% respectively. The likelihood of being long term unemployed increases with age.

The London and South East factor. Berkshire is geographically well placed, being close to London and within the South East. The area is well served by transport and communications networks, with London being less than an hour's rail journey from all Berkshire's main business centres and good road and rail access to major air and seaports, including the Channel Tunnel.

The GDP of the South East region is larger than that of some European states and growth in the global marketplace through the use of ICT and e-commerce means that there are significant opportunities for Berkshire's businesses to benefit from international trade and competition.

These factors have led to considerable growth in both GDP and employment in the region with a focus on the M40/M3 wedge of the South East (Surrey, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire).

This economic situation has led to high house prices and more commuting into, and out of, Berkshire for work. This puts pressure on the transport infrastructure as over 20% of employees travel in/out of Berkshire each day for work.

These factors have led to labour and skill shortages for local employers and high salaries to keep or attract employees. Another downside of this apparent overall affluence is that Berkshire, like much of the South East region, is ineligible for some of the additional government funding targeted at social inclusion.

Learners

Qualifications levels in Berkshire are generally high in comparison with averages in England, although they lag behind those of Europe.

The diagrams below show recent qualification achievements by young people in Berkshire⁵.

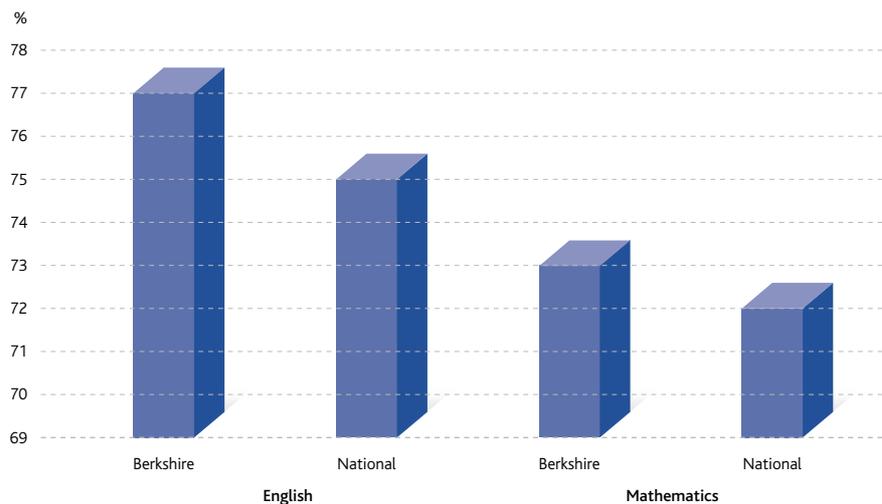


Diagram 4
Percentage of 11 year olds achieving the expected standard in English and Mathematics, 2000

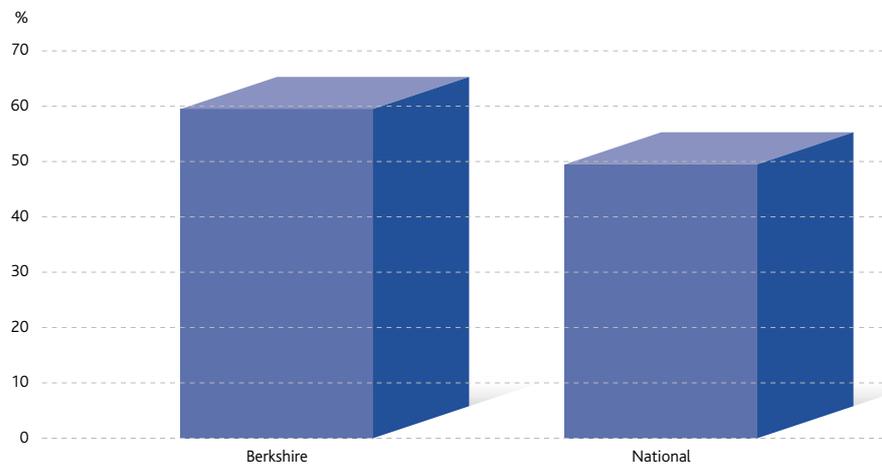


Diagram 5
Percentage of 16 year olds achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE/GNVQs, 2000

⁵ The figures in the first chart show the percentage of 11 year olds achieving the expected standards in English and Mathematics through the Standard Assessment Tests.

The picture is very similar for adults, 74% of adults in Berkshire had a Level 2 qualification in comparison with the national average of 70% in 2000. In comparison with a national average of 47%, 53% had a Level 3 or above.

The 16-18 age group⁶ (c.30,000 in total): the level of participation in learning and achievement by young people is varied and close to the national target for 2004 (80%). It is estimated that in 2001 35% of 16-18 year olds are in Sixth Forms (approximately a third of these are at independent schools). A further 25% are in FE, 10% in Higher Education and 9% are in Work Based Learning. The majority of the remaining 21% is in employment, although there is a lack of information about the nature of any training or education undertaken by those in employment. Of concern is the significant number (near to 2,000) who are neither in employment or learning.

Achievement levels at entry to the 16-18 age group are mixed: overall in Local Education Authority schools in 2001, 55% achieved five or more grade A* to C GCSEs in Berkshire, which was 5 percentage points over the average for England (50%). This represented an improvement of 3.8% since 1998, compared with a national improvement of 3.7%. These figures include independent schools.

In 2000, 79% of students in Berkshire taking A and AS Levels in FE colleges, Local Education Authority maintained and independent schools, gained 2 or more. Their average points score was 18.8⁷ compared with a national average of 18.5, excluding independent schools, and a South East average of 18.8, which was achieved by 77% of South East entrants. In 2001 the average points score for all A, AS and Advanced GNVQ results in FE and maintained schools was 16.5 compared with a national average of 17.4.

The overall achievement figures show significant local variations, which reflect in part the pattern of selective and non-selective schools across Berkshire.

Close to 35% of 18 year olds continued learning through Higher Education in 2000 (including those from the independent sector). The Government target is that by 2010, 50% of those aged under 30 participate in Higher Education.

Adult learning: although adult qualification levels are high in comparison with the region (just over 74% are qualified to Level 2 or above and 53% to Level 3 or above), levels have barely changed for the last five years. With a focus of jobs in business services and ICT, it is not surprising that 33% of the residents/employees are qualified to Level 4 or above (graduate level equivalent) which compares with a regional average of 28%.

The numbers of people, however, training through work (41%) and studying for a qualification (11%) have been similarly constant.

⁶ This group includes all young people aged 16, 17 and 18.

⁷ Average point score 10 points = A grade, 8 points = B grade etc.

In 2001-02 over 25,000 learners participated in Adult and Community Learning, with close to 1,000 qualifications achieved. For many learners however, the value of participation is in the learning process and in the skills and knowledge gained, as much as in the qualification gained.

Overall 20% of people have poor levels of basic skills: in spite of Berkshire's relatively high average incomes, there are significant basic skills issues with needs being most evident in Slough, Reading and Bracknell Forest. The Berkshire figure compares with an average of 21% for the region. Research has established clear links between low income, inactive learning and very low levels of basic skills.

Learner needs are not fully understood: as learning strategies for the area are developed, it is particularly important that a clear understanding of learners' needs forms a key part of them. Some information about learners' views of learning opportunities is available, for example from Learning Partnerships, but there has been no comprehensive recent assessment across Berkshire.

Employer-led training is fragmented and partial: for the past five years there have been reports of a high level of training by larger companies (90% of companies with over 200 employees train over half of their staff annually), although much of the training is unaccredited. Small companies (25 or fewer employees), however, who employ 30% of those employed, continue to have a poor training record – only half undertake any training of more than 5 days' duration. The main barriers to training are the lack of time to train and the belief that staff do not need training. Employees are twice as likely to receive training if they work for a large company.

Economic

Our Berkshire economy is one of the most dynamic in the UK and the area is home to many world-class businesses. Several inter-related factors including the wider economic framework, innovation, investment, the extensive adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), as well as a highly skilled and qualified workforce, play a role in promoting and sustaining its high level of competitiveness.

Employment patterns indicate an economy that is heavily dominated by the service sector, with particular strength in business and finance, and retail employment (as shown below);

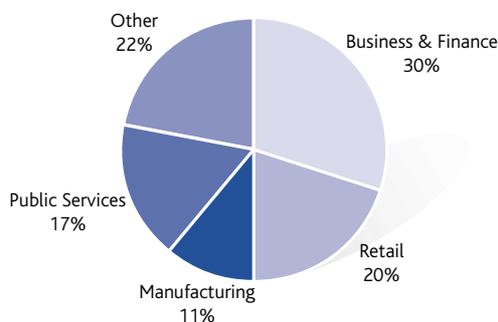


Diagram 6
Industrial sectors making up Berkshire's 450,000 jobs in 2001

Of particular importance recently has been the high proportion of jobs directly related to ICT. Statistics indicate that locally this rate is almost 6%: more than double any other area in Europe.

The economic buoyancy of Berkshire is also forecast to continue, despite the impacts of some restructuring of businesses. Growth of employment in Berkshire is forecast at 5% over the next two to three years, which is similar to the rate recorded over the past three years.

The main areas of new job growth will be in the business services, distribution and retail sectors. Given that 70% of all recruitment is to replace staff, there will be job opportunities in all sectors and occupations over the coming years.

The chart below highlights the main recent employment growth trends.

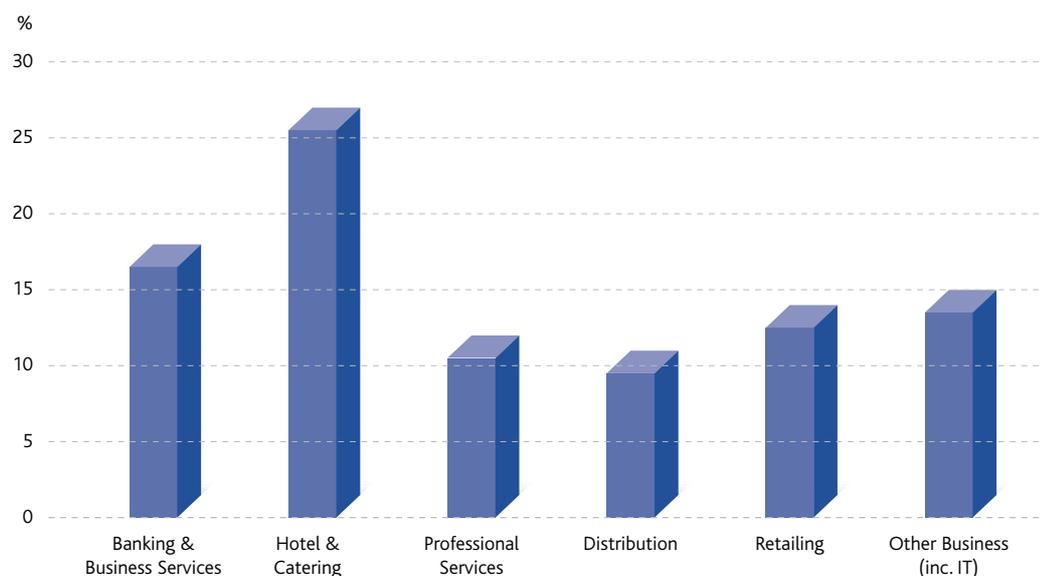


Diagram 7
Percentage Job Growth by Sector 1998-2001

Even some traditional industries that are in decline have vacancy levels generated by normal job turnover that outweigh the overall decline in the total number of jobs.

Skills issues impacting many local businesses are, however, significant and employers are facing continuing difficulties based upon the fundamental problem of a labour shortage, exacerbated by both an ageing population and a shortage of skilled individuals.

The concentration of the critical skills shortages is in craft/technician skills. This is due to a combination of factors – a growth of jobs exceeding the supply of skilled workers and the obsolescent skills of some that hamper either the transfer between occupations or the ability to adapt to new technologies and processes. Other occupations facing particularly severe skills or labour problems include ICT, management, hospitality and care.

Many key workers, in particular teachers and nurses, find that the cost of living is a deterrent to working in Berkshire. Local authorities are working to offer incentives and support, including improving the capacity of affordable housing, to tackle this problem.

The overall result is that employers are struggling to fill vacancies and build their businesses across all sectors. There are significant skills shortages, skills gaps and general recruitment difficulties. There will also continue to be available significant numbers of relatively well-paid unskilled jobs without training, particularly in service sector support occupations.

2.3 Challenges for Berkshire

Having set out the tasks for the national Learning and Skills Council and the local context, we need to define the most urgent local challenges. From the evidence outlined above, the key areas are to raise skill levels, to equip young people with the best skills, to meet employers' skill needs and to address the needs of the disadvantaged and decrease the gaps between sectors of the Berkshire community.

Achieving these objectives will not be simple or short-term, but we will have made a real impact if we can achieve the following:

- **Develop a high quality, flexible, efficient and collaborative learning infrastructure:** the infrastructure must be able to respond to learner and employer needs. There needs to be greater choice in vocational and academic courses, which are of high quality and fit for purpose. This change can only be achieved by the promotion of new, collaborative structures that build on the strengths of our partners, for example, by supporting ways that colleges and voluntary groups can work together effectively.
Aspects of this challenge that are key to the 14-19 age group include developing the coherence of learning opportunities, enabling seamless progression in learning at age 16 and narrowing the divide between vocational and academic routes;
- **Develop and improve the current standard and quality of provision:** throughout the duration of this plan the learner will be central to our thinking. We must ensure that the quality and range of provision is developed and further improved and we must actively pursue a policy of continuous improvement to support our drive towards world-class local learning provision;
- **Maximise Level 3 achievement rates for 19 year olds:** although young people in Berkshire achieve well at GCSE in comparison with the rest of England, they do not maintain this lead to Level 3 (broadly equivalent to 2 A levels). This level is considered to be the minimum skill level by the majority of employers in the area. We must also pay attention to the needs of the higher achievers, and ensure that there are opportunities and progression routes at Levels 4 and 5;
- **Reduce the number of young people who are not in supported learning when they leave school at 16:** the current rate of 20% has been steady for the past five years and this means that a significant number of young people (unsurprisingly mainly those with low qualifications) are falling out of learning at a very early stage. Re-engagement at a later stage becomes increasingly difficult. Those who enter employment with low skills are likely to receive little training.
One of the relevant issues here is the presence locally of a high volume of relatively well-paid jobs that are readily available, including to those aged under 25;
- **Improve the economic potential for people who have been disadvantaged for cultural, health, social, environmental and employment reasons:** the reasons for such disadvantage are complex but often arise from cultural/social factors compounded by low and out of date skills. These individuals, given the appropriate approach and opportunities, have an enormous potential to contribute to the social and economic well-being of Berkshire.
The lack of people to fill many jobs provides an opportunity for many people to move into employment so long as they have the appropriate support, training and flexible working practices;

- **Improve the levels of basic skills:** as over 20% of the adult population of Berkshire have low levels of literacy and numeracy, they are less likely to take part in training and may have difficulty in helping their children with learning or dealing effectively with the basic day-to-day tasks. Links between low basic skills, deprivation and low achievement of children are well documented. Fortunately the economic situation in Berkshire means that many people with low basic skills still have a good earning and employment potential. Their basic skills problems are a disadvantage rather than a major barrier. Those with the very lowest levels of basic skills, however, face major employment barriers. We need to tackle this problem urgently and creatively;
- **Address the key current and forecast skill shortages of the area:** it is important that we develop learning opportunities of all sorts that are appropriate and relevant to employer needs. We will focus on:
 - promoting the development of technical skills, in particular in construction and craft up to, and including, Level 3;
 - improving the ICT skills of both users and ICT professionals;
 - improving management skills for those in small and medium sized businesses;
 - supporting training to aid recruitment across the public services, for example, in health and education.

- **Raise skills levels amongst the local workforce:** we need to develop a culture that encourages continued learning to Level 3 or higher and we want to actively support local people in gaining skills so that they can take advantage of higher level job opportunities. People moving to the area frequently fill the higher skilled and better paid jobs and this compounds the transport problems and the pressures on the cost of living in Berkshire. There are particularly strong pressures in the public sector.

For those with lower incomes, financial pressures mean that many young people do not enter Higher Education but join the workforce. It is important, therefore, that we facilitate access to Higher Education for those in work. We need also to attract young people and employers to learning so that young people remain in learning whilst working.

In addition there is a need to recognise the value of non-accredited training undertaken by local businesses;

- **Develop e-skills and e-learning throughout Berkshire:** the e-skills (skills in the use of ICT) and e-learning (using ICT as a learning medium) agenda is wide-ranging and complex. There are two main challenges locally:
 - we must raise ICT user and professional skill levels and ensure that these skills are up to date and relevant to our fast moving work environment. ICT skills are fundamental to employability; and
 - building on the local strength in ICT we must develop new e-learning techniques to deliver learning.

We will need to use the full potential of the existing and developing local infrastructure, including employers, to provide access to ICT and to deliver more learning.

There are already a range of initiatives in Berkshire on which we can build, including 15 Learndirect/Ufl centres;

- **Address the continuous learning needs of the ageing population:** demographic projections for Berkshire reveal a fundamental change in the age distribution of workers. They indicate a continuing decline in the numbers of residents aged under 45, which is complemented by a larger increase in the numbers of residents over 45 who are still of working age. With labour demand projected to continue to grow, the employability needs of this group need urgent attention.

The challenge is to provide individuals who wish to remain in employment with the skills set to enable them to do so. There is also a need to open up partnerships for retired people to participate more in voluntary and community work. All providers will need to accommodate the training needs of older people and to provide learning opportunities. Employers will need to provide flexible working patterns that help people continue working for longer.

> 3. Targets and Strategy

3.1 National Targets

A set of quantitative targets has been defined as the principal measure for the progress of the national and local Learning and Skills Councils over the next two years.

These targets are grouped into five areas of objectives, which reflect the key tasks of the Learning and Skills Council (as outlined in Chapter 1). We must plan and resource strategies and actions to achieve these targets and objectives.

The table on page 24 sets out the national objectives, the national and local benchmarks and the current proposals for 2004 national and local targets. Measurements for four of the targets have not yet been defined: these are likely to be developed for publication in the national Corporate Plan for 2002-03. The proposed local targets are subject to agreement by National Office.

The data used to set the benchmarks and targets has been provided by the national Learning and Skills Council.

It is recognised that Berkshire is ahead of national attainments in many of the target areas for young people and the rate of progress towards final achievement of the national targets is likely to be far from linear. Our targets are highly challenging in the two-year time frame.

We are ahead in many measures of workforce achievement in learning. As previously noted a number of well skilled workers are attracted to the area but the high economic activity rate also attracts non-qualified workers. These factors will operate against further improvement in the short term.

3.2 Regional Targets

Working with SEEDA, other Learning and Skills Councils in the South East region and other partners, we support the Public Service Agreement targets for skills development set out in SEEDA's draft Corporate Plan 2002-04. These are:

- Improving basic skills in the workforce.
- Improving ICT skills in the workforce.
- Increasing the number of people with management skills.
- Tackling specific sector skill shortages.

3.3 Local Targets

The diversity of the challenges faced across the six Local Authority areas will need appropriate focused attention to help us ensure that we are making a difference throughout Berkshire. Our intention is to develop local targets and impact measures for each area with local partners, including an equality impact measure. Our progress towards developing local targets and impact measures will be outlined in our business plan for 2002-03.

Key Objectives	National Targets for 2004 & Benchmarks	Berkshire Targets for 2004 & Benchmarks	
		2000 baseline	2004 target
Extend participation in education, learning and training	80% of 16-18 year olds in structured learning (2000: 75%)	82.5% (24,875) ⁹	85.5% (27,831)
	Set baseline and target for adults in 2002-05 Corporate Plan	Increase number of adults engaged in some form of learning in previous year (61% {31,500} in 2000) ⁸	
Increase engagement of employers in workforce development	Develop measure of employer engagement in 2002-05 Corporate Plan	Local targets will reflect those developed nationally.	
Raise achievement of young people	85% at Level 2 by age 19 (2000: 75%)	78% (8,200) ¹⁰	85% (9,100)
	55% at Level 3 by age 19 (2000: 51%)	52% (5,518) ⁸	58.2% (6,239)
Raise achievement of adults	Raise literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults	Raise literacy and numeracy levels to approved standards for 12,645 people (21% with poor literacy and 20% with poor numeracy skills in 2000) ¹⁰	
	% of adults at Level 2: target to be set in 2002-05 Corporate Plan	Base of 74% (377,000) in 2000	
	52% of adults at Level 3 (2000: 47%)	50.4% (215,000) ⁹	58.4% (249,000)
Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction	Baseline and target to be set in 2002-05 Corporate Plan	Local targets will reflect those developed nationally	

⁸ Thames Valley Enterprise Household Survey 2000.

⁹ Government Administrative Records/Labour Force Survey, 2000.

¹⁰ Basic Skills Agency local disaggregation of figures, 2000.

3.4 The National Framework

We have a wide remit and a national mission and vision that have been translated into national targets. Our national drivers for change are:

- **The Common Funding Formula:** schools, colleges and Work Based Learning providers were all funded by different bodies using various formulae. The migration to a common funding process has started and by 2003 – 2004 all providers should be funded using a formula based on common principles, although not necessarily the same level of funding.
- **The Common Inspection Framework:** all Learning and Skills Councils inherited a range of providers subject in the past to varied quality monitoring and improvement requirements dependent on their funding body. All providers, however funded, are or will be subject to external inspections by the Adult Learning Inspectorate or OFSTED, based on the Common Inspection Framework.
- **National priorities, legislation and funds:** post-16 learning takes place in a national and global context, in which world events, legislation, government initiatives and funding changes all impact on the way that we can work. Those having an impact on the work of the local council range from the economic slowdown to the government's proposals for the 14-19 group.

3.5 Local Implementation Strategies

To achieve our targets, deliver the remit and meet local challenges we have identified a set of five interlinked strategies. We believe that implementing these will increase and broaden participation and achievement in learning at all levels, including drawing in those who do not see learning as valuable to them.

It is important to note that we are starting with an existing well-established national and local infrastructure of providers, delivering curricula that are of varying breadth, quality and subjects and focused at different age groups.

We do not work in a steady state environment and in the timescale covered by this plan there will undoubtedly be significant changes and new developments. Changes in funding and inspection are likely to lead to adjustments in the provider infrastructure and the introduction of new providers, projects or initiatives may be influenced by quality requirements. Existing providers are keen that funds should be sufficient to enable them to maintain the quality and flexibility that they show at present and to allow them to grow.

Our strategies are as follows:

Strategy 1: Working Together Towards World Class Standards in Learning.

Strategy 2: Strengthening the Structure of Learning.

Strategy 3: Changing Attitudes and Unlocking Learning Opportunities for All.

Strategy 4: Helping Learners Succeed.

Strategy 5: Building a Highly Skilled Workforce for the Future.

We will now look at each strategy to highlight the issues, approach and priorities. The key actions within each priority are outlined in Chapter 4, along with the main outcomes.

3.6 Strategy 1: Working Together Towards World Class Standards in Learning

Through this strategy we aspire to raise the quality of learning in Berkshire so that it matches the best in the world.

Through reviewing the performance of our FE and Work Based Learning providers we have established that the local picture is broadly consistent with the national profile, in which most provision is graded through inspections as satisfactory. While there are currently no providers about whom we have serious concerns, not enough of our areas within our provision are outstanding and there is significant room for improvement in delivery and performance.

Our aim is to improve quality so that learner performance, especially retention and achievement, and learner satisfaction levels improve. Learner success is best promoted in organisations with a strong culture of continuous improvement and with well managed quality assurance systems using robust learner performance data.

We have concluded that locally we need to intervene in four key areas to achieve sustained quality improvement:

- rapid improvement in quality assurance, to ensure that priority is given to developing and using effective evidence based systems;
- value added analysis and benchmarking to enable providers to compare their learner and staff performance with other providers;
- properly qualified staff and programmes of continuous professional development to enable continuous improvement;
- responsiveness to learner needs and promotion of equal opportunities, including inclusive learning.

Planning and monitoring quality improvement takes place primarily through provider performance reviews, linked to provider planning, assessment and development plan timescales. Inspection by OFSTED and the ALI will provide further evaluation of standards and performance.

Monitoring will only be effective if we have robust data analysis based on accurate information systems. Working with our partners, we also need to develop other measures for quality, more sophisticated than raw exam scores, which take into account fitness for purpose, added value and the difference in learner cohorts. These measures should enable us to compare quality across the different learning routes.

Priorities for Action:

With our partners we will:

Priorities	Local challenge addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support providers in raising standards through a focused quality improvement cycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and improve the current standard and quality of provision.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage investment in continuing professional development of staff delivering education and training.	National objective supported
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop, improve and evaluate appropriate quality assurance frameworks for all programmes and projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raised quality of education and training and user satisfaction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop centres of excellence in teaching and learning.	

3.7 Strategy 2: Strengthening the Structure of Learning

Our ambition is to build a framework for post-16 learning in Berkshire which:

- delivers high quality learning;
- achieves excellent performance;
- responds to local and national strategic developments including the needs for growth in learning;
- matches and meets the needs of learners, communities and employers; and
- allows individuals continually to make progress.

As outlined in Strategy 1, we have, on the whole, a sound infrastructure, for example as illustrated in the FE and Work Based Learning sectors. Yet it could be much better. We also need to ensure we understand, and can fill, any gaps in the provision of learning.

We need to evaluate critically and contribute to providers' strategic plans. The aim is to ensure that there is a wider choice of provision, learning packages that fit together better, and progression routes that are effectively signposted. This will contribute to improving skill and achievement levels. We need to listen and respond to the needs of our learners, as well as employers and communities.

One of the most important areas for attention is to address the Government's recent 14-19 Green Paper. By providing more choice, flexibility and collaboration there should be an improvement in the rates of post-16 learning participation and achievement. This is critical to meeting the future skill needs of our employers and increasing commitments to lifelong learning.

We also have a key task in building the capacity of the infrastructure which delivers adult learning. A wide range of organisations are active in this, but we need to coordinate and develop this further, initially focusing on establishing consistent quality systems, sustainability and supporting skills improvement for staff in some sectors.

There are several key drivers to all our work in this strategy. We must:

- understand better the needs, views and concerns of learners, and of potential learners;
- work creatively within national policies, including funding mechanisms; and
- collaborate closely with providers to effect change.

The funding streams are numerous and we need to draw them together. In the South East there are six local Learning and Skills Councils, the Employment Service, SEEDA, 17 LEAs and the Government Office for the South East working on related agendas; we need to work together to reduce bureaucracy, repetition and overload on our employers, organisations, partners and groups. We need to create synergy using our organisational strengths to tackle specific issues.

Priorities for Action:

With our partners we will:

Priorities	Local challenge addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new high quality opportunities for 14-19 year olds, which provide choice and flexibility. • Build capacity through working with partners to develop flexible pathways, which maximise participation and achievements in learning. • Improve coordination and focus in Adult and Community Learning. • Contribute to and collaborate on providers' strategic plans, locally, regionally and nationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a high quality, flexible, efficient and collaborative learning infrastructure.
	<p>National objectives supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend participation in education, learning and training. • Raise achievement of young people. • Raise achievement of adults.

3.8 Strategy 3: Changing Attitudes and Unlocking Opportunities for All

To achieve our objectives and targets of raising participation, we must ease access to learning and tackle the complex barriers to participation. The benefits of learning are often unclear. Surveys have frequently shown that many people consider that they are sufficiently well skilled. There is a wide range of barriers which prevent people from participating in learning and in achieving qualifications. Exclusion, non-participation and under-achievement occur at all skill levels and all ages, and are not confined to areas of disadvantage.

There are three aspects to this strategy:

- 1 Widening participation by breaking down the barriers to learning.
- 2 Addressing social inclusion by working with specific groups of people who are unable to participate in learning due to physical, cultural, social or other factors.
- 3 Improving opportunities for those with specific learning needs and/or disabilities so that they are able to achieve their potential.

1. Widening Participation

The most common general barriers to participation are:

- lack of time or inability to commit for a long period, including for those who work and/or travel for long hours;
- an assumption that an individual does not require any further learning;
- lack of practical support such as finance, affordable childcare or transport;
- lack of knowledge of what is available and fear of what will be required;
- lack of interest in learning and a low value placed on learning and training by individuals, their employer or their community, resulting in low levels of personal motivation to learn; and
- lack of basic skills.

People in low paid work often do a lot of overtime or have more than one job. Those in well paid jobs are often expected to work long hours or travel long distances for their work.

Access funds, charities and other organisations help to overcome some financial barriers, but not always those that the learner most needs tackling, for example, childcare (both whilst learning and studying) and travel.

There is also a need to address the issues at an early stage and to work with partners such as the Connexions Partnership and Berkshire Business Education Alliance on activities that are preventative as well as curative.

The issues around basic skills issues are set out in "Skills for Life"¹¹. We need to change the mindset that if you are in work, it doesn't matter that you cannot read. We need to convince people that the benefits are both for them and their families. In schools, much focused work is underway to improve literacy and numeracy levels and we must build on this.

¹¹ The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills, 2001

2. Addressing Social Inclusion

Participation difficulties are especially severe for some specific groups of people. In this prosperous area the difference between the “haves” and “have-nots” is high and this is not conducive to building strong, active communities.

Target groups include:

- ethnic minority communities;
- long-term unemployed;
- disaffected young people; and
- rural isolated communities.

Other groups requiring special focus include travellers, offenders/ex-offenders, looked after children, drug users and over 50s.

We need to address the issues faced by those who are excluded, systematically under-achieving or in a cycle of deprivation that is now generational. We must accept that teaching strategies appropriate for mainstream work have had limited success in engaging and progressing some learners.

Working with Connexions there is much to be done to re-engage the significant number of young people aged 16-19 who are not involved in any stable form of learning or employment. The problems are more pronounced in specific areas within Berkshire.

3. Improving Opportunities for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

The Learning and Skills Council is responsible for arrangements both for young people up to age 19 who have been statemented as having a special educational need, and for adults with learning difficulties. There are indications that there is a need for quality improvement and a greater range of options for these groups.

Our major role is developing policies and options for both young people and adults. We will work with a range of agencies to do this, including the emerging Joint Investment Planning groups and the Employment Service, which has responsibility for New Deal and work based learning for adults.

The table below indicates the major groups of individuals (post-16) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the local issues, which need to be addressed for each of them:

Learning Difficulties and/or Disability	Areas for LSC action
Young people with moderate needs	Insufficient post-16 learning provision appropriate to needs, especially linked to work/work experience.
Young people with severe needs	Dependency on out of area provision, as local facilities are limited.
Adults with moderate needs	Need for more community based and specialist provision tailored to individual needs.
Adults with severe needs	Need for more learning opportunities linked to long-term supported employment.

Much of our detailed policy work in this area is set out in our Equality and Inclusion Strategy, a summary of which is at Annex 7.

Priorities for Action:

With our partners we will:

Priorities	Local challenges addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the learning needs of those with low levels of basic skills, through a focused action plan. • Improve the infrastructure of support for inclusive learning. • Provide tailored, diverse and relevant learning opportunities that are attractive, timely and accessible. • Continue to provide access to high quality information, advice and guidance for all. • Establish promotional and support mechanisms, which improve participation in learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the economic potential for people who have been disadvantaged for cultural, health, social, environmental and employment reasons. • Improve the levels of basic skills. • Reduce the number of young people who are not in supported learning when they leave school at 16.
	<p>National objective supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend participation in education, learning and training.

3.9 Strategy 4: Helping Learners Succeed

Improving retention, achievement and progression rates will depend on a wide range of activities.

In an area where many jobs need high levels of skills and at a time when skill requirements are constantly changing, it is critical that we enable individuals to achieve their highest potential. The attraction for many young people and adults of relatively well-paid low-skilled jobs above the attraction of learning is well recognised. Key local data, however, supports the need to focus on improving achievement rates:

- average GCSE results achieved by those aged 16 are well above national averages, but this lead is not maintained at Level 3 by those aged 19;
- the proportions of 16-18 year olds who remain in learning are highly variable across Berkshire and this requires improvement;
- close to 60% of young people aged 15-16 gained 5 GCSEs at grade C or above in 2000. A further 18% gained a Level 2 qualification over the following two years. Both these rates need to improve to achieve the target in Berkshire of 85%;
- currently around 33% of 18/19 year olds progress to Higher Education. This rate must be improved if we are to meet the Government target of 50% of those under 30 participating in HE by 2010;
- although a high proportion of adults have qualifications at Level 3 or above, many of these individuals have moved into the area and the skill levels of the resident population are lower.

We need to ensure that appropriate support and guidance are available to all learners throughout their learning. This covers a variety of support including financial, practical (such as equipment), personal and careers/employment advice. Support will need to be highly specialised, individually tailored and involve specialist agencies for some individuals.

We also need to help providers take advantage of the most up-to-date learning techniques and technology to improve the enjoyment and effectiveness of learning. This will include developing appropriate curricula which promote engagement and maximise accreditation of learning.

Building on the work already undertaken, in particular by Learning Partnerships, we need to develop further a culture of lifelong learning. We need to help individuals to recognise, and to be able to realise, the value of continuous learning.

Individuals will often remain in learning if they can see the relevance and benefits of learning. This will be helped if there are close links with employers and if the progression routes into employment and further learning are clarified. We need to ensure that there are appropriate routes into Higher Education and that they are available for those employed as well as for those progressing from education.

Priorities for Action:

With our partners we will:

Priorities	Local challenges addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Level 3 achievement levels in particular by young people. • Support curriculum development and new ways of delivery, which improve retention and achievement, including maximising use of new learning technologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise Level 3 achievement rates for 19 year olds. • Develop e-learning throughout Berkshire. • Develop a high quality, flexible, efficient and collaborative learning infrastructure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the benefits and necessity of learning throughout life. • Develop appropriate support, including for those with additional needs, leading to improved retention and achievement. • Strengthen links with Higher Education to broaden opportunities for a wide range of individuals 	<p>National objective supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise achievement of young people. • Raise achievement of adults.

3.10 Strategy 5: Building a Highly Skilled Workforce for the Future

While, overall, employers spend large amounts of money in training their workforce, this investment is patchy across sectors and levels.

The main role of the Council with respect to employers is in developing the human capital aspects of the local economy. We can, through our funding and planning responsibilities, improve the work-related skills and aptitudes of Berkshire's population, especially young people. Our activities must complement and enhance opportunities for the individual as well as contributing to the success of the organisation in which they are employed.

Also, by developing a workforce development strategy that works in partnership with employers we can help address some of the particular skills deficits of the workforce.

In addition, the Council will aim to support the creation of a culture that is business-friendly and encourages employers to train all their staff, at all levels.

It is already clear that we must:

- sell the benefits of learning to all employers, especially small and medium sized employers and the self-employed, who are less likely to involve themselves or their staff in training;
- increase the engagement of more employers in training and Work Based Learning, including activities for those still in statutory education;
- raise the levels of basic skills of those employed;
- reduce under-employment by encouraging the take up of Level 3 and higher courses;
- support human resource/working practices to keep the 45+ in work;
- learn from those companies which take training seriously;
- target areas of skills shortage in the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- make accreditation of in-house training more attractive, accessible and worthwhile, whilst continuing to value non-accredited training provision;
- work closely with the Employment Service and other agencies which hold funds and planning responsibilities for work based learning for adults; and
- work in partnership with employer representative organisations.

Priorities for Action:

With our partners we will:

Priorities	Local challenges addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to better business performance through a workforce development plan that is based on Berkshire's role in the regional, national and global economy. • Identify and implement joint actions to tackle skills shortages, especially in ICT, technical and craft skills. • Improve the engagement of employers in learning and training, in particular through Modern Apprenticeships. • Enable more upskilling for employees, including addressing basic skill needs. • Implement activities which support continued employment for older workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the key current and forecast skill shortages of the areas. • Raise skill levels amongst the local workforce. • Develop e-skills throughout Berkshire. • Address the continuous learning needs of the ageing population.
	National objective supported
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase engagement of employers in workforce development.

> 4. Action Plan

This chapter sets out our action plan for the next three years, which outlines the most important actions we need to undertake to achieve the targets and challenges in this Plan. It is organised around the five strategies outlined in Chapter 3.

This action plan cannot cover all activities. These will be detailed in our annual business plan which will be published each year.

Strategy 1: Working Together Towards World Class Standards in Learning

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Support providers in raising standards through a focused quality improvement cycle¹²	
Develop the rigour and extend the range of regular provider performance reviews to improve the effectiveness of providers' quality improvement cycles. Implement reviews for Work Based Learning, FE and Adult and Community Learning in 2002-03.	All provision is at least satisfactory by 2004 by LSC standards and there is an increase in the proportion of learners in good and excellent provision from the 2001 baseline of 49% to 60% in 2005.
Support providers in developing self-assessment reporting which is consistent with the standards applied through external inspections.	Close (90%) match between self-assessment and external inspection grades.
Invest, including through the Standards Fund, in provider development so that there are demonstrable improvements in all aspects of provider performance.	Improvement in provider performance as measured against the local levels of national targets for 2004 for participation and achievement. Retention targets to be agreed in 2002.
Encourage investment in continuing professional development of staff delivering education and training.	
Help providers, including schools with Sixth Forms, to achieve, and maintain, the Investors in People standard.	All schools with Sixth Forms, colleges, Work Based Learning and Local Education Authority providers with Investors in People accreditation by December 2003.
Work with the six Local Education Authorities and providers on the continuous development of staff to promote vocational excellence in the teaching, lecturing and training of post-14 learners.	High quality learning centres for staff involved in post-14 learning will be supported annually through discretionary funds. Continued support for 14-19 collaborative curriculum development.
Widen teacher professional development through focused activities to progress vocational curricula, in particular the recommendations in the Green Paper "Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards".	Over 500 work based placement days involving at least 450 teachers annually.

¹² The term "provider" covers all organisations that deliver education and training which is resourced and planned through the Learning and Skills Council. The planning and resourcing for school Sixth Forms is undertaken jointly with the Local Education Authority.

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Develop, implement and evaluate appropriate quality assurance frameworks for all programmes and projects.	
<p>Develop our use of management information to monitor effectively the performance of programmes, providers and projects. This will include developing measures such as value added analysis and benchmarking with other Learning and Skills Councils.</p>	<p>Comprehensive, accurate and up to date records of performance to inform contract management and strategic actions established during 2002-03.</p> <p>Pilot value added system developed locally in 2002.</p> <p>Value added system in all FE/schools 2004.</p> <p>Pilot for Work Based Learning providers in 2003.</p>
<p>Working with partners, develop and implement local evaluation mechanisms for all programmes and projects. This will include learner satisfaction and feedback, which will be undertaken in conjunction with providers such as colleges, so that consistent approaches to learner satisfaction and tracking are developed.</p>	<p>By 2003, evaluation integrated into all provider programme and project management.</p> <p>Baselines and improvement levels for learner satisfaction on all major programmes agreed with Work Based Learning and FE providers in 2002.</p>
<p>Implement the equality action plan, which will include ensuring that provision meets the legal requirements such as the SEND (Special Education Needs and Disability) Act, 2001, the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, and the Race Relations Act (amended), 2001.</p>	<p>Equality action plan implemented during 2002-03, and annually updated.</p> <p>All providers meet requirements of the Acts by 2004.</p>
<p>Ensure that all providers have in place robust internal control systems, can satisfy all audit requirements and recognise their responsibilities for the health and safety of learners. There should be clear links between processes and performance improvements.</p>	<p>Ratings from inspections and audits are satisfactory or better.</p>
Develop centres of excellence in teaching and learning	
<p>Proactively progress local, regional and national initiatives to develop centres of excellence in schools, colleges, training providers and the voluntary and community sector. This will include supporting any New Technology Institutes that are approved for Berkshire.</p>	<p>All FE Colleges involved in COVEs by 2005, two during 2002-03.</p>
<p>Promote local successes in learning provision through marketing and promotional activities. This will include pilots of sponsored learning award schemes, development of a wide range of learning case studies and regular press coverage.</p>	<p>High levels of awareness of local learning successes, measured, from 2002, through an annual household survey.</p>

Strategy 2: Strengthening the Structure of Learning

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Develop new high quality opportunities for 14-19 year olds, which provide choice and flexibility.	
<p>Support collaborative projects that promote learning developments for those aged 14-19, through close working with Local Education Authorities, schools, colleges, training providers and Education Business Link Organisations.</p>	<p>All colleges involved in 14-16 flexibility projects in 2002.</p> <p>Baseline and targets to be set in 2002 for the number of providers engaged in 14-19 collaborative activities.</p> <p>A high quality, flexible and comprehensive range of 14-19 provision in place by 2005, as evidenced by area inspections.</p>
<p>Ensure that there are appropriate and high quality learning opportunities for those aged 14-19 with additional needs such as disaffection, disadvantage, disabilities or learning difficulties.</p> <p>A strategy for disadvantaged youth will be developed in partnership with organisations such as Local Education Authorities, Connexions and the Education Business Link Organisations. This will focus on reviewing current arrangements, drawing in new provision and linking local developments with those at national level. A key part of the strategy will be supporting the introduction of the SEND Special Education Needs and Disability code of practice.</p>	<p>A joint strategy developed during 2002 which leads to increased participation and satisfaction levels by young people with additional needs.</p> <p>A review of Work Based Learning provision for young people who have additional needs in 2002, in advance of the introduction of Entry to Employment in 2003.</p> <p>Contribute towards increasing the number of 16-18 year olds in structured learning (target of 85.5% by 2004).</p>
Build capacity through working with partners which maximise participation and achievement in learning.	
<p>Where there is an identified demand, fund and support new providers which respond effectively to learner/employer needs.</p>	<p>All 16-18 year olds able to access an appropriate learning opportunity if they want one, including introducing a Modern Apprenticeship guarantee for 16-17 year olds by 2004.</p> <p>A wide range of choice and flexibility in learning as evidenced by feedback from partners, such as Local Learning Partnerships, and annual surveys.</p>

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
<p>Provide learning providers with a range of support, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaboration with provider networks; • information about legislative changes, research and new initiatives; • staff development programme; • assisting development, for example, helping to establish a new provider framework for the delivery of Modern Apprenticeships; • workshops, newsletters and briefings. 	<p>Annual programme of workshops, briefings and training events.</p> <p>Introduction of Apprenticeship Agents to deliver Modern Apprenticeships during 2002-03.</p>
<p>Working with Learning Partnerships, providers and community and voluntary sector organisations, broaden the range of places in the community where learning takes place, including arrangements for specific groups, such as family learning centres.</p> <p>Mechanisms will be developed that enable appropriate community and voluntary sector-led learning opportunities to become more sustainable in future, through partnerships with existing "mainstream" providers.</p>	<p>High levels of participation in learning at a wide range of community locations supported through mainstream and discretionary funds.</p> <p>Two pilots developed by 2003 which link community and voluntary sector organisations with mainstream funding routes such as Adult and Community Learning and FE.</p>
<p>Source additional funding opportunities to help providers, in particular from European Social Funds (ESF), through Learning and Skills Council co-financing arrangements.</p>	<p>Approximately £2M annually from ESF focused on widening participation in learning.</p>
Improve coordination and focus in Adult and Community Learning.	
<p>Coordinate Adult and Community Learning plans to improve access, participation and quality. This will focus on developing quality improvement mechanisms and measures, bringing new learners into learning and increasing diversity and access.</p> <p>Develop specialist pan-Berkshire Adult and Community Learning to meet local learning needs better, such as supporting providers who develop innovative learning approaches and those who work with specific groups of disadvantaged people.</p>	<p>A development plan shared by all providers by 2003.</p> <p>Increased participation by at least 5% (1,250) each year from the 2001/02 baseline of 25,000 learners to over 28,000 by 2005.</p> <p>Analysis of current provision and gaps during 2002 and pilot projects to improve opportunities developed during 2003.</p> <p>Family learning projects supported by the Learning and Skills Council throughout Berkshire by 2003 including literacy and numeracy focused activities.</p>

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Contribute to and collaborate on partners' strategic plans, locally, regionally and nationally	
<p>Establish a system of linking appropriate strategic local, regional and national plans, including local community plans, provider business plans and education development plans so that plans impacting post-14 learning and skills in Berkshire have consistent messages and aims. Special consideration will be given to the diversity across the six Local Authority areas within Berkshire. This will include ensuring we listen and respond to the views of learners.</p>	<p>Methods of linking plans established during 2002-03.</p> <p>Improved consistency of learning messages by 2003.</p>
<p>Work with providers to collaborate on research and data management on learning and skills needs of learners/potential learners, employers and communities. Areas of focus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local barriers preventing people, especially those with additional needs, from participating in learning; and • establishing with partners, in particular Learning Partnerships and providers, consistent mechanisms for feedback from learners and potential learners in local areas to better understand and respond to individuals' needs and views. 	<p>Shared arrangements for information and data management established with key partners during 2002 and 2003.</p> <p>Localised research undertaken in 2002 into community learning needs of relatively disadvantaged sub-areas within Berkshire.</p> <p>Youth and adult learner fora piloted and evaluated during 2002-03.</p>
<p>Maintain, improve and extend the Berkshire Review so that it provides a comprehensive set of data and information about post-14 learning and supports preparation for inspections and policy developments.</p>	<p>Vocational aspects of provision for 14-16 year olds included in the Review during 2002.</p> <p>Annual updates of the Review and dissemination of main findings to providers and partners.</p>

Strategy 3: Changing attitudes and unlocking learning opportunities

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Address the learning needs of those with low levels of basic skills, through a focused action plan.	
Develop curricula across all provision to ensure that all learners with low levels of basic skills have the opportunity to improve their skill levels. The focus will be on improving the breadth of curricula and embedding basic skills in existing opportunities.	Increase the number of individuals currently undertaking basic skills learning from 7,000 to over 20,000 annually by 2004.
Work with all providers to develop high quality arrangements necessary to implement the basic skills action plan.	An established network of accredited providers at BSA quality standards by the end of 2003-04.
Develop the capacity of basic skills provision by improving and increasing the skills of staff, including in delivery and initial assessment.	Increased number of qualified tutors (at FENTO standards) so that the local level of the national target can be achieved. Baseline to be reviewed during 2002-03.
Improve the infrastructure of support for inclusive learning.	
<p>Working with partners, including specialist agencies, develop an action plan to improve the inclusivity and diversity of learning locally.</p> <p>This will include focusing activity on widening participation by inactive learners, such as those who are disaffected, have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or are ethnic minority.</p>	<p>Increased participation in learning by specific groups. Indicators and baselines to be set during 2002-03. These are likely to include the level of take up of Modern Apprenticeships by those with learning needs.</p> <p>An equality local target to be agreed for each Local Authority area early in 2002-03.</p>
Collaborate through a statement of arrangements with a range of organisations including the Employment Service, on New Deal, Welfare To Work and other initiatives to add value and coherence in adult learning.	<p>High level of coherence and consistency to the work of the Learning and Skills Council and others involved in adult learning.</p> <p>Two local joint initiatives implemented and evaluated during 2002-03.</p>
Develop and provide a range of support mechanisms for providers which enable disadvantaged learners to participate in learning, including childcare, help for carers and transport support.	<p>Policy guidelines developed during 2002-03.</p> <p>Increased numbers of disadvantaged learners in learning. Baselines to be set in 2002.</p>

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
<p>Provide tailored, diverse and relevant learning opportunities that are attractive, timely and accessible.</p>	
<p>Implement and further the national "compact" arrangements on a local basis which set out the agreement between government and the voluntary and community sector to pursue joint development and capacity building.</p> <p>This will build on the expertise of organisations active locally, to break down barriers, support learners and disseminate good practice.</p> <p>The focus will be on providing opportunities that are attractive in terms of location, venue, time and cost and will include projects for specific groups and specific communities.</p>	<p>Increased participation in learning especially by those living in disadvantaged areas. Baseline to be set through annual household survey in 2002.</p> <p>Jointly produced and agreed community development and learning strategy implemented in 2002-03.</p>
<p>Continue to improve access to high quality information, advice and guidance for all.</p>	
<p>Work with Local Education Authorities, Connexions, Education Business Link Organisations and providers to ensure that all young people receive information, advice and guidance about the full range of 14-19 year olds' learning opportunities.</p> <p>This will include developing a better awareness of the value and benefits of Work Based Learning to improve its image with 16-18 year olds and targeting work with those who influence 16-18 year olds.</p>	<p>Contribute towards the local participation targets that 85.5% of 16-18 year olds are in structured learning by 2004.</p> <p>Targeted marketing activities each year that inform influencers of post-16 learning choices.</p>
<p>Enhance the existing adult service through focusing on improving access and guidance, linking more closely with Learndirect and developing quality assurance arrangements within the service.</p>	<p>Increased number of information and advice sessions per year from the baseline of 1,350 in 2001-02 by 10% annually.</p> <p>Double the number of accredited local Information, Advice and Guidance centres from the 2002 base of 13 by the end of 2002-03.</p>

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Establish promotional and support mechanisms which improve participation in learning.	
<p>Implement a marketing plan and activities to raise awareness and profile of learning opportunities through coordinated work with partners. The main objectives will be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing awareness and understanding of post-16 options, with a focus on 16-18 year olds; • targeting niche markets to increase participation by specific groups including those of ethnic minority origin, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with basic skills needs; • coordination with providers and partners such as Business Link, Local Authorities and employer organisations to improve employer engagement in learning; • supplementing national campaigns with local information and activities. <p>Network meetings and consultation with key partners will be ongoing, including FE, Learning Partnerships, Work Based Learning providers and employer organisations.</p>	<p>Annually updated marketing plan in place by April each year.</p> <p>Coordinated activity by all partners on marketing learning.</p>

Strategy 4: Helping Learners Succeed

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Improve Level 3 achievement levels, in particular by young people	
<p>Improve Level 3 achievements by the age of 19 by implementing a range of activities. The starting point will be an investigation into the reasons behind the current Level 3 achievement rates and how these can be improved. The action plan will cover measures to improve advice and guidance, participation, retention and achievement, all forms of provision and will address funding and quality issues.</p>	<p>Investigation completed by 2003.</p> <p>Increased achievement rates at 19 from 52% (2000) to 58.2% (2004).</p>
<p>Develop improved integration of provision within FE, enabling more people to progress from foundation through to Level 3 provision and beyond.</p>	<p>High levels of value added. Measures to be set as part of value added pilot project in 2002.</p>
Support curriculum development and new ways of delivery which improve retention and achievement, including maximising use of new learning technologies	
<p>Encourage innovation in curriculum development especially in flexible and "bite size" approaches to delivery.</p>	<p>Increased availability of flexible learning programmes through 14-19 year old pilot projects in 2002.</p>
<p>Work with LEAs, FE and Work Based Learning providers to ensure that there is provision in place that meets the needs of those who are particularly able.</p>	<p>Increased proportion of grades that are at the highest levels. Baseline and targets to be set in 2002.</p>
<p>With partners, develop and implement a local e-skills strategy which will include an e-learning strand. The focus of this will be on the development of the use of ICT as a learning medium. It will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build on the established work of Learndirect, Ufi and the National Grid for Learning; • promote to learners, providers and employers the benefits and uses of new technologies in learning; and • establish development projects with schools, FE, Work Based Learning providers and community and voluntary organisations that will increase the use of ICT and new technologies for learning, including basic skills. 	<p>E-learning strand as part of an e-skills strategy developed and implemented during 2002-03. This will include setting baselines and targets for the use of e-learning.</p> <p>A range of discretionary funded projects focused on improving ICT skills and developing e-learning.</p> <p>Local support for e-skills strategic projects in partnership with e-skills UK (the Sector Skills Council for all ICT and telecommunication industries and occupations).</p>

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Promote the benefits and necessity of learning throughout life	
Build formal alliances with employer and economic development organisations to promote the importance of lifelong learning and the role of the Learning and Skills Council.	Partnership arrangements with local business networks by December 2002. Improved awareness of the Learning and Skills Council by employers and employer organisations as measured by surveys and feedback. Baseline to be set in 2002.
Support Berkshire Business Education Alliance, comprising of eight Education Business Link Organisations, to enable young people to understand the importance of learning in adult working life through work experience, enhanced through preparation and debriefings.	Close to 100% of year 11 students in maintained schools participate in work experience annually.
Develop appropriate support, including for those with additional needs, leading to improved retention and achievement	
Develop projects and initiatives that help learners stay in learning and achieve qualifications, such as developing effective initial and ongoing assessment and review processes and establishing mentoring programmes.	Review of mentoring programmes in 2002. Improved retention rates in colleges from 86% and improved achievement in colleges from 70% in 2000. Targets to be agreed in 2002. Increased Modern Apprenticeship NVQ achievement level from baseline in 2002 of under 50% and from framework completion level of 25%.
Work with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships and providers to help them to provide appropriate childcare for learners in FE, including care for older children, through providing new childcare places.	Increased number of new childcare training places supported through EYDC Partnerships from 2001-02 baseline of 100 by 20% each year to 2005.
Support the development and provision of specialist support for young people and adults with learning difficulties and /or disabilities, including help at transitional points such as moving from school, back into learning. The focus will be on implementing individuals' learning plans through support such as additional learning, aids and adaptations and individual guidance.	Increased retention and achievement rates by those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Baselines to be set in 2002.

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Strengthen links with Higher Education to broaden opportunities for a wide range of individuals	
Promote and support the development of foundation degrees in FE, including reviewing the provision, take-up and success of these.	Set baseline and targets for improvement in 2002 following the review.
Encourage schools, colleges and Work Based Learning providers to collaborate in developing progression opportunities to HE including supporting a local "Partnership for Progression" initiative, which will improve local collaborative links between Higher Education institutions, schools and FE to increase participation in HE.	<p>Progress towards the Government target of 50% participation of those aged 18-30 in HE by 2010.</p> <p>Improve from the 2000 baseline of 32% numbers of 18/19 year olds progressing to HE.</p> <p>Participation in a "Partnership for Progression" programme starting in 2002-03.</p>
Work with providers and Connexions to review progression routes from Work Based Learning to a range of HE courses including foundation degrees and Higher National Diplomas.	A review of opportunities for HE experience within or following Work Based Learning by 2003.

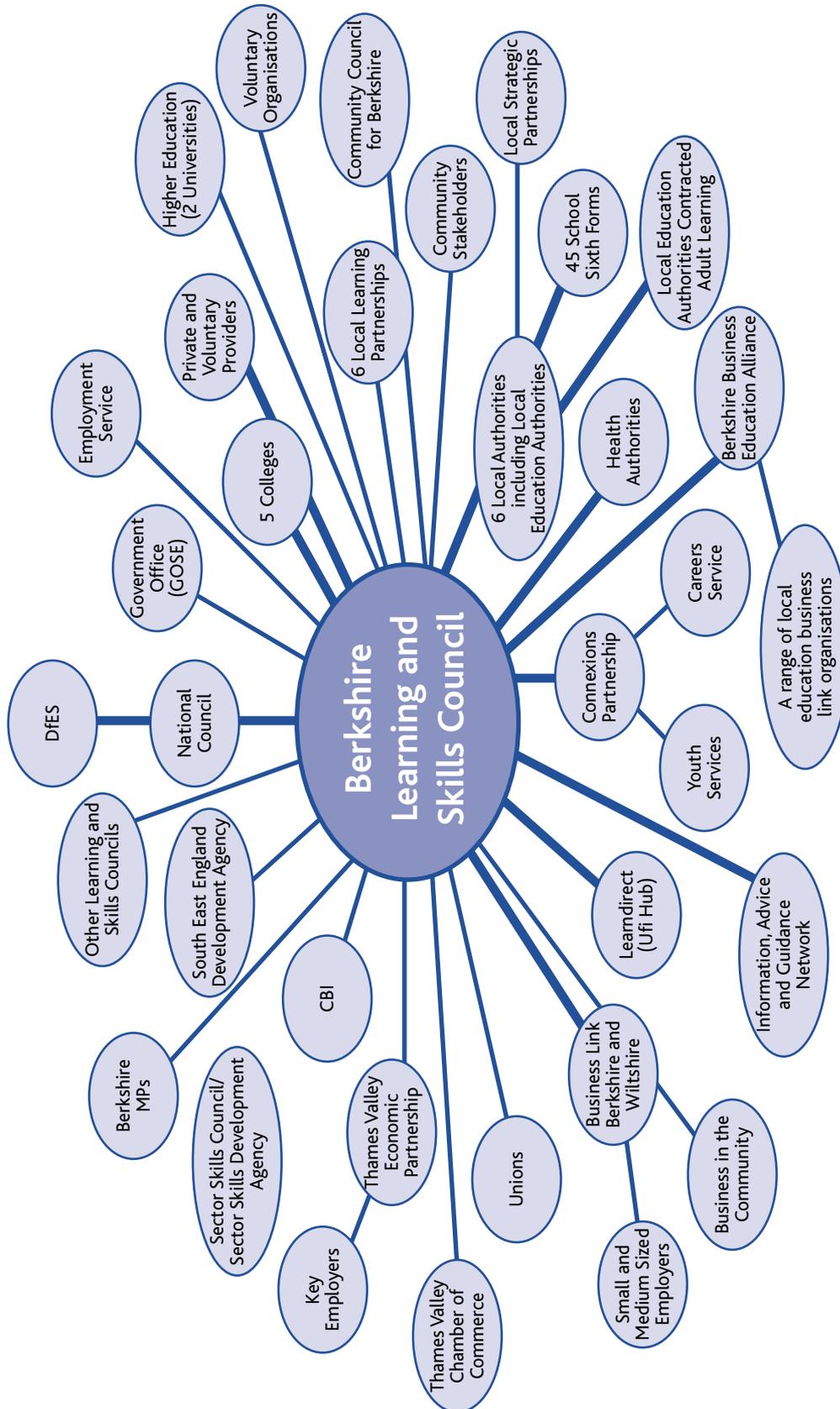
Strategy 5: Building a Highly Skilled Workforce for the Future

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Contribute to better business performance through a workforce development plan that is based on Berkshire's role in the regional, national and global economy	
Work closely with a range of local and regional organisations to develop and implement the plan, in particular SEEDA, Employment Service, Skills Sector Councils, unions, local employer organisations and the Thames Valley Economic Partnership.	A coherent and comprehensive workforce development strategy that is actively supported by partners implemented during 2002.
Encourage more employers to achieve Investors in People status.	Increased numbers of employers with IIP accreditation from 330 in 2002 to over 500 in 2005.
Carry out regular local business surveys that focus on learning and skills issues and disseminate findings and recommendations to providers and partners.	Local learning plans developed by the Learning and Skills Council, providers and partners that reflect and respond to local needs. Improved understanding of skills shortages and gaps and responsive programmes developed.
Work with Connexions, Education Business Link Organisations and other partners to encourage young people and adults to take up learning opportunities in the key sectors of retail, manufacturing, construction, ICT, care (child and adult) and business.	Contribute towards increasing the number of 16-18 year olds participating in structured learning towards the target of 85.5% in 2004.
Identify and implement joint actions to tackle skills shortages, especially in ICT, technical and craft skills	
Respond to local ICT skills and labour shortages by developing and implementing an e-skills strategy, one strand of which focuses on user and professional e-skills. This will be developed in partnership with e-skills UK (the Sector Skills Council for all ICT and telecommunication industries and occupations). The focus of the strategy will be increasing the competence of the workforce through direct work with employers. This will be supported by relevant programmes (run by local providers) and a coordinated marketing strategy.	A local e-skills task force established to develop an e-skills strategy. Local participation in the "e-skills into business programme" established in 2002 and local targets agreed for an increase for 2003-2005. Improved achievement of qualifications in user skills and higher employer satisfaction with recruits in ICT. Baselines to be set in 2002.

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
<p>Work with the partners including Sector Skills Development Agency and Sector Skills Councils to develop initiatives that address local and regional skill shortages, particularly focused on craft and technician skills (in particular at Level 3) and ICT through employer related projects.</p>	<p>Increased achievement of qualifications in craft and technician skills.</p> <p>Pilot project developed in 2002 in construction occupations, funded through discretionary funds.</p>
<p>Improve the engagement of employers in learning and training, in particular through Modern Apprenticeships</p>	
<p>Develop a programme of marketing activities to employers that focuses on the benefits of workforce learning, IIP, key and basic skills, NVQs for young people and retaining older workers. The main target of the activities will be small and medium sized businesses (under 250 employees).</p>	<p>Increased investment in training from 37% of small and medium sized businesses in 2001 to 43% by 2005.</p> <p>Increased work-related training in specific sectors measured by the proportion of employees undertaking training in the previous year. 2001 baselines are: Business services – 45% (business administration and support services) Retail – 42% ICT – 50% Manufacturing – 42%</p>
<p>Support the engagement of employers in education, in particular through the activities of Education Business Link Organisations and Local Learning Partnerships. This will include employer involvement in the development of opportunities and pathways throughout the 14-19 curriculum.</p>	<p>Employer engagement in education-business activities maintained or increased from the baseline in 2001 of 7,350.</p> <p>Employer involvement, via Education Business Link Organisations, in all 14-16 flexibility projects during 2002-003.</p>
<p>Implement locally the workforce development related recommendations of the report of the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) Advisory Committee. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase participation in MAs, working towards the national targets of 28% of young people entering MAs before the age of 22 by 2004 • Improve the rate of employed status MAs • Introduce technical certificates and MA diplomas • Increase the numbers and range of employers participating in MAs 	<p>Increased participation in Modern Apprenticeships from the 2002 figure of 4,800 (3,400 16-18 year olds).</p> <p>All Modern Apprentices to have employed status by September 2003.</p> <p>Research report in 2002 into employer training for 16-18 year olds who are not in Government funded training.</p> <p>Technical certificates and diploma awards introduced within Modern Apprenticeships during 2002-03.</p>

Priorities and Actions	Outcomes
Work with employers to improve the range of accredited qualifications gained by employees including piloting initiatives to support the accreditation of non-accredited learning.	Sector project in partnership with e-skills UK implemented in 2002 (through the IT4all programme). Development to other sectors in 2003-04.
Enable more upskilling for employees including addressing basic skill needs	
Undertake a range of activities that help upskill workers in key sectors, for example, health and care. This will include working with union representatives to help them to develop learning opportunities within their workforce.	Sector project in health and care leading to increased participation and achievement by key workers established during 2002-03.
Implement programmes through FE and Adult and Community Learning that specifically address the basic skills needs of those in employment.	Employer-led basic skills programmes developed during 2002 established through the Basics in Business programme. Increased employee participation in basic skills programmes. Baseline to be set in 2002 through annual household survey.
Implement activities which support continued employment for other older workers	
Support retraining opportunities in particular through collaboration with Employment Service, FE and close work with Ufl.	Higher rates of employment of older workers and reduced incidence of long-term unemployment amongst older workers.
Develop local projects, which explore the relevant issues and pilot initiatives to retain older workers in employment.	Local projects developed across Berkshire by 2003.

Annex 1 Key Partners



> Annex 2 Council Membership

PHOTO
REDACTED
DUE TO
THIRD
PARTY
RIGHTS OR
OTHER
LEGAL
ISSUES

Gordon Bull

Director
Vodafone Global Campus

Anthony Dunnett

Chief Executive
SEEDA

Jacqui Johnson

Section Head of Art
Design and Media Studies
Bracknell and Wokingham
FE College

Fred McCrindle

Principal and Chief Executive
Reading College and School
of Arts & Design

Jay Mercer

Executive Director
Berkshire Learning
and Skills Council

Kay Penney

Talent Management Director
Centrica plc

Anne Wilson

Managing Director
Central Berkshire EBP

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ISSUES

Kathryn Cook

Head of Senior
Executive Learning
Consignia

Tony Eccleston

Director of Education
Bracknell Forest
Borough Council

David Lunn

Chief Executive
Royal Borough of Windsor
and Maidenhead

Thomas Melvin

Chairman
Berkshire Learning
and Skills Council

Nick Parish

Industrial Chaplain
for Bracknell

Roger Waters

Career Programme Manager
BMW (GB) Limited

> Annex 3 Priorities for Discretionary Funding

The list below outlines the major priorities for discretionary funding for 2002:

Working Together towards World Class Standards in Learning

- Developing the skills of staff involved in post-14 learning activities.

Strengthening the Structure of Learning

- Capacity building – developments in community and voluntary sector organisations that access hard to reach groups to increase their involvement in learning.
- Flexibility and innovation in vocational provision for 14-19 year olds.
- Research into the needs of learners.

Changing attitudes and unlocking opportunities for all

- Training and increased learner support for disadvantaged groups such as disaffected young people, ethnic minorities, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the over 50s, ex-offenders, drug users and those living in rural isolated communities.
- Basic skills training for the employed and the non-employed.

Helping learners succeed

- Improving progression and access to Higher Education.

Building a highly skilled workforce for the future

- Skills and labour shortages – training in ICT, technical and craft skills, care and management skills in small and medium sized businesses.

Innovation in the use of e-learning as a learning medium is encouraged in all of the above themes.

> Annex 4 Organisational Development

Berkshire Learning and Skills Council is committed to developing the strategic and operational capacity of the local Council so that it can achieve the targets and actions set out in this plan. To do this we must develop an organisation that is professional, flexible and responsive. Some of the key elements we will build into our organisation are:

- **Staff development and human resource management** – the recruitment and continuous development of staff are key to raising levels of knowledge, skills and experience so that we are able to work effectively across the full remit of the Council. We aim to achieve Investors in People accreditation during 2002-03. Regular consultation with staff will take place. As part of our commitment to learning we aim to develop our Information and Learning Zone as a personal development resource for use by staff and partners.
- **Equality focus** – we aim to achieve and maintain an exemplary status as an employer. We will introduce a range of measures that integrate equality into operational plans, supported by induction and training that equips staff with the skills and confidence to recognise and deal effectively with equality issues.
- **Effective systems and minimised bureaucracy** – in line with the national Council we will endeavour throughout our activities to minimise and reduce bureaucracy.
- **Efficient audit arrangements** – the main aim of these activities will be to safeguard all public funds and assets in the Learning and Skills Council's charge through a proportionate level of activity. Through this we seek to ensure financial probity of all providers and value for money in all activities.
- **Effective strategic decision-making** – the expertise, advice and knowledge of our local Council members are critical to directing and guiding our work. We will provide Council members with high quality support services (including management information), opportunities for active engagement in strategic and operational work and training and development in key areas of the Council's work.

In parallel with this our internal organisational structure is set up to ensure that strategic decisions are effectively managed and implemented.

- **Customer-focused approach** – we aim to build a culture of high quality customer service, for both internal and external customers, throughout the organisation. This includes implementing robust communication mechanisms such as newsletters and internet/web access.
- **Robust internal quality systems** – we are committed to developing and implementing an internal quality strategy for continuous improvement. This will involve initiating quality processes and service standards, and risk assessment procedures. We will use the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model as the basis for undertaking regular self-assessment and development planning.
- **Fit-for-purpose facilities** – we will maximise the use of our base in Reading, for example by co-locating with partner organisations and ensuring we meet our health and safety responsibilities. Internally we aim to use ICT to support effective working practices.

- **Focused research programme** – our activities over the next three years will be supported and guided by a programme of collating and analysing data, information and research. This will initially focus on:
 - improving Level 3 achievement;
 - developing value added measures;
 - an annual household survey;
 - an annual business needs survey;
 - sector skills studies;
 - understanding employer learning for 16-18 year olds;
 - developing local impact measures;
 - improving progression routes to Higher Education;
 - maintaining the Berkshire Review.
- **Manage information** – we aim to provide simple access and signposting to all relevant information. To this end we will develop knowledge management procedures, improve our internal and external communication mechanisms and make best use of ICT.

➤ Annex 5

Key Economic, Employment and Learning Information

Indicator	Bracknell Forest	Reading	Slough	West Berkshire	Windsor & Maidenhead	Wokingham	Berkshire	South East	National
National Learning Targets									
19 year olds - level 2 (2002 target)	88.9%	89.1%	88.9%	88.9%	91.0%	90.0%	89.6%	90.0%	85.0%
19 year olds - level 2 (1999 target)	79.0%	80.7%	80.1%	78.1%	83.5%	80.0%	80.1%	75.8%	72.2%
Source: Local Learning Partnerships									
Adults - level 3 (2002 target)	62.0%	55.0%	38.8%	55.3%	61.8%	58.6%	55.0%	54.0%	50.0%
Adults - level 3 (1999 actual)	58.8%	59.5%	31.1%	53.9%	60.5%	69.9%	55.7%	50.0%	46.0%
Source: Local Learning Partnerships & DfES estimates from the Labour Force Survey									
Basic Skills									
Literacy (low skills)	14.2%	14.1%	15.6%	13.2%	12.5%	12.1%	13.5%	14.5%	15.0%
Literacy (lower skills)	4.1%	4%	5.2%	3.3%	3.3%	2.8%	3.7%	3.7%	5.0%
Literacy (very low skills)	3.9%	3.6%	6.3%	2.5%	2.8%	2.1%	3.4%	3.4%	4.0%
Literacy (overall low skills)	22.2%	21.8%	27.1%	19.0%	18.3%	17.1%	20.6%	21.5%	24.0%
Numeracy (low skills)	11.7%	10.8%	12.3%	9.7%	9.4%	9.4%	10.4%	10.5%	12.0%
Numeracy (lower skills)	5.9%	6.4%	8%	4.7%	3.4%	4.8%	5.4%	5.9%	7.0%
Numeracy (very low skills)	4.6%	4.8%	7.1%	3.0%	2.9%	2.4%	4.0%	4.4%	5.0%
Numeracy (overall low skills)	22.2%	22.0%	27.3%	17.5%	17.6%	15.2%	19.9%	20.8%	24.0%
Source: Basic Skills Agency, 2001									

Indicator	Bracknell Forest	Reading	Slough	West Berkshire	Windsor & Maidenhead	Wokingham	Berkshire	South East	National
Local Education Authority Schools:									
5+A*-C GCSEs	49.1%	46.8%	52.4%	56.1%	58.8%	61.3%	55.1%	52.8%	50.0%
Source: DfES Performance Tables, 2001 (National figure includes independent schools)									
2 or more A/AS (average points)	18.5	20.6	20.2	19.6	20.9	17.5	18.8	18.8	18.5
A/AS average per entry	5.9	6.4	5.8	5.8	6.5	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.5
Source: DfES Performance Tables, 2000 (FE colleges & all schools)									
Percentage remaining in education and training post-16	80.5%	75.3%	80.4%	76.6%	84.0%	80.9%	79.6%		
Source: CfBT Careers Service, 2000									
Colleges (see key below):									
16-18 cohort achieving NVQ2	B&W 24.1%	RCSAD 17.0%	EBC 9.7%	Newbury 16.2%	BCA 12.5%	n/a	13.2%		
Source: ISR 19 and colleges' performance indicators (1999/00)									
Work Based Learning:									
Completion ¹³	55.6%	42.4%	40.7%	52.7%	51.6%	58.9%	52.9%		
Source: TEC and LSC individual data (2000)									
Adult and Community Learning:									
Participation per 1000 adult population	31.2	72.1	23	73	58.8	61.7	53.3		
Source: Adult and Community Learning Plans 2001-02									
College Key:									
B&W	Bracknell and Wokingham College	RCSAD	Reading College and Schools of Arts & Design						
EBC	East Berkshire College	Newbury	Newbury College						
BCA	Berkshire College of Agriculture								

¹³ Achieved a whole NVQ or stayed in training for at least 80% of the intended duration of the programme.

> Annex 6 Local Area Learning and Economic Overviews

The summaries below highlight the learning, skills and economic issues of each of the local authority areas of Berkshire.

Bracknell Forest

Population

The population at the 1991 Census stood at 95,949. Just 3% of Bracknell Forest's population are of ethnic minority origin, significantly lower than the average for Berkshire of 8%. The largest ethnic minority group in the Bracknell Forest area is Indian, which accounts for 20% of the ethnic minority resident population.

Employment – Key Sector Industries, August 2001 (Total Figures 60,087)

Business Activities & Finance	Public Services	Wholesale	Transport & Comms	Manufacturing	Hotels	Construction Services	Other
35.1%	15.7%	23.3%	4.7%	8.3%	6.1%	3.5%	3.2%

Unemployment

In November 2001, there were 623 unemployed claimants in Bracknell Forest, an unemployment rate of 1.0%. The number of claimants has fallen by just under a quarter since June 1999.

Learning Participation and Achievement

There are 21 primary schools and 6 secondary schools, all with Sixth Forms, one special school, one college and two Work Based Learning providers based in the Bracknell Forest LEA area.

Exam results are as follows:

	5+ A-C GCSE/GNVQ			2+ A/AS/AGNVQ (Av. Points)			Adult NVQ L3		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001*	1999	2000	2001
Bracknell	45%	47%	49%	18.2%	18.5%	14.5%	59%	57.2%	
Berkshire	53%	54%	55%	19.0%	18.8%	18.8%	56%	54.2%	
England	48%	49%	50%	18.2%	18.5%	17.4%	45.9%	47.2%	

* DfES performance data now combines A Level and Advanced GNVQ 2

Destination Analysis

A total of 1,029 students completed year 11 in 2000 in Bracknell Forest. 77% of students continued with full-time education, an increase of 6% over 1999 and higher than the Berkshire average of 74%. 14% of students went into work and training, a 3% decrease on 1999.

A total of 354 students completed year 13 in 2000. 43% progressed on to Higher Education, a decrease of 5% on 1999. A further 13% continued their education in a college or school. 6% of students decided to take a year out before proceeding to Higher Education. 22% of students went into work or training.

See footnote below¹⁴.

Basic Skills

In a survey of basic skills levels in the South East region in Spring 2001, the Basic Skills Agency research found that the proportion of residents in Bracknell Forest with low levels of both literary and numeracy skills was above the average for the region. 11.5% of the population in Bracknell Forest are classed as having low skills, 5.9% lower skills and 4.6% very low skills.

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Bracknell	South East	Bracknell	South East
Total with poor skills	22.1%	21.6%	22.0%	20.8%

Deprivation

The 2000 Index of Deprivation is calculated for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). Out of 354 areas in 2000, Bracknell Forest was ranked 317 in terms of deprivation (1 being the most deprived area).

Key Local Learning and Skills Issues Additional to the Berkshire Challenges

1. Improve performance for 16 to 18 year olds at Level 3.
2. Develop 14 – 16 vocational GCSEs.
3. Address basic skills issues.

¹⁴ In 2000 in Berkshire a total of 632 students from FE progressed to HE, in addition to close to 2,900 from schools. Of those from FE 340 were aged 18 or 19.

Reading

Population

The population at the 1991 Census stood at 128,877. 9% of the population are of ethnic minority origin. Of the 9% the largest ethnic minority groups are Afro Caribbean (28%), and Pakistani (23%).

Employment - Key Sector Industries, August 2001 (Total Figures 95,097)

Business Activities & Finance	Public Services	Wholesale	Transport & Comms	Manufacturing	Hotels	Construction Services	Other
35.9%	19.3%	16.3%	8.6%	6.3%	5.4%	3.6%	2.9%

Unemployment

In November 2001, there were a total of 1,553 unemployed claimants in Reading, an unemployment rate of 1.4%. The number of claimants has fallen by just over 20% since June 1999.

Learning Participation and Achievement

There are 32 primary schools, seven secondary schools with Sixth Forms, three special schools, one FE college and one adult college and four Work Based Learning providers based in the Reading LEA area.

Exam results are as follows:

	5+ A-C GCSE/GNVQ			2+ A/AS/AGNVQ (Av. Points)			Adult NVQ L3		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001*	1999	2000	2001
Reading	44%	46%	47%	21.8%	20.6%	17.6%	59%	60%	
Berkshire	53%	54%	55%	19.0%	18.8% 1	8.8%	56%	54.2%	
England	48%	49%	50%	18.2%	18.5%	17.4%	45.9%	47.2%	

*DfES performance data now combines A Level and Advanced GNVQ 2

Destination Analysis

A total of 1,161 students completed year 11 in 2000 in Reading. 67% of students continued with full-time education, the same percentage as in 1999. 17% of students went into work and training, a 2% decrease on 1999.

A total of 359 students completed year 13 in schools in 2000. 41% progressed on to Higher Education, an increase of 2% on 1999. A further 12% continued their education in a college or school. 9% of students decided to take a year out before proceeding to Higher Education. 17% of students went into work or training.

See footnote below¹⁴.

¹⁴ In 2000 in Berkshire a total of 632 students from FE progressed to HE, in addition to close to 2,900 from schools. Of those from FE 340 were aged 18 or 19.

Basic Skills

In a survey of basic skills levels in the South East in Spring 2001, 10.6% of the population in Reading are classed as having low skills, 5.8% lower skills and 4.3% very low skills in numeracy. The Basic Skills Agency research found that residents in East Reading had lower literacy and numeracy deficiencies compared with the regional average, but that those in West Reading had above the regional average needs.

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Reading	South East	Reading	South East
Total with poor skills	21.8%	21.6%	20.7%	20.8%

Deprivation

The 2000 Index of Multiple Deprivation is calculated for the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). Out of 354 areas, in 2000, Reading was ranked 188 in terms of deprivation (1 being the most deprived area). The most deprived wards are Whitley and Church, both located in the south of Reading.

Key Local Learning and Skills Issues Additional to the Berkshire Challenges

- 1 Increasing the participation of 16 to 18 year olds in all learning/training.
- 2 Address low achievement in some schools.
- 3 Increase the number of Modern Apprentices in business and administration.

Slough

Population

The population of Slough at the time of the 1991 Census stood at 101,066. 27.1% of the population are of ethnic minority origin. The largest ethnic minority groups are Indian, which make up 46% of the total, and Pakistani at 33%.

Employment - Key Sector Industries, August 2001 (Total Figures 78,630)

Business Activities & Finance	Public Services	Wholesale	Transport & Comms	Manufacturing	Hotels	Construction Services	Other
24.2%	13.5%	19.6%	13.8%	17.8%	4.0%	4.2%	2.9%

See footnote below¹⁴.

Unemployment

In November 2001, Slough had a total of 1,551 persons on the claimant count, a rate of 2.6%.

Learning Participation and Achievement

There are 30 primary schools, 11 secondary schools, four with Sixth Forms, a further education college with a Sixth Form studies centre, one special school and five Work Based Learning providers based in the LEA area.

Exam results are as follows:

	5+ A-C GCSE/GNVQ			2+ A/AS/AGNVQ (Av. Points)			Adult NVQ L3		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001*	1999	2000	2001
Slough	48%	51%	52%	18.3%	20.2%	16.5%	31%	38%	
Berkshire	53%	54%	55%	19.0%	18.8%	18.8%	56%	54.2%	
England	48%	49%	50%	18.2%	18.5%	17.4%	45.9%	47.2%	

*DfES performance data now combines A Level and Advanced GNVQ 2

Destination Analysis

A total of 1,213 students completed year 11 in 2000 in Slough. 74% of students continued with full-time education, a 2% decrease on 1999 but the same number as for Berkshire as a whole. 13% went into work with training, which is a slight decrease on last year.

A total of 475 students completed Year 13 in 2000. 53% progressed on to Higher Education, an increase of 8% on last year and slightly higher than the average of 50% for Berkshire. A further 32% continued their education in school or college. Less than 1% decided to take a year out before proceeding to Higher Education, a considerable drop (over 7%) on the figure for 1999. 6% went into work or training. At East Berkshire College 208 students also progressed to Higher Education.

See footnote below¹⁴.

¹⁴ In 2000 in Berkshire a total of 632 students from FE progressed to HE, in addition to close to 2,900 from schools. Of those from FE 340 were aged 18 or 19.

Basic Skills

In a survey of basic skills levels in the South East in Spring 2001, the Basic Skills Agency research found that literacy and numeracy levels in Slough were the worst of all authority areas in South East England (27.5% with literacy problems and 27.8% with numeracy problems). Those who need the most intensive help are, therefore, most prevalent in Slough.

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Slough	South East	Slough	South East
Total with poor skills	27.5%	21.6%	27.8%	20.8%

Deprivation

The 2000 Index of Multiple Deprivation is calculated for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). Out of 354 areas, in 2000, Slough was ranked 120 (1 being the most deprived area). The most deprived wards are Chalvey and Baylis.

Key Local Learning and Skills Issues Additional to Berkshire Challenges.

- 1 Develop basic skills provision in disadvantaged areas.
- 2 Increase total number of young people on Modern Apprenticeships with additional effort to attract those from ethnic groups.
- 3 Increase range of participation and progression routes for 14 to 19 with particular emphasis on under performing ethnic groups.

West Berkshire

Population

The population at the 1991 Census was 136,700. Less than 2% of the West Berkshire population is from an ethnic minority origin, the lowest of all the Unitary Authority areas. Of the ethnic minorities, the largest ethnic minority groups are Indian which make up 18% and Black at 15%.

Employment - Key Sector Industries, August 2001 (Total Figures 75,599)

Business Activities & Finance	Public Services	Wholesale	Transport & Comms	Manufacturing	Hotels	Construction Services	Other
25.1%	12.7%	21.7%	6.9%	16.0%	5.9%	4.6%	5%

Unemployment

In November 2001, there were a total of 633 unemployed claimants in West Berkshire, an unemployment rate of 0.9%. The number of claimants has fallen by a third since June 1999.

Learning Participation and Achievement

There are 10 secondary schools with Sixth Forms, 68 primary and infant schools, three special schools, one college and three Work Based Learning providers based in the LEA area.

Exam results are as follows:

	5+ A-C GCSE/GNVQ			2+ A/AS/AGNVQ (Av. Points)			Adult NVQ L3		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001*	1999	2000	2001
W Berks	57%	56%	56%	19.4%	19.6%	17.2%	54%	51.6%	
Berkshire	53%	54%	55%	19.0%	18.8%	18.8%	56%	54.2%	
England	48%	49%	50%	18.2%	18.5%	17.4%	45.9%	47.2%	

*DfES performance data now combines A Level and Advanced GNVQ 2

Destination Analysis

A total of 1,907 students completed year 11 in the West Berkshire area in 2000. 72% of students continue with full-time education, 5% lower than in 1999 and slightly less than the Berkshire average of 74%. 19% of students went into work and training which is a 3% increase on 1999.

A total of 764 students completed year 13 in 2000. 52% progressed on to Higher Education, an increase of 7% on 1999 and slightly higher than the Berkshire average of 50%. A further 8% continued their education in a college or school. 10% of students decided to take a year out before proceeding to Higher Education. 21% of students went into work or training.

See footnote below¹⁴.

¹⁴ In 2000 in Berkshire a total of 632 students from FE progressed to HE, in addition to close to 2,900 from schools. Of those from FE 340 were aged 18 or 19.

Basic Skills

In a survey of basic skills levels in the South East in Spring 2001, the Basic Skills Agency research found that in West Berkshire there was a smaller proportion of residents with literacy and numeracy difficulties than in the average of all South East authority areas.

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	W Berks	South East	W Berks	South East
Total with poor skills	19.4%	21.6%	18.1%	20.8%

Deprivation

The 2000 Index of Deprivation is calculated for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). Out of 354 areas, in 2000, West Berkshire was ranked 329 in terms of deprivation (1 being the most deprived area).

Key Local Learning and Skills Issues Additional to Berkshire Challenges

1. Improved achievement of Level 3 skills for adults.
2. Retraining/upskilling of rural workers.
3. 14 to 19 vocational training particularly centred on ICT.

Windsor and Maidenhead

Population

The population of Windsor and Maidenhead at the time of the 1991 Census stood at 132,465. 5% of residents are of ethnic minority origin. The largest ethnic minority groups are Indian, which make up 33% of those from an ethnic minority, and Pakistani at 25%.

Employment - Key Sector Industries, August 2001 (Total Figures 61,477)

Business Activities & Finance	Public Services	Wholesale	Transport & Comms	Manufacturing	Hotels	Construction Services	Other
33.7%	17.9%	17.8%	4.9%	7.4%	7.4%	4.0%	5.5%

Unemployment

In November 2001, Windsor and Maidenhead had a total of 985 persons on the claimant count, a rate of 1.2%.

Learning Participation and Achievement

There are ten primary schools and nine secondary schools, eight with Sixth Forms, one FE college, one special school and two Work Based Learning providers within the Authority area.

Exam results are as follows:

	5+ A-C GCSE/GNVQ			2+ A/AS/AGNVQ (Av. Points)			Adult NVQ L3		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001*	1999	2000	2001
RBWM	58%	59%	59%	21.3%	20.9%	16.4%	60%	49.2%	
Berkshire	53%	54%	55%	19.0%	18.8%	18.8%	56%	54.2%	
England	48%	49%	50%	18.2%	18.5%	17.4%	45.9%	47.2%	

*DfES performance data now combines A Level and Advanced GNVQ 2

Destination Analysis

A total of 1,473 students completed year 11 in 2000 in Windsor and Maidenhead. 80% of students continued with full-time education, 1% lower than in 1999.

A total of 551 students completed year 13 in 2000. 57% progressed on to Higher Education, an increase of 8% on 1999 and higher than the Berkshire average of 50%. A further 9% continued their education in a college or school. 7% of students decided to take a year out before proceeding to Higher Education.

See footnote below¹⁴.

¹⁴ In 2000 in Berkshire a total of 632 students from FE progressed to HE, in addition to close to 2,900 from schools. Of those from FE 340 were aged 18 or 19.

Basic Skills

In a survey of basic skills levels in the South East in Spring 2001, the Basic Skills Agency research found that literacy and numeracy levels in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead were higher than the South East and Berkshire averages.

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	W&M	South East	W&M	South East
Total with poor skills	18.3%	21.6%	16.8%	20.8%

Deprivation

The 2000 Index of Multiple Deprivation is calculated for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). Out of 354 areas, in 2000 Windsor and Maidenhead was ranked 343 (1 being the most deprived area). Within the Borough, however, there are small areas of deprivation.

Key Local Learning and Skills Issues Additional to the Berkshire Challenges

- 1 Adult Level 3 achievement is patchy. Promote targeted Level 3 provision.
- 2 Improve performance of young people in transition from Level 2 to 3 in schools and FE.
- 3 Due to the patchy nature of achievement, 14 to 19 vocational learning routes need focused development including vocational GCSEs.

Wokingham

Population

The population of Wokingham at the time of the 1991 Census stood at 139,189. Wokingham has a low proportion of residents from ethnic minority origin, just 3% of the Authority's population. The largest ethnic minority group is Indian, which makes up 36% of those from an ethnic minority and Asian at 11%.

Employment – Key Sector Industries, August 2001 (Total Figures 58,036)

Business Activities & Finance	Public Services	Wholesale	Transport & Comms	Manufacturing	Hotels	Construction Services	Other
27.7%	22%	20%	4.8%	10.4%	4.9%	4.6%	3.8%

Unemployment

In November 2001, Wokingham had a total of 694 persons on the claimant count, a rate of 1.0%.

Learning Participation and Achievement

There are 55 primary schools and nine secondary schools plus Sixth Forms and two special schools in the Wokingham LEA area.

Exam results are as follows:

	5+ A-C GCSE/GNVQ			2+ A/AS/AGNVQ (Av. Points)			Adult NVQ L3		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001*	1999	2000	2001
Wokingham	58%	60%	61%	17.5	16.8	16.5	70%	63.9%	
Berkshire	53%	54%	55%	19.0	18.8	18.8	56%	54.2%	
England	48%	49%	50%	18.2	18.5	17.4	45.9%	47.2%	

*DfES performance data now combines A Level and Advanced GNVQ 2

Destination Analysis

A total of 1,748 students completed year 11 in 2000 in Wokingham. 79% of students continued with full-time education, a 2% increase over 1999. 13% of students went into work and training, a 3% decrease on 1999.

A total of 726 students completed year 13 in 2000. 56% progressed on to Higher Education, a decrease of 6% on 1999 but higher than the Berkshire average of 50%. A further 8% continued their education in a college or school. 8% of students decided to take a year out before proceeding to Higher Education. 20% of students went into work or training.

See footnote below¹⁴.

¹⁴ In 2000 in Berkshire a total of 632 students from FE progressed to HE, in addition to close to 2,900 from schools. Of those from FE 340 were aged 18 or 19.

Basic Skills

In a survey of basic skills levels in the South East in Spring 2001, the Basic Skills Agency research found that the proportion of residents in Wokingham with poor literacy and numeracy skills was amongst the lowest of any area.

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Wokingham	South East	Wokingham	South East
Total with poor skills	16.8%	21.6%	15.0%	20.8%

Deprivation

The 2000 Index of Multiple Deprivation is calculated for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). Out of 354 areas, in 2000 Wokingham was ranked 353rd (1 being the most deprived area).

Key Local Learning and Skills Issues Additional to the Berkshire Challenges

1. Improve performance for 16-18 year olds at Level 3.
2. Increase the number of young people aged 16-18 on Modern Apprenticeships with a particular emphasis on business administration.
3. Develop aged 14-16 vocational GCSE with an emphasis on ICT.

> Annex 7 Summary of Equality and Inclusion Strategy

The Equality and Inclusion¹⁵ Strategy

The Strategy will cover our activity for targets and actions for widening participation, developing inclusive learning, tackling social exclusion and supporting neighbourhood renewal, promoting equal opportunities and workforce development

The Equality and Inclusion Remit

The Berkshire Learning and Skills Council, Executive Director and the Officers acknowledge an accountability and responsibility for implementing the equality and inclusion strategy. All aspects of our Council's work will be underpinned by Equality and Inclusion policies to ensure that it is mainstreamed throughout our plans and activity. Berkshire is an economically and socially diverse area and the Council recognises the need to give a high level of commitment to the promotion of equality and inclusion.

Berkshire Learning and Skills Council Operating Guidance for Equality and Inclusion:

- embed equality and inclusion in all policies, programmes and actions, working with key equality organisations, including the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Council, and the Employers Forum on Age, and establishing an Equal Opportunities Advisory Group to review the impact on provision and learners and disseminate good practice;
- have funding systems that do not disadvantage any group and use discretionary funding to support innovative projects;
- benchmark and baseline the equal opportunities performance of the national Council, local councils and providers, and publish comparative data, disaggregated by gender, race, age and disability;
- draw up and report annually on the Equality and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan (at national and local level) including targets and performance indicators to tackle under-representation, under-achievement and stereotyping in terms of gender, race, age, disability and other people facing disadvantages in particular occupational and learning sectors;
- consult widely on this strategy and draw on existing good practice;
- promote equality of opportunity and challenge discrimination with providers and employers and encourage all providers to take positive steps to widen participation;
- develop learning programmes and materials which take into account the different characteristics of learners from different cultural and social backgrounds.

The strategy will:

- give support to people who would like to become involved in learning but face barriers to active learning;
- persuade inactive learners who are in employment that they need to update their skills;

¹⁵ The term equality and inclusion encompasses equal opportunities.

- do more to prevent dropping out of learning;
- do more to tailor initiatives to individual needs;
- do more to raise basic literacy and numeracy skills;
- encourage employers to ensure that all of their workforce becomes engaged in learning;
- tackle and remedy all forms of discrimination or inequality in the activity of the Council, the providers or partnerships in which it is engaged.

Addressing Diverse Needs and Mainstreaming Equality and Inclusion

Berkshire Learning and Skills Council has identified market and social factors to be addressed by the strategy including reducing levels of under-employment, countering the development of a learning underclass, addressing needs in basic literacy and numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages, and the needs of ex-offenders, homeless people, lone parents, drug users, women returners etc.

The strategy will play a key role in ensuring that provision is aimed at addressing these issues by widening participation and moving equality and inclusion into mainstream funding and activity.

The strategy supports the key equality aims, which are to:

- ensure that all sections of the community are equipped to participate fully in the economic life of the area;
- ensure that the people for whom our services are designed can access them according to their need and obtain maximum benefit from them, whatever their circumstances;
- maximise participation in training in order that individuals make the most of their talents and fulfil their potential regardless of disability, gender or race or social disadvantage;
- to achieve and maintain an exemplary status as an employer.

The Strategic Framework

As an Employer:

- identify a senior team member who will be responsible for embedding equal opportunities in the organisation and structures;
- ensure that all staff have appropriate references to equality in their job descriptions and objectives in their work plans;
- ensure that induction programmes and the staff development strategy have a central focus on promoting equal opportunities;
- ensure that induction and training equip staff with the skills and confidence to recognise and deal with equality issues such as institutional discrimination and stereotyping;
- 'equality-proof' arrangements for making staff appointments at all levels to ensure that staffing profiles reflect the diversity of both national and local populations.

As an Equality Champion:

- work with key equality organisations to build equality of opportunity into all policies, programmes and actions;
- draw up a local equal opportunities strategy and action plan that includes targets and performance indicators to tackle under-representation, under-achievement and stereotyping in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, disability and other people facing disadvantages in particular occupational and learning sectors;
- establish a local Equal Opportunities Advisory Group to advise on the development of the local Strategy and Action Plan and review the impact of the activities on provision and learners and disseminate good practice;
- establish strategic partnerships with other key agencies such as Local Authorities, Connexions, Careers Services, ES and Regional Development Agencies in order to address cross-agency equality issues of common concern;
- identify ways of challenging discrimination and stereotyping among employers.

Mainstreaming through Policies, Programmes and Actions:

- target support to excluded communities in order to shape the focus of local regeneration programmes;
- consult widely and regularly on the strategy, drawing on existing good practice;
- benchmark the equal opportunities performance of the local Learning and Skills Council and providers and publish comparative data disaggregated by gender, ethnic group, age and disability;
- support funding arrangements that promote equality of opportunity and do not disadvantage any group;
- ensure that funding arrangements are based on meeting learner needs and take account of the additional costs involved in reaching, engaging, retaining and enabling achievement by learners from disadvantaged groups;
- develop learning programmes, resources and materials which take into account the different characteristics and needs of learners from different ethnic and social backgrounds;
- encourage greater diversity within the local provider network, particularly from the black and minority ethnic communities, by offering help with core costs and helping to build the capacity of local voluntary and community groups;
- promote equality of opportunity, challenging discrimination and stereotyping among providers and employers and encouraging them to take positive action to widen participation among under-represented groups.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- monitor and evaluate local providers' equal opportunities performance, including progress against equal opportunities action plans to close equality gaps and widen participation;
- require local providers to establish management information and business systems that gather all appropriate data on starts, outcomes and destinations, to support their self-assessments, and inform external inspections and quality monitoring;

- set up provider groups, where needed, to work collectively on closing equality gaps and widening participation;
- support the exchange of practical advice and the good practice identified in provider self-assessments and records of delivery against agreed equal opportunities targets when reviewing performance and assessing future potential;
- ensure that clear and robust arrangements are in place for working with the Connexions and adult IAG service to ensure that all people have fair access to learning, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and suitable provision which meets their needs and any additional support they require.

The Strategy over a Three Year Term

The strategic objectives for equality and inclusion are based around participation, skills and learning.

Participation: Addressing access and the responsiveness to the needs of the potential and actual learner, focusing on widening participation.

To revitalise the perceptions of learning as a desirable, valued and natural betterment to the quality of life, to ensure that funded provision:

- offers inclusive learning opportunities;
- is responsive to the need advocated by the individual or their legitimate representative;
- maximises all individuals' engagement in learning.

Skills: Addressing the ethos of equality and diversity in work based and vocational learning.

To embed equality and inclusion in all aspects of delivery, as a positive affirmation for the demand and supply of responsive and diverse provision to:

- improve skill levels and the individual's parity of achievement;
- address the benefit of diversity to employers' business needs;
- provide an equality assurance of all programmes' contribution to economic and social development.

Learning: Addressing the quality of the learning experience and inclusive learning

To create a self sustaining drive for equality and inclusion, by encouraging the development of learning communities, employment sectors, groups and the provider environment and pedagogy:

- to fit the opportunities offered with the learner's preferred learning style, method and goals;
- places inclusion at the heart of evaluating learning.

> Annex 8

Summary of Berkshire Learning and Skills Council Policy on Health and Safety

The primary duty of care for the health and safety of the learner is the responsibility of the provider. The Learning and Skills Council, however, will work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to promote the concept of the "safe learner" in respect of health and safety on funded programmes.

The Learning and Skills Council will facilitate the implementation of safety processes with contracted organisations through a number of key factors:

- the inclusion of a safety element in all Learning and Skills Council contract documents, which places the primary duty of care with the contracted organisation;
- the completion of a Safety Systems Appraisal for all contracted organisations;
- an audit of safety related documentation;
- a monitoring programme of compliance audits, based on a variety of risk factors;
- the completion of the safety criteria within the provider performance review process;
- the quality assurance of all relevant accidents to learners.

The Learning and Skills Council National Office may amend this process.

Annex 9 Useful Sources of Information

Document Name	Date	Produced By
Corporate Plan (Strategic Framework to 2004)	July 2001	Learning and Skills Council
Equality in Practice (A Guide to Mainstreaming)	July 2001	Learning and Skills Council
The Learning and Skills Council Remit Letter	November 2000	Department for Education and Employment
Modern Apprenticeships (The Way to Work)	September 2001	Department for Education and Skills
Skills for All (Final Report of the National Skills Task Force)	June 2000	Department for Education and Employment
Opportunity for All: Skills for the New Economy	June 2000	Department for Education and Employment
Raising Standards in Post-16 Learning (Self Assessment and Development Plans)	March 2001	Department for Education and Employment
Learning to Succeed (A New Framework for Post-16 Learning)	June 1999	Department for Education and Employment
Education and Skills (Delivering Results - A Strategy to 2006)	November 2001	Department for Education and Skills
Moser Report (Improve Literacy and Numeracy: A Fresh Start)	1999	Basic Skills Agency
Tomlinson Report (Inclusive Learning: Report of Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Committee)	1996	Further Education Funding Council
Davies Report (Review of Enterprise and the Economy in Education)	2002	HM Treasury
14-19 Green Paper (Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards)	February 2002	Department of Education and Skills

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