Learning and Skills Council

Local Strategic Plan 2002-05

West of England

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Clarity
approved by
Plain English Campaign

Learning+Skills Council
West of England

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> 1. Chairman's foreword

"For most people, earning a living from some form of paid employment is an unavoidable fact of life. The demand for education and training to prepare people for work as a key part of their life's purpose is inevitable and valid. People are motivated if they feel that their work contributes to the maintenance of a civilised society, which they seek to be included in, and if they find that work satisfying. Education must provide knowledge, skills, training and understanding. But perhaps above all else it should initiate a process of enlightenment for individuals that can continue throughout their lives. The product of this illumination should enrich both the citizen and the state; it should be of benefit to the shared community.

The great urban management challenge to the Victorian entrepreneurs of the 19th century was to improve the living conditions for the workers that they so desperately needed in their factories. By providing an infrastructure to supply clean water and manage effluent they undoubtedly served their own needs whilst also enhancing the living conditions of their workforce. Their engineering ingenuity attacked the sources of cholera, typhoid and similar deadly diseases and thereby improved life expectancy and, to some extent, life itself. They set the foundation for society, as we know it today. Examples of Brunel's great engineering legacy, such as the Clifton Suspension Bridge and Temple Meads Railway Station, should inspire and motivate us to see the West of England at the heart of a learning revolution fit for the 21st century.

The desperate need for workers everywhere today is conventionally labelled as a 'chronic skills shortage'. This 21st Century lack of supply points to a deficit that is life damaging in other ways; the insufficiency of our education systems to meet the needs of a significant proportion of the young population and the endemic effects of the lack of basic skills at all age levels within the workforce must be tackled.

The Learning and Skills Council will ensure full partnership planning and delivery between schools, employers and work-based training providers to ensure the growth and breadth of the vocational curriculum necessary to meet the demands of the recently published Green Paper and the needs and motivations of our young people. This will place the needs of the learner, not the institution, at the heart of all planning decisions.

We will use our funds to provide education universally, fairly and efficiently so that no human potential is casually wasted and that no individual is robbed of the chance to develop his or her prospects to the full. We will develop, and properly fund, a new Community Learning Service to work with and help develop existing community organisations to encourage participation from hard to reach groups and those traditionally excluded from mainstream provision. Directed funding for capacity building will provide access for non-learners to life-changing opportunities.

Without an effective response the community will decline and inevitably decay. We have a vital and unique role to play in achieving rapid improvements across the whole West of England area.

We will, for example, continue our recent work in helping those least likely to take up learning opportunities to achieve an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent.

During our first year we will have helped more than 1,000 people who were previously excluded from learning or in danger of dropping out to achieve this level. We plan to continue this success year-on-year.

We will also:

> Increase by 3,432 the number of 16-18 year olds in structured learning
> Increase by 862 those achieving Level 2 by age 19
> Increase by 699 those achieving Level 3 by age 19
> Raise the literacy and numeracy skills of 15,341 adults
> Increase by 39,515 the number of adults achieving Level 3

This strategic plan is visionary, ambitious and exciting. It challenges the existing situation and promotes new and imaginative ways of working. It aims to harness and use the enthusiasm, expertise and determination that abound across the West of England, so that all can achieve their potential and make the West of England a modern and prosperous place to live, work and learn.

I commend this plan to you".

John Savage
Chairman
March 2002

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> 2. Executive Summary

Growth and social inclusion

The West of England is an exceptional place to live, work and learn. It covers the two historic and cultural cities of Bristol and Bath and a rural landscape of outstanding natural beauty.

The area is thriving as a regional capital both socially and economically. It offers:
> internationally-important companies;
> a geographically-favourable position at the hub of several motorways and the national rail network; and
> an international port and airport.

All of this means that business activity has performed particularly well over recent years and forecasts for future job opportunities are good[1].

People are the resource at the heart of the future development of the West of England. We will underpin individual learning and skills development to make sure that opportunities for individuals, businesses and the community are not wasted but realised as far as possible.

The Learning and Skills Council - West of England is deeply committed to working with partners and stakeholders to achieve its aims and objectives.

However, deprivation is a major problem and is strongly concentrated in certain parts of the area. The West of England contains five of the South West's 15 most deprived wards. It also has the South West's top five wards with 'learning and skills' deprivation, four of which are in south Bristol[2]. There is a long history of social, economic and cultural inequality. Rich settlements exist alongside very disadvantaged communities, and this inevitably leads to tension. It seems that in some communities there is generally low motivation towards education, and this in turn affects the number of students continuing with their learning after the age of 16. This divide wastes ability and repeats through generations.

This strategy promotes sustainable long-term economic growth and social inclusion.

Impact measure

We will support and encourage GDP (gross domestic product) growth in the sub-region and will record change in an annual statement divided into the main sectors, industries and communities that affect skill supply and related learner issues.

Choice, participation and retention

The area is well served by a wide range of learning institutions. However, facilities are located according to historical need. The forecast increase in population[3] means that we must make plans to provide high-quality education over areas that will benefit all learners, including those in more rural areas. We will offer learning opportunities in a broader way, with a greater use of 'cafeteria'[4] choice for learners. This means that a fuller choice will be available throughout the area in a virtual 'Campus of the West of England'.[5]

We will work with the Connexions service to provide individual access to high-quality, impartial information and advice that will help people to make suitable choices to meet their skill and qualification needs.

This strategy promotes a 'learning campus' approach that builds upon best practice for all providers which will cover all areas.

Impact measure

We will define learner rights and responsibilities in a local learners' charter, which will give learners more freedom and power in negotiating and arranging effective and relevant education services.

Vocational and academic emphasis

The West of England, in common with much of the United Kingdom, has a strong and valued bias towards academic qualifications. We need to develop a greater awareness of the importance of vocational learning. We also need to make opportunities for the highest levels of achievement available to everyone, regardless of their starting point.

We will work with local education authorities, schools, colleges and work-based training providers to promote the development of an alternative curriculum for students over 14. This development, together with improved achievement rates for those following traditional academic routes, will be the basis of our contribution to the national aim to increase significantly the percentage of population in higher education.

We will work in partnership with the three local universities and the university college to overcome the factors that prevent some local people from taking part in higher education and fully achieving their potential.

This strategy promotes equal respect for and co-operation between providers and employers so that learners can offer employers both academic and vocational skills.

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[1] West of England Strategic Partnership (WESP) Perfect Tense, Future Perfect - October 2001
[2] Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2000 DETR © Crown Copyright

[3] West of England Learning + Skills Council estimate developed with CE LEFM software
[4] Cafeteria refers to provision of choice from a broad menu of provision accessible to all learners across the West of England (see page 9).
[5] Cumpus refers to a consistent quality of provision from all providers of learning and training across the West of England (see page 8). A Learning Skills Council - West of England system of kitemark accreditation will be established.

Impact measure
We will lead our providers in a new partnership approach to the 'continuous improvement' campaign, with the aim of offering flexible learning opportunities and developing modern 'cafeteria' style services within a West of England 'campus'. We will use capital funding to focus on improving the learner experience and quality of provider.

Local competitiveness
By concentrating development activity on the 1,400 large and medium employers in the West of England[6] we will be able to involve approximately 50% of the local workforce. Also, by further developing our already proven sector approach to access (where unskilled people are a large proportion of the workforce and employer networks are immature or non-existent) we will greatly improve the opportunity for developing the local economy and skills levels.

We are in the unique position of having the highest number of developed and entrepreneurial businesses involved in information-learning technology outside London. This will help us to bridge the gap between business and education and so improve access to learning technology that inspires and motivates people of all ages to take part in high-quality, effective and inspirational learning.

This strategy develops a sector approach to business competitiveness, training and qualifications, and promotes direct involvement of employers in the planning and providing of education and training.

Impact measure
We will work with business, schools and the Connexions service to develop our accredited standard to make sure young people have good quality skills across the West of England.

Basic skills
We will work with our partners to draw up an action plan that will raise expectations to make basic learning accessible, desirable and relevant to all.

Where traditional approaches are not succeeding we will work with all providers and communities to promote new ways of achieving equal opportunities by keeping young people involved in a meaningful, relevant learning experience. We will work to provide access for those who are currently excluded from the benefits and opportunities of taking part in learning and skills development. We will build on our recent Level 2 work, which has helped another 1,000 people who were outside learning. Many of these people had basic skills problems but have since achieved a Level 2 qualification.

This strategy focuses on the learner (whether they are at home, in the community or at work) to intensify 'first steps' learning opportunities.

[6] Annual Business Inquiry 1999 Nomis[12] ONS © Crown Copyright

Impact measure
We will meet agreed national targets in the first year and will draw up a new partnership strategy to demonstrate a coherent dynamic approach to tackling this issue.

Community learning
A wide range of local community-based and voluntary organisations offer innovative education, training and learning skills to different groups of learners. However, for too long local community organisations have tried to meet local needs without the backing of co-ordinated long-term funding. This haphazard investment can result in wasted efforts and poor value for money. An informed local service backed up by planned and directed resources will provide the stimulation and opportunity to learn.

This strategy will establish a new 'Community Learning Service' that will:
> **share common high standards and aims across the area; and**
> **work with existing community organisations to encourage involvement from the hard-to-reach groups through directed funding and increasing numbers.**

Impact measure
We will set up new 'managing agencies' to provide 'back-office' support to voluntary organisations. This should help them to become more effectively involved in our learning schemes. We will integrate the Adult and Community Services further into our work and priorities.

The West of England Learning Campus
Our vision for the West of England is to provide a consistent quality of learning experience through strong and meaningful partnerships between learning providers, employers, schools, community learning organisations, colleges, work-based trainers and so on.

Through these partnerships we will develop a whole area focused on learning with, whenever possible, joint marketing campaigns which involve providers, employers and communities.

Growth and investment in high speed communications technology will make sure that distance learning is supported, accessible and of high quality. So the campus will be both physically real and virtual.

We will work with the West of England's highly innovative multi-media business companies to develop and use new software to encourage people into learning and to stay in learning.

We will work with all providers of learning to agree the values, principles and aims of this approach.

The West of England Cafeteria

To help us develop the West of England Campus, we will work with providers and partners to develop the services available to people. The ultimate focus will be on the learner, so in some cases this will lead to customised learning. Learning will be innovative, will create a desire for more learning and will build on the knowledge and skills of those taking part.

We will use flexible funding to offer a consistent quality, variety and range of services which can be tailored to meet an individual's needs. Together with LEAs and school partners we will look into setting up post-16 areas within schools.

Learning which meets learners' needs will become more easily available, for example:

> home and community learning with high-quality ICT;
> short taster courses;
> customised learning;
> traditional academic and vocational learning; or
> a mix of these to suit identified needs.

All services will offer the back-up of high-quality information and advice systems.

Impact measure

We will develop a vision where every business is a trainer, or a potential trainer, every person is a learner and where every community has a number of different providers of learning.

Summary

> The West of England will continue to grow and we will influence the growth by promoting:

- a learning campus for providers;
- a new community learning service; and
- a business-sector approach to social inclusion.

The campus will achieve results by working effectively with key partners.

The diagram on the next page shows our vision for the future of learning services.

Learning & Skills Council - West of England - A Vision for the Provision of Learning
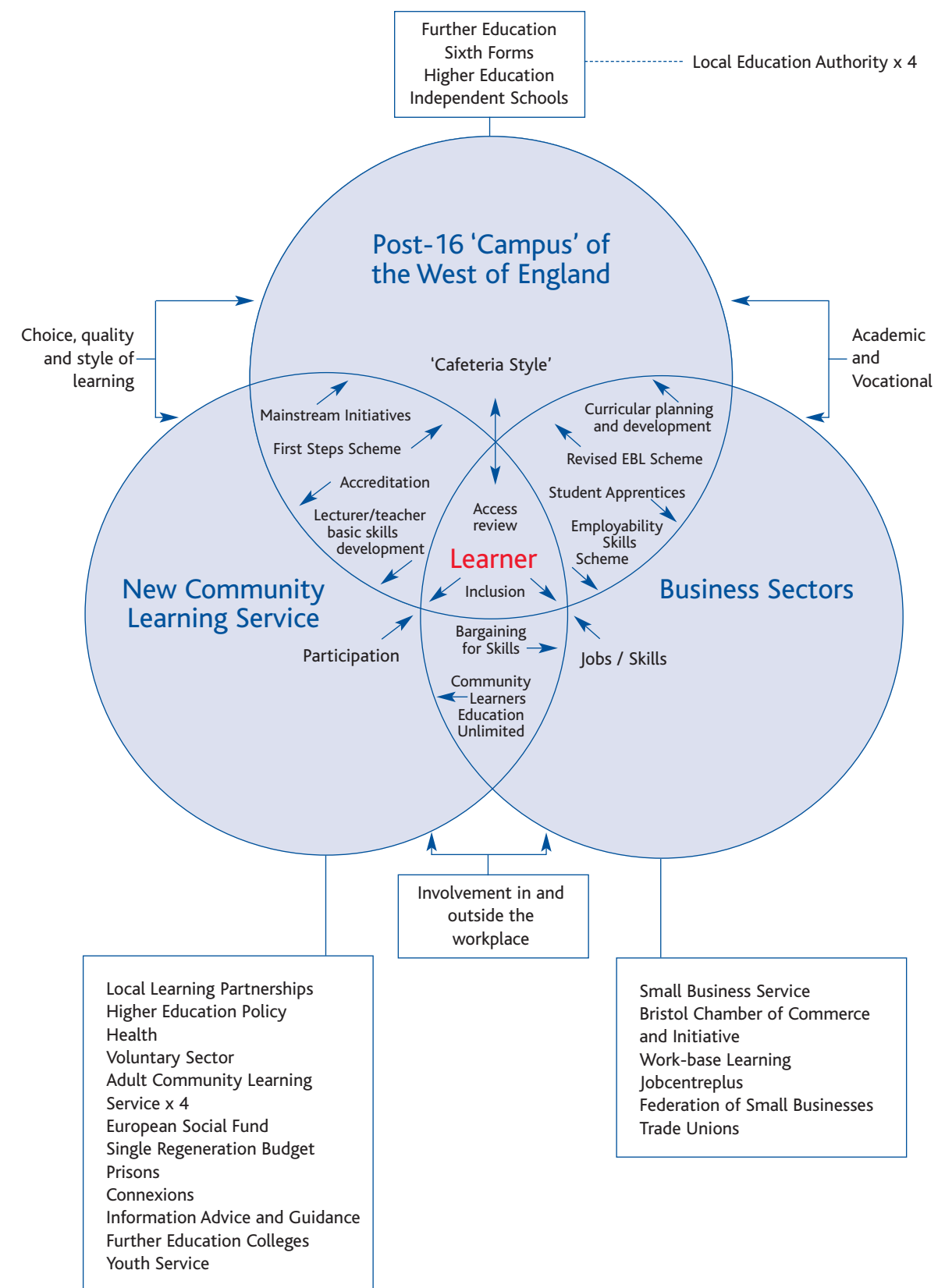
> 3. The national context

The Learning and Skills Council was launched in April 2001 as a national organisation with 47 local branches. We have taken over the roles of the Training and Enterprise Councils and the Further Education Funding Council.

The Secretary of State set our brief for education and employment in November 2000. This is summarised in five key tasks, which are:

> to raise the number of young people in learning and their level of achievement;
> to increase adult demand for learning and equalise opportunities by providing better access to learning;
> to raise skills for national competitiveness;
> to raise the quality of education and training services; and
> to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

The National Council's first three-year corporate plan, published in July 2001, set out the mission and vision for all local Learning and Skills Councils.

'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 will have the knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world'.

The West of England Plan includes the national brief, strategy and key aims and targets described in full in the National Council's corporate plan.

All the aims, targets and actions we set will contribute to those national targets.

The Learning and Skills Council will work with partners, providers of education and training, local businesses and local communities to achieve the objectives and targets based upon the three themes of skills, participation and learning in the national plan.

Our strategic plan aims to build on the 14-19 agenda set out in the Government's publications 'Schools Achieving Success' and the Green Paper 'Extending Opportunities - Raising Standards'.

We will promote activity that will:
> involve business;
> raise levels of achievement in general and in vocational qualifications;
> increase the number of young people taking part in education and training after the age of 16 (including higher education);
> meet the learning needs of all young people;

> broaden the skills which all young people learn to improve their chances of employment;
> be provided through flexible, integrated networks of providers working in partnership; and
> broaden work experience and increase how effective it is.

We will work with our partners to develop a strategy and suitable learning environment for 14-to 19-year-olds. This will be characterised by high achievement and by more people taking part and staying on in learning.

The table below shows the key national objectives and targets for the LSC for 2002 and 2004[7]. The baseline figures against these targets will drive the local targets.

Key objectives	Targets for 2002	Targets for 2004	UK 2000	Local target for 2004
1. Increase the number and type of people taking part in education, learning and training	77% of 16- to 18-year-olds in structured learning	80% of 16- to 18-year-olds in structured learning Set baseline and targets for adults in next year's plan	75%[8]	3432
2. Increase the number of employers involved in workforce development	To be advised	Include measures of employers' involvement in next year's corporate plan	To be advised	Sectors
3. Raise the achievement of young people	80% at Level 2 by age 19 52.5% at Level 3 by age 19	85% at Level 2 by aged 19 55% at Level 3 by age 19	75%[8] 51%[8]	862 699
4. Raise the achievement of adults	40% of adults at Level 3	Raise the literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults % of adults at Level 2, target to be set in next year's plan. 52% of adults at Level 3	Up to 7,000,000[8] adults with literacy or numeracy difficulties 47%[8]	15,341 39,515
5. Raise the quality of education and training and user satisfaction	To be advised	Set baselines and targets in next year's plan	To be advised	Campus

The responsibility for planning, funding and monitoring the quality of further education work-based learning, workforce development and adult and community learning was passed to us in April 2001. We will also be responsible for funding sixth form education from April 2002.

[7] This relates to the given targets set in the Corporate Plan, July 2001
[8] Learning + Skills Corporate Plan July 2001

We will achieve change through a process of research, analysis, setting priorities and involving everyone in education and training - nationally, regionally and locally.

Summary

As part of a unified national organisation, we will contribute to national targets and achieve them effectively.

> 4. The local context

The West of England

An influential 'growth economy' but …..

As we have already noted the West of England is an exceptional place to live, work and learn and is thriving both socially and economically. The area covers the four local authorities of Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset with a population of approximately 1,000,000 people. Furthermore, over half of these people are in employment[9]. The area is a major generator of economic activity within the South West and the United Kingdom.

Business activity has performed particularly well over recent years and forecasts for future job opportunities are good, despite predictions to the contrary following the events of September 11th.

The Labour Force Survey of May 2000 estimates the total number of jobs in the West of England at approximately 500,000. This includes:
> 77,000 (15.3%) working in manufacturing;
> 89,000 (17.8%) working in banking, finance and business services; and
> 137,000 (27.4%) in public administration.

Major employers include the four unitary authorities, NHS Trusts, the Ministry of Defence, Rolls Royce and BAe Systems.

A major feature in recent years has been the rapid expansion of employment to the north of Bristol as a result of businesses and organisations relocating and new jobs, most notably in the retail industry at a regional shopping centre. However, important new building developments at Temple Quay and Bristol Harbourside (both in the centre of Bristol) have strengthened the sub-region as the administrative and commercial centre of the South West.

[9] Labour Force Survey, November 2001, Nomis ® ONS © Crown Copyright
ONS mid year population estimates mid 1998 © Crown Copyright

In recent years the West of England has benefited from various new companies which have been set up at the leading edge of technology, and particularly from new media companies.

In a survey commissioned by The Observer in January 2001, the South West was considered the most popular place to live. Some population estimates for the West of England show a rise over the next 15 years ranging from 50,000 to 150,000 people, or more. These higher numbers could be absorbed with carefully-planned and thoughtful, long-term development of the area.

It is vital that we do not become complacent, as this will hinder the strengthening of economic and social development. The sub-region suffers the highest concentration in the South West of people experiencing deprivation of many kinds. Much of the inner city and south Bristol are particularly affected, as are Weston-super-Mare and several rural locations. Unemployment in some communities is above the national average and is linked to these areas of deprivation.

Current performance

Educational facilities include three universities, one university college, five colleges of further education, one sixth form college and more than 500 schools. These represent a wealth of expertise, experience and commitment and a whole range of people dedicated to the education profession. These people include school teachers and college lecturers, head teachers and principals, the local education authorities and university staff.

There are many examples of imaginative and excellent practice and initiatives, and school achievement rates at Level 2 are around or slightly above the national average. However, they are worryingly low for Bristol at 18%, below the national average. Achievement rates at Level 3 are below the national average[10] with some failure to build on relatively successful GCSE performance and to maintain this success through to A-level or equivalent. We also need to deal urgently with the low level of motivation in some parts of the area which achieve, at best, only average targets.

Through this strategic plan we will build on the expertise and commitment available to us using associated strengths and knowledge to improve learning opportunities for our citizens. The action plans we develop as a result of area inspections will be fully included in, and supported by, our strategic plan so that we use our resources effectively.

The West of England has a high proportion of people qualified to Level 5,[11] but future forecasts indicate a shortage of people qualified to Levels 2 and 3. We must encourage those who are in education or already in the workforce to help them improve their level of achievement.

The skills gap in the South West region is likely to increase if the region's economy expands as forecast. We accept the view put forward by the West of England Strategic Partnership (WESP) that the potential for accelerated growth is real. We must support that growth by improving the learning and skills we provide. By working with providers and employers, we will aim to train unskilled adults to meet the growth in business needs.

We will be carrying out a self-assessment process that will help to build a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses. We will also produce a bi-monthly review starting in April 2002. However, the following issues are already obvious through recent reviews and inspections.

> There are higher levels of pupils staying on in schools in Bath and North East Somerset where GCSE achievement rates are also high.
> There is a broad range of NVQ levels and subjects across the area in response to employer's needs.
> Work-based learning achievement rates are high compared to national rates, particularly at Level 3.
> In work-based learning there are poor achievement rates in some sectors when compared to national averages.
> In work-based learning there is a large gap between the achievement rates of black and ethnic-minority groups and those of other learners.

People are the resource at the heart of developing the West of England in the future. We will underpin learning and skills development to make sure that opportunities for individuals, businesses and the community are not wasted, but realised as far as possible.

Summary

The West of England is thriving yet has high levels of deprivation. We will work so that we use the strengths of our area to achieve social inclusion.

[10] DfES Performance Tables
[11] WESTEC Household Survey 2000

> 5. Partnerships

Partnership working is the key to our greatest success in meeting the learning and skills needs of the people living in the West of England. The key partners are:

> providers;
> business;
> the community; and
> learners.

In a brief to Learning and Skills Councils, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills stated that:

'The success of the Council will depend upon strong partnerships and effective linkages with a wide range of organisations'.

These links will depend on excellent communication channels between us and all our partners. We will consult our partners to decide how best we can communicate with them accurately, clearly and quickly.

We have taken positive action to deal with the partnership requirement set out in the Secretary of State's brief by creating the post of Partnership Development Manager and setting up a partnership policy (see appendix 1) for all activities involving external partnerships.

The Learning and Skills Council is deeply committed to working in partnership with stakeholders to achieve our aims. Our strategy will achieve continuous improvement in developing partnerships in line with our national and local aims.

We will be open, dynamic, informed and accountable to the communities we serve and work with. We will champion learners and plan to promote and widen access to opportunities, choice and quality. We will lead in promoting learner-centred activity. We will develop the West of England campus to help deliver this important objective.

We will set up a strategic partnership group to promote partnership working. This group will review the value and effectiveness of existing arrangements and will consider:
> **a summary of information about partnership activity and effectiveness, and its value to purpose;**
> **priorities for creating new partnerships;**
> **recommendations for withdrawing from partnerships;**
> **recommendations for increased resources;**
> **staff training and development needs;**
> **alternative representations on partnerships; and**
> **strategies to increase representation from non-traditional sources.**

The group will also:
> **make sure that 'partnership' is considered throughout the business planning process;**
> **consider staff, structure and other resources as needed;**
> **make sure that related policies, strategies and procedures support effective partnership development;**
> **consider other recommendations from the Partnership Development Manager.**

Our partnership with providers of education and training and adult and community learning services will include:
> further education colleges;
> schools;
> work-based training providers across the area; and
> the West of England Learning Consortium and its constituent local learning partnerships
> the Connexions service.

The West of England Learning Consortium has a central role to play, providing effective networking and consultation structures among providers sub-regionally and locally. By working together through the Consortium, providers are able to inform our strategy, ensuring projects are realistic and achievable. The Consortium is well placed to mobilise and use the provider support that is vital to help us achieve our targets.

The Connexions service plays a vital role in offering impartial advice to steer young people into relevant learning and employment. The partnership arrangements between Connexions and schools are particularly vital. More specifically it will be important to establish a clear understanding with the Connexions service over their role in helping us to achieve our learning, skills and participation aims. This will include setting up formal joint planning arrangements so that shared and individual aims, targets, roles and activities are clear.

Our partnership with business will include:
> employers;
> employer representative organisations such as the West of England Strategic Partnership (WESP);
> Business Link West;
> the Chamber of Commerce and Initiative; and
> all major supporters of the economic growth and development of the area.

We have consulted the South West Regional Development Agency while writing this strategic plan. This plan acknowledges their skills and learning perspective and the themes, of Information, Access, Lifelong Learning, Sector Development and Partnership set out in their own corporate plan.

Our partnership with communities will include:
voluntary organisations;
> local authorities;
> health trusts; and
> through the West of England Learning Consortium, the local learning partnerships, which provide contact with local communities and people currently excluded from learning.

This partnership will also include;

> the Government Office South West;
> the Employment Service (Jobcentreplus from April 2002);
> the University for industry; and
> other public organisations.

We will play a full role in developing community strategies and will make sure that learning, access and quality are available to support community plans.

The local council has agreed to provide £1,000,000 from the Local Initiative Fund in 2002 to 2003 to support these network and partnership aims (see appendix 2).

Local strategic partnerships

The Government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal was launched on 24 January 2001. This strategy instructed local authorities to set up local strategic partnerships to resolve the confusion caused by having a large number of partnerships and to focus local strategic planning on deprived groups and areas.

We are an active member of these new and emerging strategic partnerships. We will make sure that our plans fully reflect the needs of residents in the four local authority areas.

Impact measures

The strategic partnership group will review and report on the value and effectiveness of existing partnerships to identify whether and how they meet the needs of learners.

We will use our partnership policy to promote and support partnership working.

Summary

> Partnership working will achieve the greatest success in meeting learning and skills needs.
> We have created the post of Partnership Development Manager.
> We have developed a partnership policy to promote effective and relevant partnerships.

> 6. Providers

Our area is well served by a wide range of learning institutions. There are 47 secondary schools (of which 34 have sixth forms), five colleges, a sixth form college, 37 work-based training providers and a network of adult and community learning services. There are also three universities, one university college, and 17 independent schools, mostly clustered around Bristol and Bath.

It is by co-operating with local providers of education and training that we will achieve our aim of improving the choice, access and achievement of learners.

This aim includes learners of all ages, from those still at school through to employees in the workplace. It applies to those who are currently not in learning or employment and those who have been disappointed or disadvantaged.

This chapter of our strategic plan sets out the principles, goals and statements of intent that will improve the current situation for the benefit of all learners.

Academic and vocational learning

The West of England has a valued, strong bias towards academic qualification. In some areas this tends to overshadow the opportunities that can also be gained through vocational learning. There must be equal respect for academic and vocational learning and an assurance that all learners will be offered readily available good-quality choices. This means that higher education institutions and employers must freely accept vocational qualifications.

'The head teacher told me if I do an NVQ I would end up wasting my life and that I should do A-levels to get anywhere'. WBT Learner

> There are much higher rates of people taking part in full-time education than in England overall (74% compared to 60%[12]). Fewer people move into work-based learning.
> The area has many examples of best practice from providers and committed teachers and lecturers.

The Learning and Skills Council will create a broader style of offer with more 'cafeteria' type choice and style for learning.

There will be a full choice of suitable opportunities available throughout the area in a virtual "Campus of the West of England" through a linked chain of suppliers.

[12] 'Moving On' 1999 DfEE

The learning environment

Increased capital spending on changes to building style and layout will make the learning environment more attractive and learning more desirable. We will fund the sharing and use of best practice in, for example, the approach to and layout of student common rooms, break-out areas, atriums, and so on.

It will also be important to make sure that learning providers have compatible Information and communication technology facilities to provide greater accessibility to learning.

We will develop a more imaginative use of ICT to promote greater access to learning opportunities. This includes developing input for learning software through our work with the multi-media business sectors. This will provide access to revision support on the internet and new routes into work.

We will fund the sharing and use of good practice in general across all providers as long as it encourages more people to take part in adult learning.
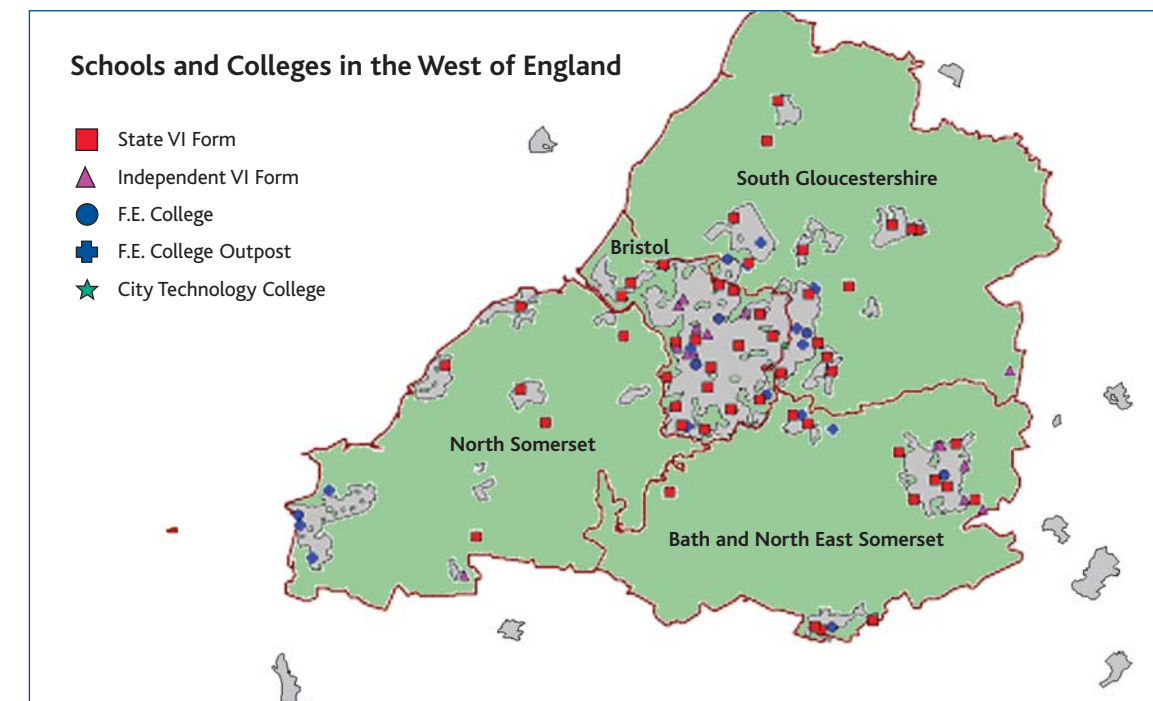
We will encourage co-operation on publicity, course coverage, quality and timing and will develop the advantages of networking as far as possible.

We will promote professional development through a collaborative approach to joint teacher and lecturer training.

We will support innovative change and new forms of learning opportunities for those who cannot use conventional solutions.

The map on page 22 shows the locations of providers in the West of England.

From this map we can see that in the more rural areas there are some sixth form facilities but there is a lack of further education colleges. This means that people living in rural areas are at a disadvantage in their access to vocational learning other than through state schools. Our strategy promotes co-operation so that all providers work jointly to provide accessible learning for all ages. We will work with our partners in the rural parts of our area to develop learner access to transport and so to improve access to learning.

Schools and Colleges in the West of England

- ■ State VI Form
- ▲ Independent VI Form
- ● F.E. College
- ✚ F.E. College Outpost
- ★ City Technology College

South Gloucestershire

Bristol

North Somerset

Bath and North East Somerset

Sources: The URPI Group Ltd.

All learners will have a right to a choice of further education through the campus system and between providers and sectors.

Colleges

The West of England is well serviced by five colleges of further education and one sixth form college. Between them they provide a full range of academic and vocational learning opportunities. They are also heavily involved in community education.

There are many examples of good practice within college services. This strategic plan aims to build on that good practice through increased co-operation between colleges and other learning providers while keeping the learner at the centre of all services provided.

> Most college students come from the local area, with 15% travelling from outside the West of England boundary[13]. More than 84% of all students under 19 and 80% of students aged 19 and over attending West of England institutions live inside the West of England area[14]. Of the six institutions in the West of England area, Norton Radstock and the City of Bath have a comparatively large number of trainees from other areas. Norton Radstock College draws most of its students from Somerset, and the City of Bath College draws from Bath, Somerset and Wiltshire.

> It is important that colleges understand the needs of their local communities and provide relevant services to meet those needs.

[13] ISR 19 data
[14] ISR data

> The Further Education Funding Council assessed local colleges as having fewer curriculum areas graded at Grade 2 (where strengths clearly outweigh weaknesses) and twice as many at Grade 3 (where there is a balance of strengths and weaknesses). (Recent December 2001 inspections have not been included as the results have not yet been published).

> The overall achievement of colleges in the area is slightly lower than the England average for 16- to18-year-olds, but is slightly above the average for 19 and over, as shown by the chart below.

FE institution overall achievement rates Levels 1 to 5 1999/2000
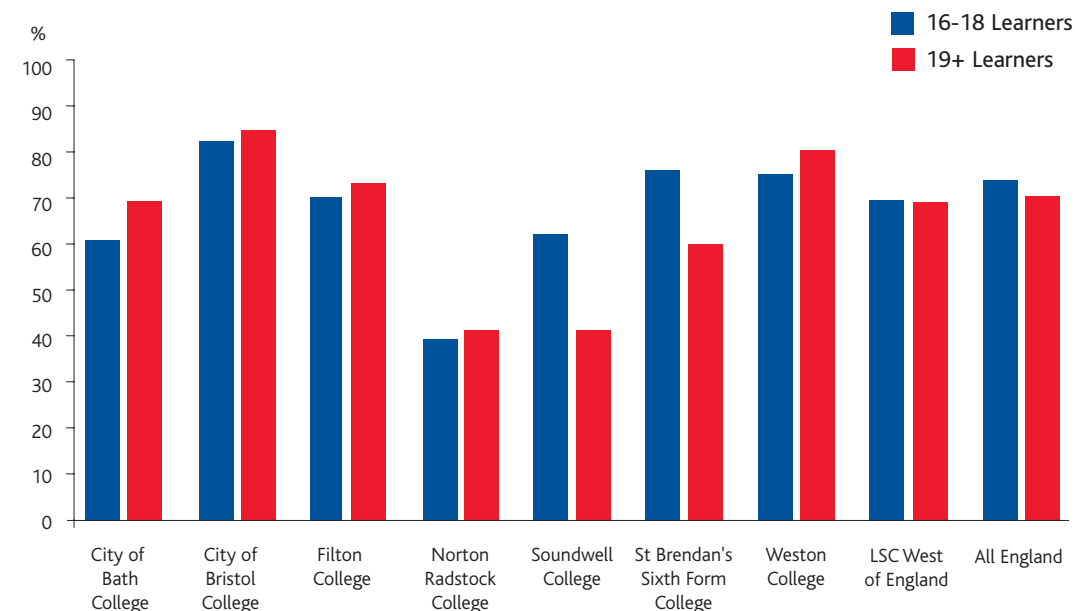
Source: Benchmarking data 1997-1988 to 1999-2000

> Retention rates are broadly the same as the national average for 16- to18-year-olds on long courses, and above the national average for 19-year-olds and over on long courses (see appendix 3, table 1)

> College services are particularly important in Bristol, where so few 16- to18-year-olds[15] attend local state school sixth forms.

> We need to offer the right services to meet both employers' and learners' needs.

> Services must be able to cope with the forecast in the demand for learning.

> Colleges need to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups in communities and to widen the involvement of these groups in further education.

> The City of Bristol College is an example of where developing accessible, modern and comfortable city centre services can increase the number of learners. The College Green site opened in March 2001 and has proved so popular that it has reached its capacity and is increasing enrolments to courses based at other City of Bristol College sites.

> It will be important to continue to promote college support to employers through learning opportunities that are relevant in the qualifications they offer and imaginatively using a mixture of teaching methods based on e-learning and direct teaching.

We will encourage co-operation between colleges, schools, work-based training and employers to provide wider choice for learners.

[15] DfEE Performance Tables, 1999

It will be important to raise the quality of teaching and to improve the number of learners staying on and achieving. We must work with other providers to increase access to learning and share best practice.

Through co-operation and specific college action plans and investment, college performance will be improved to better the national average.

Schools

The location of schools generally depends on historical need.

The forecast increase in population means that we must plan to provide high-quality education that is fairly and efficiently spread for the benefit of all.

Despite many examples of excellence, our area's state education could achieve more. Basic local-education-authority performance information suggests that despite many examples of excellent teaching and learning services, the area as a whole underperforms the English average both at GCSE and A-level. Bath and North East Somerset and North Somerset are above the English average for GCSE achievement. Bristol and South Gloucestershire are below, with Bristol's performance particularly low. (see appendix 3, tables 2 and 3)

There are proportionately more 16- to19-year-olds in independent sixth forms in Bristol than in any other area, and less in sixth forms in the Bristol schools (see appendix 3 - table 4). Teaching staff in state schools are highly committed and imaginative and successful examples of teaching can readily be seen. However, the poor performance levels at GCSE and A-level in Bristol are significant.

Our relationship with local sixth forms is in its infancy. We need to establish roles and responsibilities and to promote a positive working relationship.

We will work through local education authorities and schools to continue to improve quality and learner choice.

The independent schools sector in Bristol and Bath are important. We will draw up a strategy for exchanging good practice between the independent, state and college sectors.

We will involve the independent sector in education and training for students over 14 in the wider interests of the learner.

> We will encourage partnerships between the independent and the maintained sectors.

The table below shows A-level and GNVQ results across the region.

A, AS and AGNVQ results in all West-of-England institutions 2001

Unitary Authority	Type	Number of Institutions	Average point score for each student
Bath and North East Somerset	School 6th form	10	16.1
Bath and North East Somerset	Independent	5	22.4
Bath and North East Somerset	Further education colleges	2	10.6
Bristol	School 6th forms	8	9.6
Bristol	Independent	8	23.1
Bristol	Further education colleges	1	12.2
Bristol	Sixth form college	1	17.8
North Somerset	School 6th forms	6	16.0
North Somerset	Independent	1	19.4
North Somerset	Further education college	1	11.7
South Gloucestershire	School 6th forms	14	15.3
South Gloucestershire	Further education colleges	2	11.5
National average			**17.4**

Source: DfES performance tables 2001

> Overall school performance rates at GSCE and A-level are slightly below the national average. The chart on page 26 shows trends in school performance rates by local authority area.

Secondary school GCSE results

GCSE schools performance table results, 1998 - 2001

% of pupils gaining 5+ grades A* - C

Legend: 1998 · 1999 · 2000 · 2001
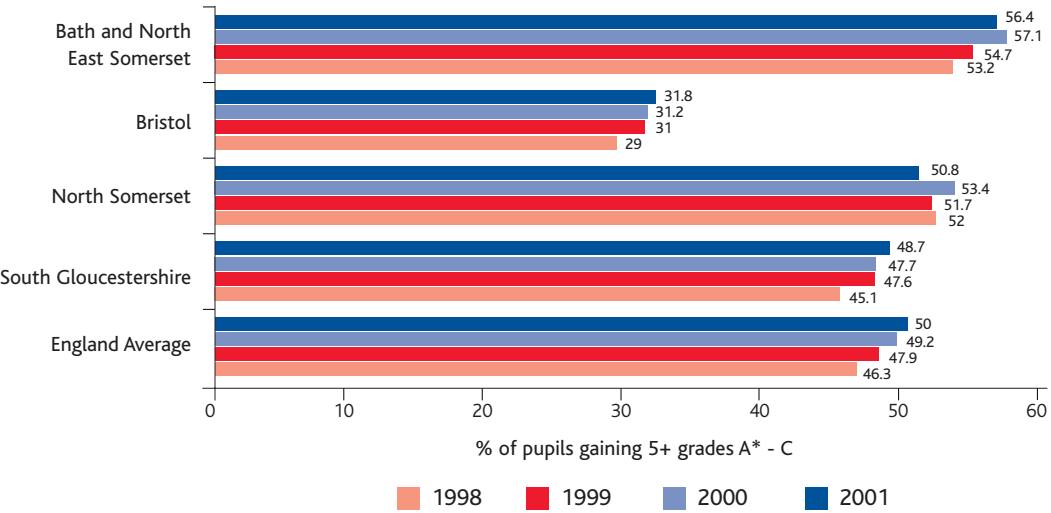
Source: DfES performance tables

> School achievement and the number of young people and adults taking part in learning are seriously undermined by the low Bristol performance before age 16. Bristol has the lowest level of under 16 educational performance in the area, with only 32% achieving the minimum standard of five A* to C grades at Key Stage 4 (GSCE) against a national average of around 50%.
> Despite higher than average school GSCE results, both North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset do not produce comparable A level results.
> The chart below shows trends in school performance rates after age 16 by local authority area.

Performance after age 16 (2+ A/AS Points Score) 1999 - 2001

Average Point Score

Legend: 1999 · 2000 · 2001
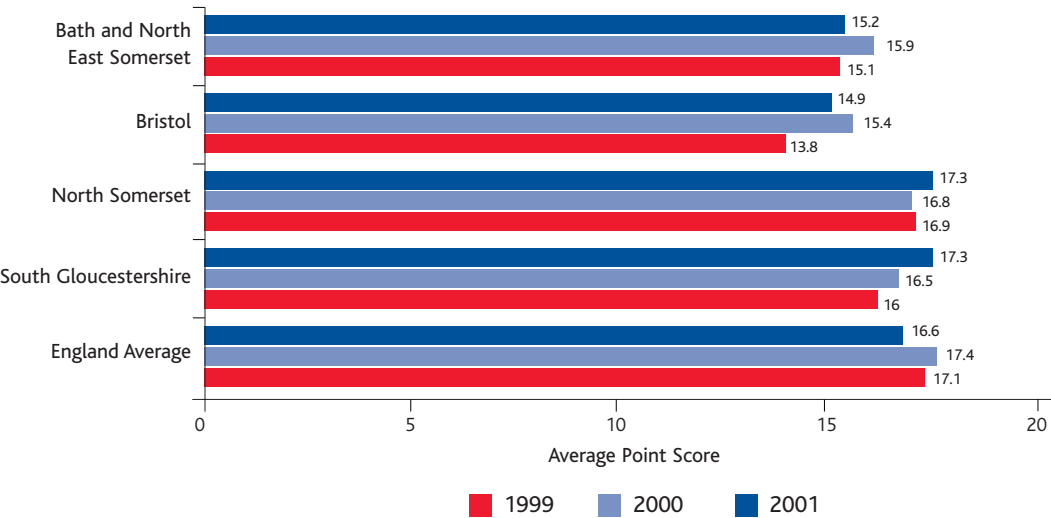
Source: DfES performance tables

> For several reasons the independent sector has an important effect on the overall picture. It will, therefore, be important to work with the independent sector to exchange good practice and increase co-operation.

We will provide credible systems to measure the distance travelled in achievements in learning, as well as the destination reached.

We will work with local education authorities to make sure that schools are based in suitable places and are performing effectively.

'GNVQs are seen as the route to work, not the route to higher education.' Sixth form learner

We must develop equal respect for academic and vocational learning routes. We will promote a wider choice of learning options, particularly vocational GCSEs and A-levels. In this way we can better meet the needs of young people. This will also include promoting work-based learning. We will achieve this through greater and more effective co-operation between schools, colleges, local education authorities and work-based training providers.

We will increase and improve vocational training for learners over 14.

> Spending for each pupil over 16 in local authority secondary schools was:
>   - slightly below the 1999 to 2000 English average for two local authorities in the area;
>   - slightly above the average for one local authority; and
>   - in the case of Bristol, much higher than average.

> In Bristol they spent £4,385 on each student compared to the English average of £3562. All four local authorities went against the national trend and spent more than their standard spending assessment (SSA) allocation to support students over 16 in 1999 to 2000.

> The amounts of SSA allocation that schools receive in Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire place them in the five least-funded local education authorities in the country.

> The charts over show spending on each pupil and SSA allocation for students over 16.

Spending for each pupil in local authority secondary schools for pupils aged 16 and over, 1999-2000
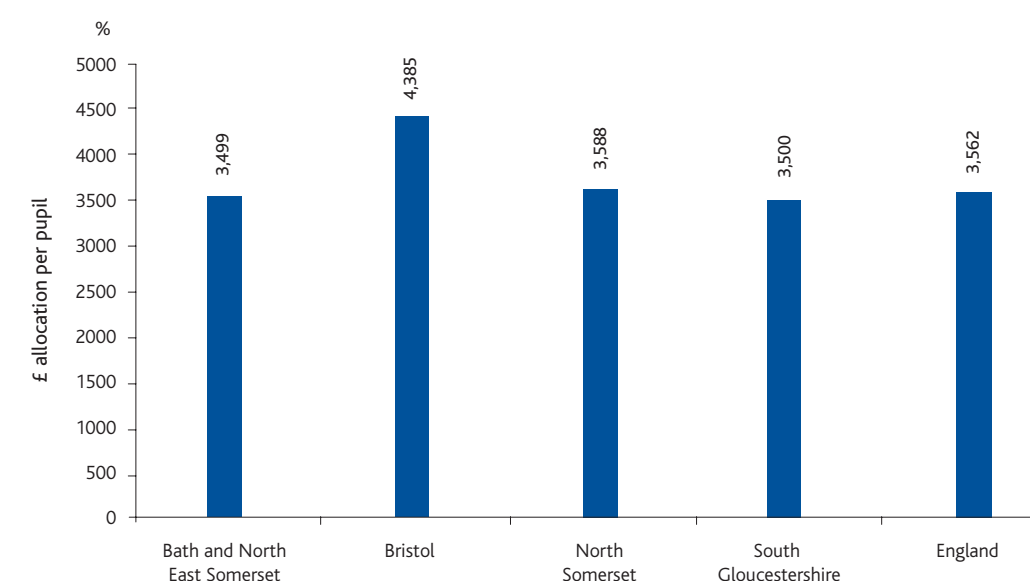
Source: Audit Commission

SSA allocation for each unitary authority (over 16)
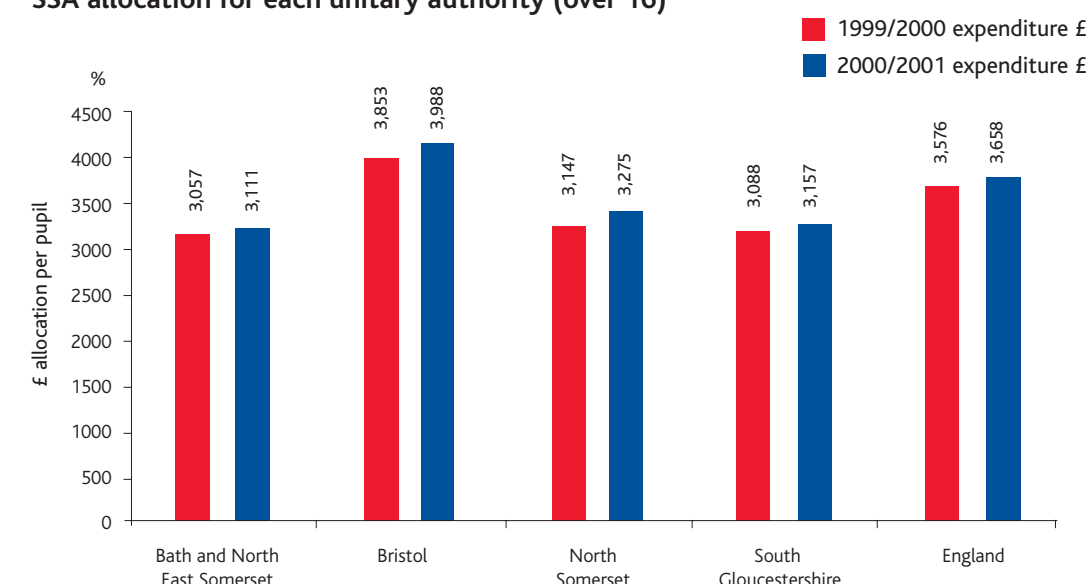
Source: Department for Education and Skills/LEA SIS

Challenging the use of traditional methods
Two area inspections have taken place over recent months.

The first involved Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) and the final report was published in late March 2001. We have developed an action plan with our partners to tackle the key areas for action identified by the inspectors. The main areas of this action plan for B&NES cover:

> the need to develop an education and training strategy for 16- to 19-year-olds; using value added from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5 as high GCSE results are not fully
> reflected at A-level;

> co-operation among learning providers for the benefit of the learner;
> the low numbers taking part in training; and
> access for all to information and advice to increase choice for learners at age 16.

We have taken the findings of the inspection into account in developing our strategic plan and aims.

The second area inspection involved the City of Bristol. The inspection took place in December 2001, and we will complete the action plan in May 2002 when we have received the final inspection report. We have received a draft inspection report which includes:
> not all providers of learning measure their added-value and those doing so use different systems from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5;
> low performance at GCSE, which then affects the number and performance of students going on to further learning after 16; and
> before the age of 16 students are not all told about options they have for learning when they reach the age of 16.

Our review of the strategic plan in 2002 will take into account the findings of the Bristol area inspection.

Traditional education methods seem to have failed a large number of people. This is evident in Bristol where only 32% of 16-year-olds[16] achieve five A to C GCSEs and large numbers of parents opt for schools out of the area or choose an independent school. Significant numbers of other young people simply drop out altogether.

Low educational achievement means that long-term employment opportunities are severely limited. The 2,500 (7%) of 16- to19-year-olds who are unemployed in the area[17] represent a huge failing within the system. The effects of this are many.

National government targets aim to raise achievement levels for 5 GCSEs grade A-C to 54% by 2004. By the same year they aim to have 90% of 16- and 17-year-olds in education and training. Our national targets for 19-year-olds are for 85% to achieve Level 2 and 55% to achieve Level 3.

We will raise expectations and inspire others to aim for a target of 95% achievement.

Research from the WESP study document 'Present Tense, Future Perfect' shows that specialist colleges have a positive effect on GCSE results where there is an emphasis on performing arts or technology. Accelerated learning techniques have also increased academic performance dramatically.

We will challenge existing forms of learning and experiment with new ideas to achieve what may seem an impossible goal.

[16] DfEE Performance Tables, 2001
[17] WESP - Present Tense, Future Perfect - October 2001

Examples of innovation can be seen in the St George's Community College achievement of City Academy status and at Ashton Park School in the highly successful use of summer activities.

An example of co-operation between the independent and maintained sectors is shown in Queen Elizabeth Hospital School's work with Churchill Community School using ICT video conferencing to teach Latin.

We will work with the business sector to support 'Education Unlimited - The Next Step'. This is a local initiative designed to offer opportunities to the hundreds of young people that leave school every year without qualifications.

Many hundreds of school leavers have no ambitions of any kind, and some come from families where employment and self-sufficiency are foreign concepts. At the same time there are many organisations running projects that help young people. These projects suffer from the following two disadvantages:

> There is often an end to the practical help they can give because they do not have anywhere else to send their clients; and
> They have no way of knowing the complete picture of what is available within the West of England.

The Next Step will continue the success stories from a range of existing projects. It will provide a way for young people to progress as they come to terms with their situations and, thanks to the help of earlier projects, have recovered from the crises they previously faced. The scheme will create a way of linking groups and allowing information to be exchanged without imposing burdensome bureaucracy.

In the beginning The Next Step will offer help to between 30 and 40 young people. It will provide an environment, resources and structure within which those who have been disappointed by formal education and have become disconnected from the worlds of work and learning can develop into individuals who are employable and keen to play a full part in the community.

The project will be continuous and long-term. It will have a distinct advantage in beginning at a time, which does not coincide with the start of the academic or calendar year.

'The Next Step' will equip its clients with the skills they need to move into full-time employment or other forms of education and training. This process may take less than six months for some people. There will be no fixed periods for individual programmes to run.

We are promoting the University for Industry (UfI) West of England hub and the Learn Direct Service to help stimulate lifelong learning among businesses and individuals and to promote access to relevant, high-quality online learning. In this way people will be in a better position to get jobs, further their careers and improve the competitiveness of their businesses.

We have set up contracts with 26 outlets, ranging from further education colleges to mainstream providers and internet cafes across the area. These outlets will provide publicly-funded learning online at a cost of almost £2 million a year. We have selected them for their ability to:

> provide suitable internet connections and experienced staff;
> take on development activity which will meet our strict quality requirements and those of the Adult Learning Inspectorate; and
> promote e-learning as part of our strategy.

This service will have a major effect on basic skills training, widening the number of people who take part and developing the workforce. This is because it provides learning at a time, pace and place to suit individuals and employers. By working closely with industry to identify real need, we will be able to find opportunities to develop new and alternative methods for promoting learning and skills development in ways which are more appropriate to industry.

Work-based learning

> The Cassells Report stated that work-based learning in England is still very under developed, particularly in comparison with European countries.

The report recommended a minimum of 35% participation in work-based training. As we can see from the chart below, the West of England is far below that figure and we will need to work to bring involvement up to acceptable levels.

Percentages of 16 year olds taking work-based and other learning, 1998/9.
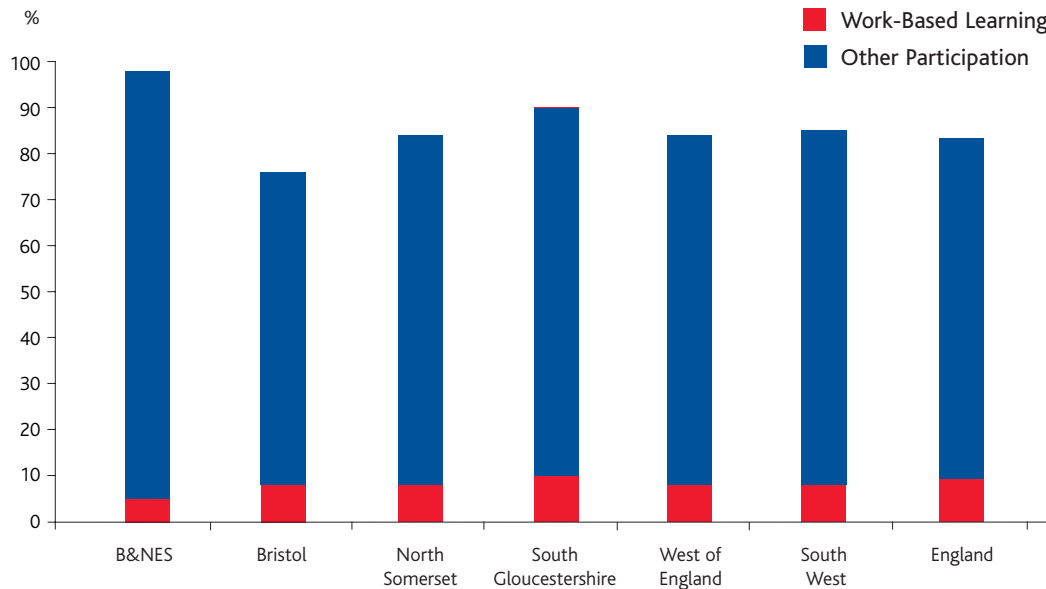
Source: DfES Statistical Bulletin 11/00

Other learning refers to those young people in school and Further education college.

> Not all growth in the work-based sector can be directed at current non-learners. We will need to co-operate with existing providers to achieve academic and vocational progress.

> **We will provide work-based learning opportunities through schools across the area.**

> **We will raise awareness of work-based learning opportunities through better marketing and publicity.**

Following 11 Training Standards Council inspections, local work-based learning services were found to be generally satisfactory. Providers were better than the national average on equal opportunities, trainee support, training management and quality assurance.

Work-based training services in the West of England have consistently higher achievement rates than both South West and National averages. The tables below show this.

Work-based training achievement and satisfaction rates 1998/99 to 200/01

Work-based training for young people year on year comparison								
	NVQs per 100 leavers			NVQ2s per 100 leavers			NVQ2+s per 100 leavers	
	00-01	99-00	98-9	00-01	99-00	98-9	00-01	99-00	98-9
South West	69	69	69	44	44	46	68	66	64
West of England	78	77	71	48	48	48	76	74	69
England	**63**	**65**	**66**	**42**	**41**	**42**	**60**	**59**	**59**

Source: English TEC / CCTE Performance Indicators

Work-based training for young people year on year comparison								
	NVQs at Level 3 for each 100 leavers			Cost for every point - £			% of Youth Training Trainees found training very or fairly useful	
	00-01	99-00	98-9	00-01	99-00	98-9	00-01	99-00	98-9
South West	24	22	19	1,674	1,745	1,707	87	80	82
West of England	28	25	21	1,502	1,492	1,592	83	86	83
England	**18**	**18**	**16**	**1,808**	**1,843**	**1,722**	**82**	**81**	**81**

Source: English TEC / CCTE Performance Indicators

Higher education

Less than 2% of all local further education college enrolments are on higher education courses. This accounted for 1,700 students last year, who were mostly aged 19 and over.

The local universities play an important role in providing part-time degree opportunities. This could be another way of widening participation in and access to higher education. It is important that higher education institutions work with colleges and employers to provider better access to the full range of higher education learning opportunities. In this way they can raise levels of ambition as well as levels of participation.

> **We will encourage formal co-operation between colleges and schools and the four higher education institutions. This will promote greater access to higher education and promote a greater accessibility to learning opportunities in Higher Education.**

> **We will work with all providers to achieve a 50% participation rate in higher education.**

Adult and community learning

Spending on each member of the adult population for adult and community learning is well below the national average. The hours spent on courses are less than a quarter of the national average. There are more details on this in the table below.

Performance indicator	Bath and North East Somerset	Bristol	North Somerset	South Gloucestershire	England average
£ spent on each member of the adult population	1.06	2.51	1.29	0.82	4.13
Number of learners	2,100	9,930	12,558	2,516	N/K
Enrolments as % of adult population	9.8	3.2	7.7	1.2	6.5
Total hours for every 1000 population	190	92	454	451	1338

Source: LEA performance indicators

Despite low funding and different delivery methods, there are many examples of good practice and commitment in the area and there is considerable potential for development.

We will include adult community learning services in the major area-wide mapping exercise that has now started. This will provide information to promote a widening choice of curriculum in an efficient way across the West of England. This will in particular benefit 20,000 people aged 16 and over who have very poor literacy and numeracy skills[18] The adult community learning service is well placed to link with people in their local communities and to meet basic skills needs in imaginative, flexible, learner-friendly ways.

'Courses must fit in with school hours and be local. This factor is very important. I would not have travelled to start learning.' Adult Learner

> **We will work in partnership with LEAs and schools to further develop schools and community lifelong learning opportunities.**

> **We will promote better funding facilities for adult community learning. We will plan and co- ordinate with the four local authority services so that they are actively involved in the new community learning service.**

Quality

> **All education and learning services will be of the highest possible quality.**

[18] Basic Skills Agency 2001 - copyright

In everything that we do we will strive to promote excellent quality and value for money. The whole point of this strategic plan is to raise the standard of learning in the West of England. It will succeed if inspirational and dedicated planning, funding, monitoring and development result in continuous quality improvement.

> **We will insist that all providers work to this aim. In particular they must maintain the highest standards of teacher training and continuing development and each provider must aim to be a specialist centre in at least one discipline.**

> **We will improve how we review provider performance assessments of further education strategic plans, audits and financial monitoring, assessments of applications, (such as local initiatives fund), Centres of Vocational Excellence and ongoing contracts. By doing this we should guarantee continuous improvement.**

We will make the most of the opportunities presented to us by area inspections to agree action plans which will help us to arrive at this improved achievement.

For 2002 to 2003 we have agreed allocation of £300,000 from the Local Initiative Fund and TEC legacy to promote campus aims (see appendix 2). This will help us to develop ideas, infrastructure and tutors for the campus. We will also consider new, creative uses of the standards fund and the further education growth element to help with this.

Impact measures
We will improve GCSE results for the sub-region by encouraging co-operation between education providers. This will allow providers to work together to meet the needs of learners effectively.

We will also increase the number of people in learning by targeting potential learners and providing new, interesting learning methods.

We will set up the West of England campus so that learning services are co-ordinated effectively and to a common high standard. The campus will also give learners access to clear local information about opportunities on offer.

Summary
> There is much good practice but there are still some poor specific results.
> We will achieve change by:
  - investing in the learner;
  - promoting co-operation and partnerships
  - finding new energy to target hard-to-reach learners; and
  - maintaining high quality at the heart of all services

The requirement is for gradual, natural development not radical change.
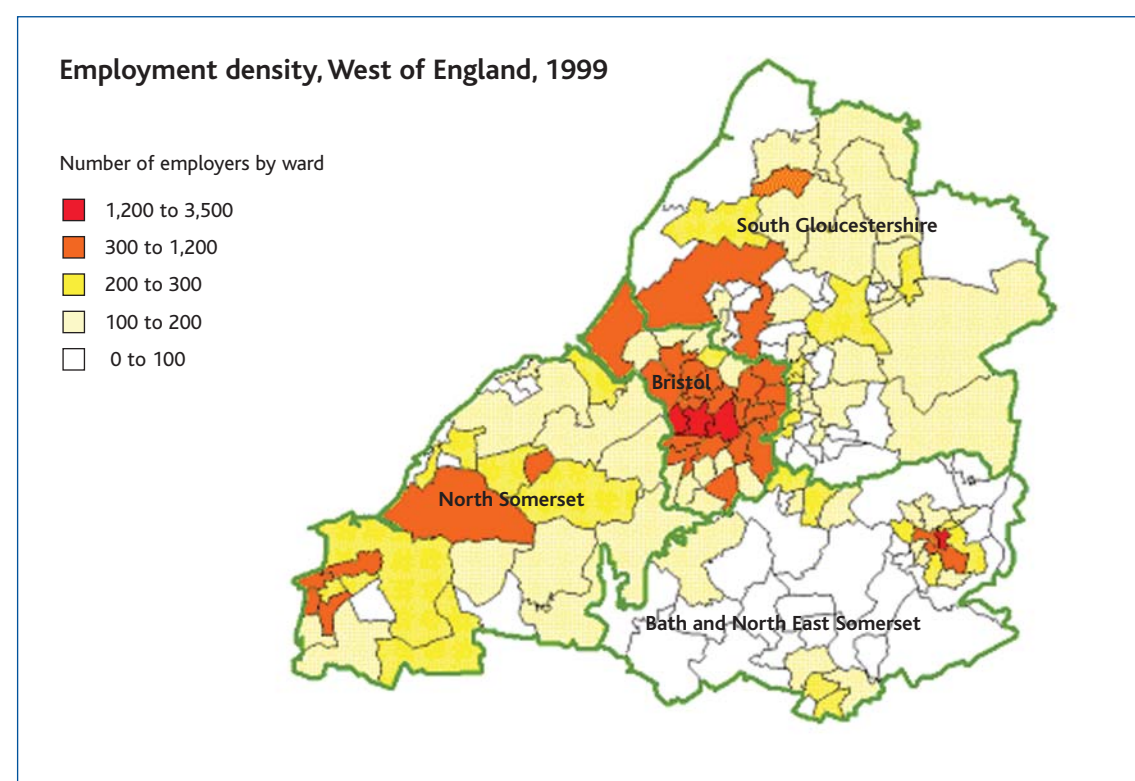
> 7. Business

Background information

> There are 40,000 employers in the area[19]. While only 1% of them employ more than 200 staff, these employees account for a third of the local workforce.

Size	Percentage of employers	Percentage of employment	Total number of people employed
'micro' 1 to 4	67	11	52,500
'small' 5 to 49	29	34	161,500
'medium' 50 to 199	3	22	105,200
'large' 200 plus	1	33	155,400

Source: Annual Business Inquiry 1999, NOMI ®, ONS © Crown Copyright

The map below shows the density of employers by ward in the West of England.

Employment density, West of England, 1999

Number of employers by ward

- 1,200 to 3,500
- 300 to 1,200
- 200 to 300
- 100 to 200
- 0 to 100

Source: Annual Business Inquiry, NOMI, ONS, the URPI Group Ltd

The following map shows travel to work patterns in the West of England

Travel to work patterns - West of England

Work-places of unitary authority residents, West of England.

- Bath and North East Somerset
- Bristol
- North Somerset
- South Gloucestershire
- Out of Area

The radius of the pie indicates how many people it counts.

75,000

150,000
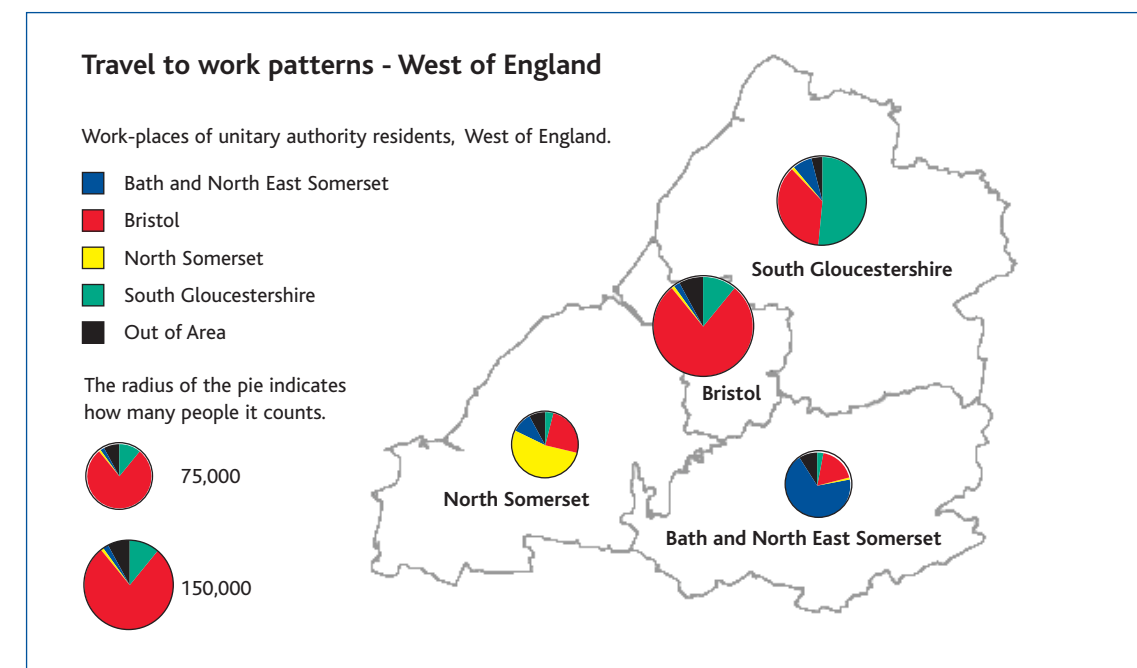
Source: WESTEC Household Survey 2000 & the URPI Group Ltd

> In the West of England there are approximately 500 organisations which have earned the Investors in People Standard. Of these organisations over 120 organisations employ 250 or more employees.

> In the West of England 1,400 medium and large employers, from just four sectors, account for almost 50% of local employment. (The rest of the people working in these sectors are employed in small businesses or are self-employed.)

Sector	Number of people employed by medium and Large companies	Number of staff
Public administration, education and health	84,900	18%
Banking, finance and insurance	56,600	13%
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	43,200	9%
Manufacturing	41,800	9%

Source: Annual Business Inquiry 1999, NOMI®, ONS © Crown Copyright

To promote local competitiveness and make the best use of our influence on investment in education and training, we will use a business-sector approach.

> Meeting the skills needs of this small number of larger businesses provides the opportunity to effectively target the requirements of many people within the workforce.

> Local colleges are essential in providing skills and training for these businesses.

[19] Annual Business Inquiry 1999, NOMI ®, ONS © Crown Copyright

However, it is difficult to connect any demand for learning from these companies (best expressed in terms of standard industrial classification codes) with college services, (expressed by programme and sub-programme areas) as the two sets of information do not directly correspond.

Students enrolled on council-funded provision in further education in 2000/01 by programme area (73087 total students)

Source: ISR data
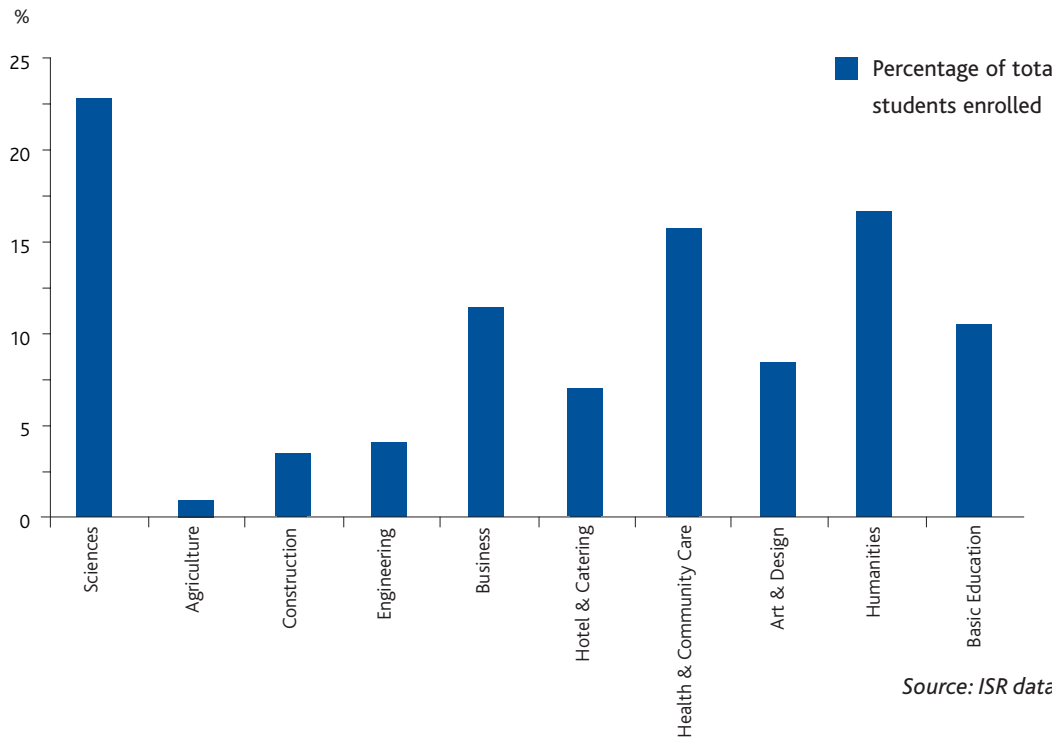
> We must not forget the role of training providers. In certain circumstances they have better links with employers than colleges do.

> Local industries that generate high levels of GDP include business services[20], manufacturing, transport, storage, communications, finance, retail and wholesale. These sectors contribute many jobs to the local economy.

> The occupational structure shows a lower than average percentage of unskilled jobs[21], but some sectors have relatively high numbers of unskilled jobs. These sectors include transport, hotels and restaurants, wholesale, the retail and motor trade, and health and social work. All of these together account for 60% of unskilled jobs locally.

> Employers have a growing demand for basic IT and customer service skills. Many also require intermediate and advanced IT skills and other specialised skills.

> People in higher-level jobs are more likely to receive training than those in lower-level jobs. Large employers are more likely to train their staff than small organisations. Only about one in four of local companies who employ less than 24 staff have a designated training budget. (See table on page 38).

[20] Taken from the Annual Business Inquiry 1999, Nomis®, ONS and Regional Accounts, Part 1, 1999, 071 © Crown Copyright
[21] Labour Force Survey, four quarters to February 2001, NOMIS, ONS © Crown Copyright

Size (number of employees)	1 to 4	5 to 24	25 to 199	200 plus	Total
Designated training budget (%)	23	27	51	95	29
Training officer (%)	16	30	48	75	30
Central strategic training plan (%)	18	27	46	73	28
System for evaluating training (%)	30	42	64	84	42
A staff review or appraisal system (%)	50	72	82	95	69

Source: WESTEC Employers' Survey 2001

Employability skills

Demand for skills is a combination of both cyclical and structural factors. At the moment we are at the peak of the economic cycle, so cyclical demand accounts for much of the requirement for skills in construction and production. Sectors including construction, retailing and hotels and restaurants are more likely to report cyclical demands as generators of skill needs.

Drivers of skill demand

Source: WESTEC Employers' Survey 2001
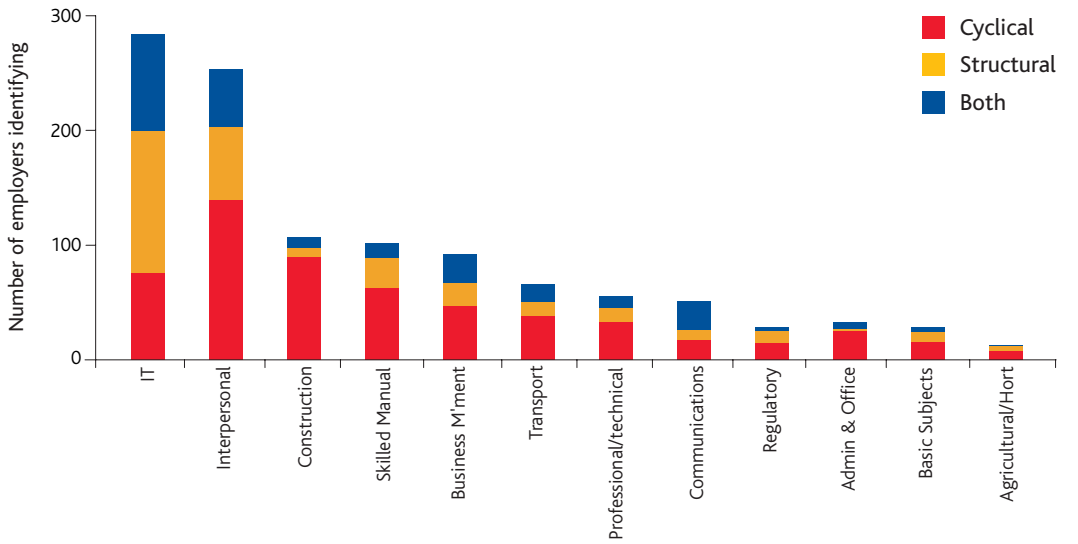
Sectors where levels of structural change and therefore structural skills demand are relatively high include:

> manufacturing;
> transport and communications;
> business and financial services; and
> public welfare services.

Over recent years, the number of West of England employers reporting skills gaps has varied by around 30%[22]. The business and financial and 'welfare' sectors are most likely to be experiencing skills gaps, particularly in human resource and financial management.

[22] Recent figures compared with those of two years ago suggest that skills gaps may have decreased. This is turn suggests that labour market pressures may be reducing a little.

Existing gaps are clustered in skill areas which are generally in growing demand, for example:

> IT skills;
> interpersonal skills (caring, customer services, and so on);
> management skills; and
> production skills.

Skill gaps

Top 10 skill gaps as listed by local employers
Keyboard, basic office, internet
Customer service
Programming, system and web design
Child and old age pensioner care
General management [not human resources, financial, marketing, sales, production]
Computer numeric control and computer aided design
Mechanical
Human resources management
Health and safety
Financial management

Source: WESTEC Employers' Survey 2001

We understand the general picture of skills demand, but knowledge of skills demand is not enough at the local sectoral level to decide on detailed policy for supplying learning services.

By encouraging greater numbers of employers to train their own workforces we will make sure that structural skill gaps are reduced over time.

We must also help employers to reduce short-term cyclical skill gaps. We can reduce these skill shortages by:

> taking suitable action to influence the information and advice available to those seeking employment;
> arranging for learning suppliers to provide relevant courses; and
> encouraging employers to train and improve the skills of their own staff.

Workforce development policy must help growing numbers of employers to anticipate skill needs to let them provide themselves with the right training and development for their staff to achieve this. We will work with employers, learning suppliers and information and adult guidance services.

Increasing employability skills through student apprenticeships

The West of England has had outstanding success in piloting the student apprenticeship scheme. This scheme provides students in schools with an opportunity to develop employment skills relevant to the sectors they are interested in. Students can find out first hand about a sector and investigate roles within it. This increases their employability while developing work skills and knowledge.

The student apprenticeship scheme is having a positive effect on the drop-out rate from modern apprenticeships and higher education because learners are becoming more confident in other career choices. This scheme also has an important role in the 14- to 19 year-old age group offering vocational learning opportunities to young people in schools and colleges. We will measure the effects of the scheme on the number of pupils staying on at school and will report the results in April 2002.

This flexible programme acknowledges that students may adjust their ambitions as their understanding and experience increase. If they have built a portfolio of proven skills and key skills or NVQ units during placements, they can transfer these to other occupational areas or further and higher education.

We are working in partnership with the Connexions service and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network to develop key, accredited employability skills for all 16-year-olds in formal education.

We will reconsider how we use our education and business links to grow the successful student apprenticeship programme.

Skill shortages

We predict growth in managerial and administrative jobs, professional occupations and more junior professional and technical jobs. There is a specific need for construction and building trade skills as the numbers required are expected to increase seven-fold in the West of England over the next eight years in comparison to the last eight years. However, a decline is forecast in craft and skilled manufacturing jobs, plant and machine operatives, clerical and secretarial jobs and all unskilled occupations.

Recruitment difficulties result as much from employment conditions as skills shortages. However, if we encourage more employers to offer workforce training we will reduce these gaps over time.

We will give great emphasis to motivating more people to want to learn and to guide them to raise their skill levels to improve their chances of being employed and the ability to contribute to the development of the West of England.

We will provide funds to the Small Business Service so it can promote the learning and skills needed by local business.

The table below shows the full-time employees' occupational structure in1998 and estimates to 2009.

South West occupational structure: 1998 and estimates to 2009

Full-time employees	Total full-time 1998 ('000)	Change 1991-8 (%)	1998-09 % change
Corporate managers	164	24	31
Managers or owners in agriculture and services	39	-1	13
Science and technology professionals	61	23	38
Health professionals	8	42	65
Teaching and research professionals	58	2	-12
Business and public service professionals	32	28	59
Science and technology associate professionals	27	2	0
Health and social welfare associate professionals	46	17	24
Protective service occupations	13	2	21
Culture, media and sports occupations	15	26	47
Business and public service associate professionals	74	20	44
Administrative occupations	144	8	2
Secretarial and related occupations	51	-13	-6
Skilled agricultural trades	12	9	10
Skilled metal and electrical trades	105	3	2
Skilled construction and building trades	42	4	29
Textiles, printing and other skilled trades	39	6	14
Caring personal service occupations	31	34	55
Leisure and other personal service occupations	21	16	17
Sales occupations	40	-11	0
Customer service occupations	5	-7	7
Process, plant and machine operatives	96	-2	12
Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives	48	0	2
Elementary occupations - trades, plant and storage	59	12	6
Elementary occupations - clerical and services	87	2	12

Source: Data downloaded from www.skillsbase.dfee.gov.uk

We will use the information in the table above to help decide future learning services.

Developing a dynamic business network

We have set up a best brands network and will develop this further to make sure that it links with local communities. Leaders and managers of best brand companies accept that the education and training of the workforce is a key factor in improving profitability and making sure their companies survive. The network also provides an opportunity to share views and ideas and discuss successes and failures.

Sectors

If we concentrate development activity on the 1,400 large and medium employers in the West of England, this will bring us into contact with approximately 50% of the local workforce. West of England local clusters, such as aerospace, media and film also offer opportunities for us to help employers develop specialised high-technology skills and to further improve the mix in the area.

The West of England sector policy has already formed successful groups within travel and tourism, engineering, media, films and construction.

We will promote education business partnerships that will work effectively with employer organisations, including the Sector Skills Councils (SSC) to develop long-term plans that provide local learning opportunities that meet each sector's specific needs.

We will collaborate with other groups of employers where special emphasis can be highly productive. The existing examples of good collaboration within established sector groups will be the basis for a target to eventually achieve complete coverage with all employers.

We can make important progress by working closely with:

> local authorities;
> the health sector;
> the TUC and unions;
> the Education Business Consortium;
> higher education (as employers);
> Investors in People (West Investors Network);
> the 'best brands' initiative; and
> good human-resources practices in sectors.

By further developing this proven sector approach, where unskilled people are a large proportion of the workforce and where employer networks are immature or non-existent, the opportunity for improving the local economy and skills levels will be greatly enhanced through wider employer involvement and influence.

Workforce representation

Some form of trade union agreement covers about 60% of employees in the West of England[23]. This represents a unique opportunity to reach a large part of the workforce to support the workforce development strategy.

The 'bargaining for skills' project was piloted in the West of England from 1998 in partnership with the South West TUC. The project is now part of a national Government initiative. It is targeted at a single group identified in the community and aims to encourage individuals to recognise the benefits of continued training and development, particularly in addressing basic skills and development needs. Other aims include:

> working with the education business group to provide a broader range of suitable initiatives that encourage effective education business links;
> working with organisations that have access to people in the workplace to promote training and provide it to recognised standards;
> helping to form partnerships between employees and employers to meet the requirements of both; and
> encouraging employers to work towards recognised standards of training and development.

We will extend the bargaining for skills activity into deprived communities.

Spreading these themes into the wider community will promote educational and training links between organisations and the community within local settings, including rural areas. It will raise the profile of local involvement and the effects of business in communities. It will also help to increase the GDP for the West of England.

We will concentrate development between employers and communities by focusing activity on the 1,400 large and medium size employers and the developing sector to access the wide range of skills within local communities and create long-term local links.

> If the area is to achieve long-term and sustainable growth, supply and demand networks will need to prepare properly to avoid future skill shortages.

We will plan for sustainable growth by promoting closer links between employers and providers.

For 2002 to 2003 we have agreed allocation of £1,450,000 from the local initiative fund and the TEC legacy to promote business aims (see appendix 2). This will increase sector development and promote schemes covering Education Business Links (EBL), student apprenticeships, employable skills, IAG, community learners, skills bargaining and 'Education Unlimited'.

[23] SW TUC

Impact measure

We will encourage employers to invest in training their workforce. We will do this in partnership with the TUC and representatives of employment sectors. These measures will reduce the skills gaps identified by employers.

Summary

> A successful and growing economy will be the sound base to achieve social inclusion.
> The industrial structure of the West of England presents an opportunity to involve a large section of the local workforce by concentrating development activity on large and medium employers.
> We will extend this sector initiative by focusing on good examples of co-operation within established sector groups.
> By encouraging more employers to take part in workforce training we will reduce skills gaps.

> 8. The Community

Community learning

The West of England has many examples of excellent community learning. However, this provision across the area is wide ranging and unco-ordinated. It is haphazardly funded and not always targeted at the real needs of learners.

The Learning and Skills Council will develop and support a new "Community Learning Service" that will encourage Local Learning Partnerships, and work with adult and community education, information and adult guidance partners, Local Strategic Partnerships and the voluntary sector. It will encourage greater efficiency in dealing with learner needs in the community.

We will launch a "first steps" scheme to bring learning into families through existing community activities such as "The Settlement" at Barton Hill.

We will help teachers to lead learners who have limited horizons into new opportunities for improving their numeracy and literacy skills.

Despite the barriers to learning, there are many people who do take part. Family learning (working with parents and children at the same time) has been a successful way of involving adults while developing family links that have strong social implications. For example, women returning to learning and work in South Bristol have found that their families and children support them and are proud that 'their mum' is proving that she is able to learn and, in some cases, go to college.

In Fairfurlong School in Hartcliffe last year, a group of grandparents were involved in family learning. When the programme finished, they had enjoyed the experience and gained so much from it that they are now training to become classroom assistants to continue to work with young children and support learning in their community. They are using their experience of lifelong learning to encourage the newest generation to get the most from learning that they can.

Backwell School in North Somerset has 20 parents of year-7 pupils attending parenting skills sessions. Some parents have been chosen as being in need of support, although the programme is open to all parents. Five parents are working to gain Open College Network (OCN) accreditation. They can then act as trainers. This scheme will reduce exclusion and raise confidence and self-esteem in the people taking part.

Despite these successes, the number of adults taking part in learning is still low. Local research has identified five barriers to adult learning, which are also reflected in national research. They are:

> motivation;
> cost;
> a lack of clear, concise information;
> life circumstances (for example, disabilities, dependants, care responsibilities and so on);
> culture (especially within social groups); and
> institutional issues.

Studies[24] have shown that lack of interest in education and training is a major barrier to people taking part. 43% of people said that they would prefer to do other things and 26% claimed no interest at all.[25] Certain groups also face special barriers to learning. These groups include:

> part-time workers (mostly women);
> self-employed people;
> certain people from ethnic minority groups;
> people with disabilities; and
> the unemployed.

Percentage of groups involved in learning last year.

*Estimated Figures
Source: WESTEC Household Survey 2001
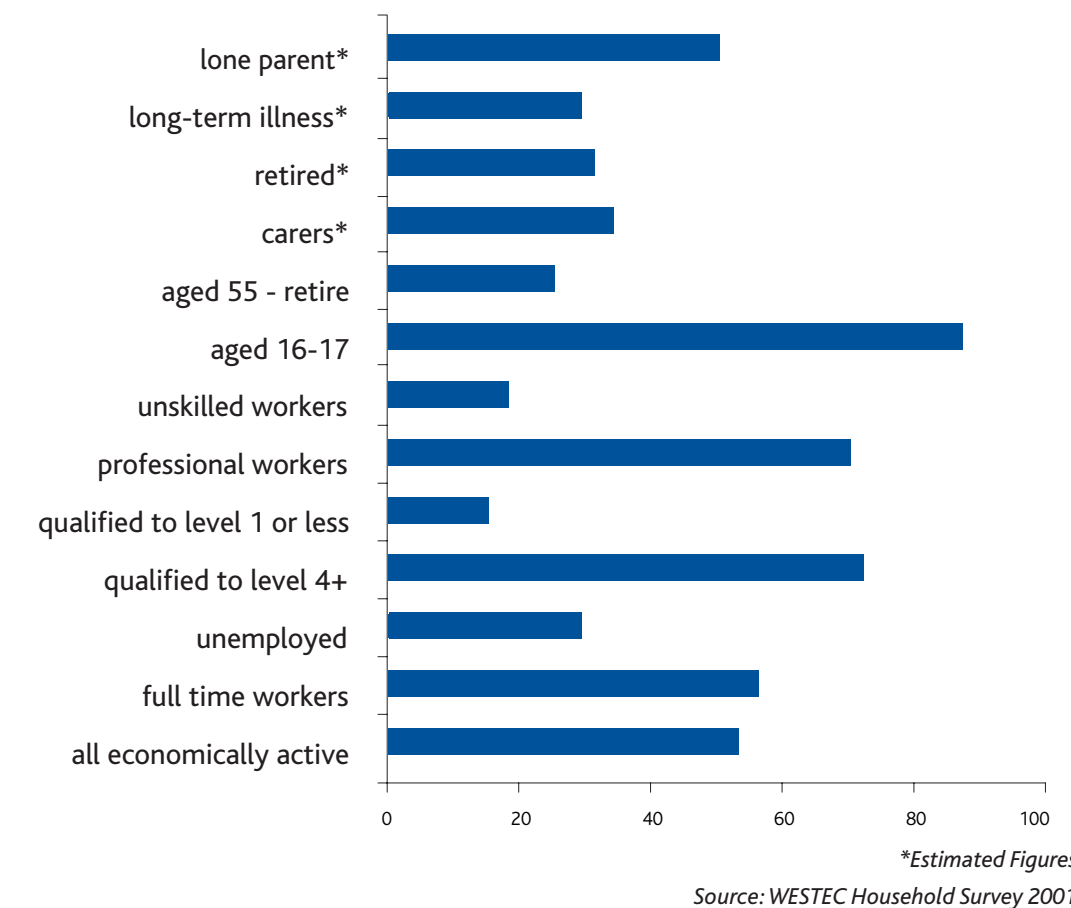
[24] 'Breaking the Cycle' LLPs April 2000
[25] National Adult Learning Survey 1997

We can build on family learning by using those who have taken part in the past as spokesmen to others in the community, and by tackling issues of learning at an early stage. For example, with the grandparents who are becoming classroom assistants, there is already a foundation in place. We will continue to support this kind of activity and, with the broader 'community learning service', will be better able to listen to learner needs and to meet them. This will also include exploring the idea of setting up a mentoring scheme linked to young people 'in trouble' whose involvement in, for example, crime, drugs or substance abuse has distanced them from learning opportunities. This kind of mentoring scheme will aim to encourage young people into learning.

Affordable childcare is vital in allowing parents (particularly single parents) to access learning. We will continue to work with the early years and childcare partnerships to tackle this issue.

By researching how communities are made up, and their education and training needs, we can work with our partners to develop a blueprint for future community-based learning. Our consultations with the Adult Community Learning Service and learners have shown that this service is well placed to link with communities and to use new methods to overcome barriers and meet basic skills needs in imaginative and flexible ways. Learners spoke positively on how the service provided positive models for learning.

> **We will work with local community organisations and the adult community learning service to overcome barriers to taking part in learning and exploit current good practice. We will work with the TUC to develop a network of community learning activities similar in nature to workplace learning.**

A co-ordinated approach

A wide range of local community-based and voluntary organisations offer education, training and learning skills to different groups of learners. These organisations include:
> Hartcliffe and Withywood Ventures;
> the Centre for Employment and Enterprise Development (CEED);
> the Silai Project;
> the Park in South Bristol;
> Bristol East Side Traders;
> Knowle West Development Fund;
> South Bristol Construction Company;
> Bowermeade Centre (Lawrence Weston);
> FOYER - Bath;
> FOYER - Bristol;
> FOYER - Weston-super-Mare;
> Wheels - working with young offenders involved with car crime;
> IRIS - involving residents in solutions;
> WECIL - West of England Coalition for Integrated Living;
> WECDOP - West of England Coalition of Disabled People; and
> ABC - Association of Bristol Learning Centres.

Local community organisations have, for too long, tried to meet local needs without the backing of co-ordinated and long-term funding. This haphazard investment has

often resulted in duplication of effort and poor value for money. An informed local service, backed by planned and directed resources, will provide the stimulation and opportunity to learn.

Because community organisations often work outside recognised forms of learning, and measure softer issues, such as improvement in self-esteem and confidence, the ability to access funding is limited.

> **We will provide direct financial resource to local community organisations to stimulate non-traditional forms of learning.**

> Most women are in employment (75%) but over 50% of these[26] work part time.

> Approximately 3.2% of local people are unemployed, which is lower than the national rate of 4.2%. Several local authority wards have much higher rates, for example, Lawrence Hill and Ashley both have estimated rates five times higher than the West of England rate[27].

> Transport can be a particular barrier for certain people. Most people who work are only willing to travel for up to one hour to a training course.

> Within the South West region, 41% of the non-white population are concentrated in the West of England sub-region[28].

> Bristol accounts for nearly one in three non-white residents in the South West[29], most of whom live in just three wards: Ashley, Lawrence Hill and Easton. Most of the non-white population in the West of England has Afro-Caribbean origins.

Concentrations of People from Ethic Minorities - West of England

Total ethnic minority population
1991 ward boundaries

- 2,300 to 3,500
- 300 to 2,300
- 100 to 300
- 0 to 100
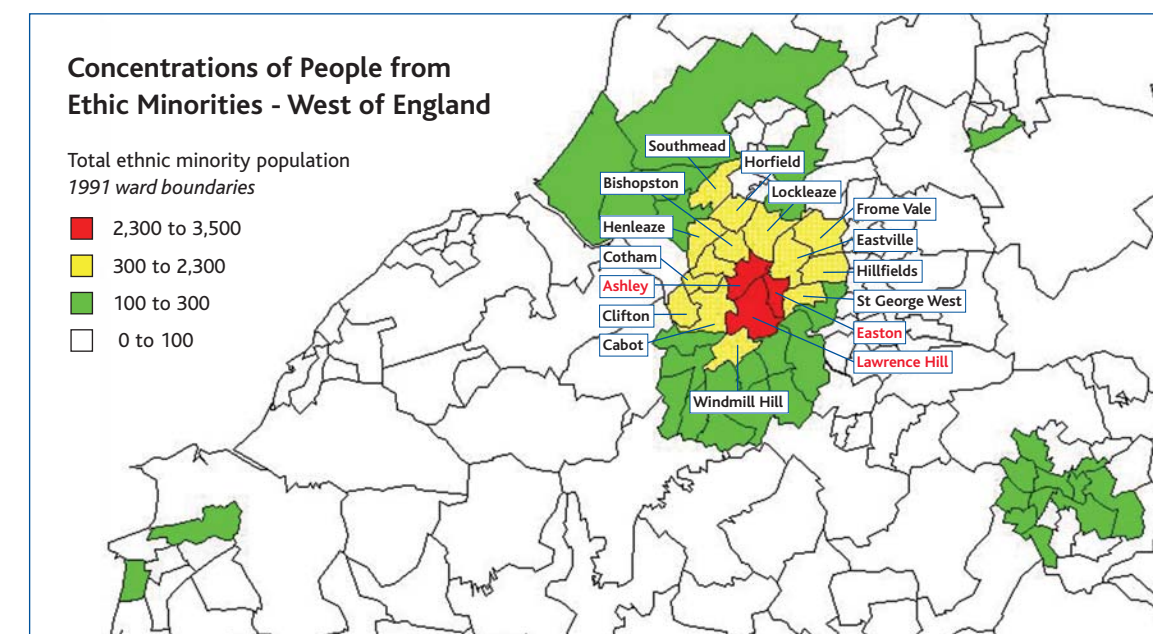
Source: The U.R.P.I. Group & 1991 Census, Crown Copyright.

26 Local Area Labour Force Survey 2000 Nomis®, ONS © Crown Copyright
   Annual Business Inquiry 2000, NOMI®, ONS © Crown Copyright
27 Local Area Labour Force Survey 2000 Nomis®, ONS © Crown Copyright and LSC estimates
28 1991 Census, NOMIS, ONS © Crown Copyright
29 1991 Census, NOMIS, ONS © Crown Copyright

> Local research into the number of people involved in learning shows that ethnic minorities make up a relatively large percentage of the total number of people in further education. However, there are some signs that people from ethnic minority groups in inner-city Bristol (where ethnic minority populations are highest) may be poorly represented in learning. Information on students' ethnic origins is scarce.

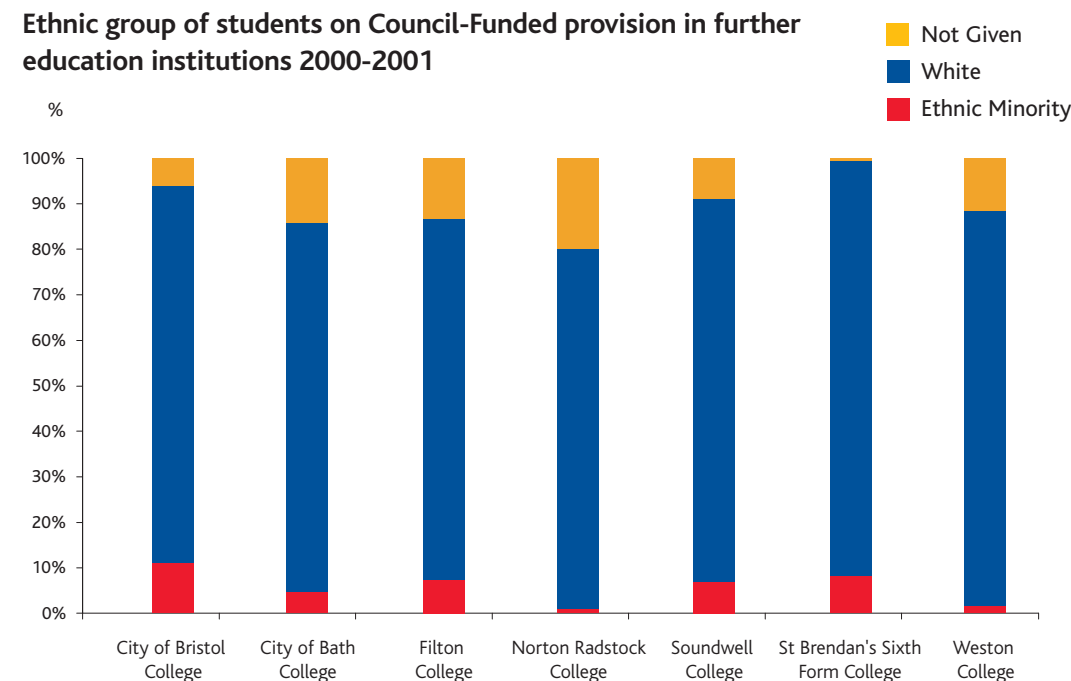The chart below shows the percentage enrolments of ethnic minorities, white people and those whose ethnic origins are unknown for each further education college.

Ethnic group of students on Council-Funded provision in further education institutions 2000-2001

Legend:
- Not Given (yellow)
- White (blue)
- Ethnic Minority (red)

Ethnic minorities include Bangladeshi; Black - other; Black - African; Black - Caribbean; Chinese; Indian; and other - Asian.

This chart shows a breakdown by ethnic group of 'ethnic minority' categories for further education colleges.

Numbers in ethic-minority groups enrolled at West of England further education institutions 1999/2000

Legend:
- Full Time (blue)
- Part Time (yellow)
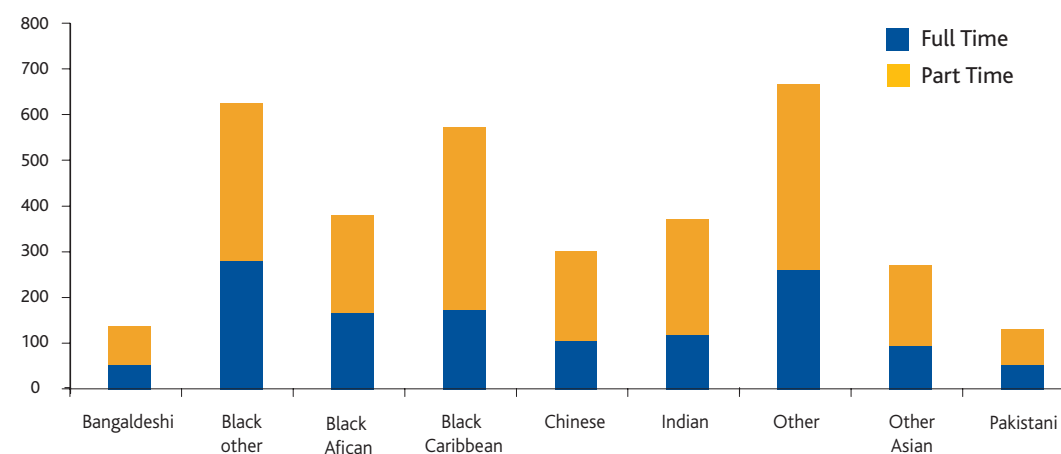
Source: ISR data

> Deprivation is strongly concentrated in certain parts of the area. The West of England contains five of the South West's most deprived 15 wards. It also has the South West's top five wards with 'learning and skills' deprivation, four of which are in south Bristol.

Top 15% deprived wards in West of England, 2000.

Top 15% of wards by overall index
- Top 15% - High (red)
- Top 15% - Low (cyan)
- Others (white)
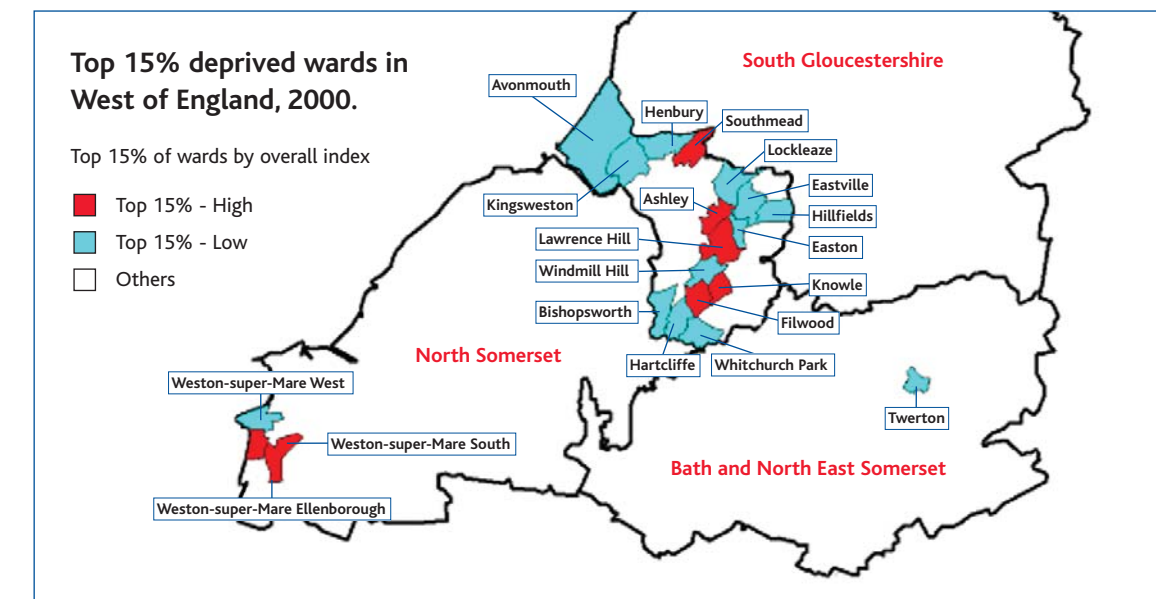
Source: Indices of Deprivation

There are geographical areas where community-based learning is lacking. These are mostly large, mostly white, low-income estates, mainly on the fringes of Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare.

> Basic skill levels are in line with national averages. Low basic skills levels are highest in areas of most economic disadvantage.

> People with low levels of literacy and numeracy experience increased barriers to taking part in learning. Their confidence to seek out learning opportunities is lower and informational and institutional barriers to education and training are likely to be greater.

We will provide a learning environment that is free from discrimination and prejudice and which encourages and helps all learners to reach their full potential and will fund and engage local groups in further research.

Regeneration funding

A lot of activity resulting from regeneration funding is happening across the area. To prevent activities being duplicated and make sure progress is made, we will co-ordinate this work.

There are several regeneration programmes covering the most disadvantaged wards in the West of England. Our Community Development Team sit on steering groups, working groups and learning theme groups, to help develop projects that fit in with our priorities.

This means we are able to:

> influence spending on learning and skills-related projects;
> communicate our priorities;
> make links between projects that are funded by the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) or European Social Fund (ESF) and those projects that we fund through LIF and co-financing; and
> use these groups to feed information back to us on particular learner needs.

Examples of programmes are set out below.

Objective 2 - Bristol
The targeted area covers Ashley, Easton, Lawrence Hill, Windmill Hill and Filwood.
One of the main themes is removing barriers to employment and training from disadvantaged groups.

SRB6 - Bristol: 'Bringing Bristol Together'
The targeted area falls within the top 5% of disadvantaged wards in the South West *(Lawrence Hill, Ashley, Cabot, Easton, Windmill Hill, Filwood, Knowle, Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe, Whitchurch Park, Henbury, Lockleaze, Kingsweston and Southmead).*
The targeted area covers Hartcliffe and Withywood.
One of the main themes of the programme is to improve the education, skills and employment prospects of local people. Targets are around Level 2. The programme aims to increase:

> the number of people entering further education, training and employment;
> adult literacy skills; and
> the number of adults taking part in education.

SRB5 - Hartcliffe and Withywood - 'Working Together for Change'
The targeted area covers Hartcliffe and Withywood.
One of the main themes of the programme is to improve the education, skills and employment prospects of local people. Targets are around Level 2. The programme aims to increase:

> the number of people entering further education, training and employment;
> adult literacy skills; and
> the number of adults taking part in education.

New deal for communities
Targeted area: Barton Hill, Redfield, Lawrence Hill and The Dings.
Raising educational achievement is one of the main themes.

Neighbourhood renewal - Bristol
The programme aims to influence the way mainstream services are provided as they are often unsuitable and poorly targeted at local communities. The main themes are to achieve lower unemployment and crime, and better health, skills, housing and physical environment. *We have identified 10 priority neighbourhoods. These are Ashley, Southmead, Knowle West, Barton Hill, Easton, Hartcliffe and Withywood, Lawrence Hill, Lawrence Weston, Lockleaze and Hillfields.*

SRB in North Somerset
We have continued to support regeneration activities in North Somerset including an SRB3 funded scheme tackling deprivation and decline on four housing estates in Weston-super-Mare and an SRB6 scheme aiming to revitalise the commercial heart of the town. The third scheme, Working with the Next Generation, focuses on the North Somerset village of Pill. The three year SRB5 programme aims to build the capacity of an isolated community to tackle issues of social exclusion and improve the employment prospects, learning and skills of local people.

Regenerating Norton Radstock
The Norton Radstock Regeneration Partnership was also awarded funding from SRB3 for a scheme to regenerate the former mining communities of Midsomer Norton and Radstock. The partnership began a major community planning exercise which resulted in the detailed design of a project to completely re-model Radstock town centre. The area is also one of nine communities in the South West region piloting the 'Market and Coastal Towns Initiative'. Together with other new initiatives such as 'Building Communities' and 'Civic Pride', the Market and Coastal Towns initiatives aim to build on the work achieved through the single regeneration budget and to complement other sources of funding for regeneration and renewal.

Local neighbourhood renewal action plans
We are developing local neighbourhood action plans in each of the areas above and are identifying local priorities for those areas. We will be feeding into this work to make sure that our priorities are fed through and vice versa.

Regeneration Areas in West of England - estimated best fit to 1991 wards
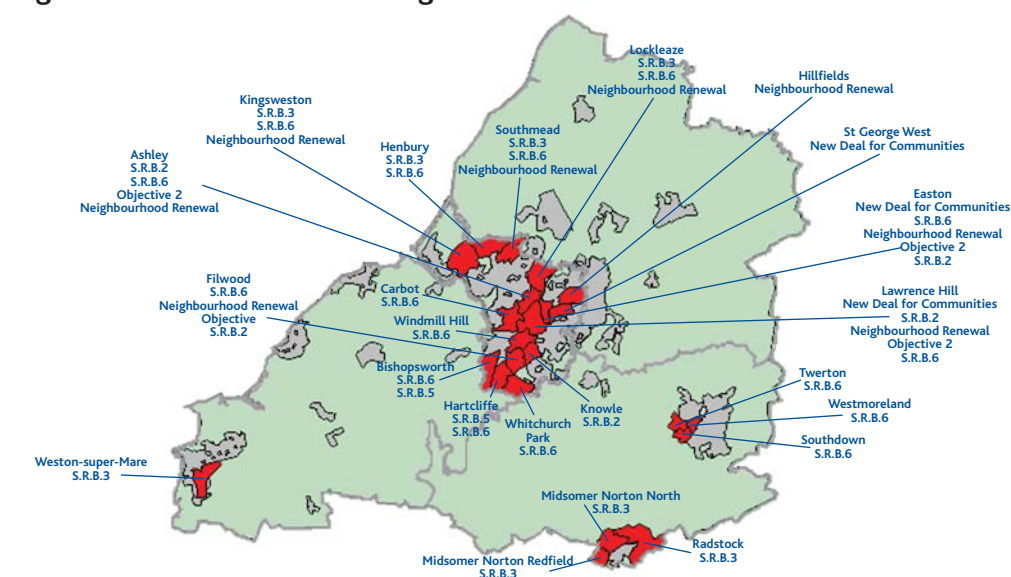
Source: LSC West of England Human Capacity Development Team

By finding imaginative approaches to using mainstream funding and identifying other sources of funding, we will be able to support new, non-traditional schemes as well as developing traditional providers.

The role of higher education in communities

Progress to the highest levels of achievement must be available to all, whatever their individual starting point.

We will work with local universities to overcome the factors that prevent some local people from taking part in higher education and fully achieving their potential. In particular we will focus on people whose ambition and opportunities are restricted by:

> 'low achiever' labels attached at a relatively early age based on historical, geographical, cultural and social expectations;
> not having a family background of higher education; or
> having a learning style or aptitude that is more suited to vocational training and therefore penalised by the bias of some higher education institutions against vocational, as opposed to academic, qualifications.

We will work with local higher education establishments to develop and deliver the widening 'access and participation agenda' of the Higher Education Funding Council.

We will improve progression opportunities to local higher education institutions for those people from non-traditional backgrounds and those following vocational learning.

For 2002 to 2003 we have agreed allocation of £900,000 from the local initiative fund and the TEC legacy to promote community learning aims (see appendix 2). This will improve community-based learner schemes that have had a formal bidding procedure as well as the new strategies described above.

Impact measures

In some communities there are few people taking part in learning, and low levels of achievement for those who do. We will target these communities specifically. Within the targeted communities we will help existing structures and identify and promote learning champions. These actions will increase learning numbers and achievement levels.

We will build on our highly-successful Level 2 work, which has helped more than 1,000 people previously not in learning (many of whom had problems with basic skills) to achieve a Level 2 qualification.

Summary

> A new community learning service will provide greater consistency and efficiency in dealing with learner needs in the community.

> Family learning will act as a powerful route to increasing the number and types of people taking part in learning.

> We will work with local universities to overcome factors that have previously prevented people from taking part in learning and making progress to the highest levels of achievement.

> 9. Learner

At the heart of each of the previous chapters is the need to put learners at the centre of all activity and services. Each chapter sets out how we will take action to meet the needs of learners.

In view of this, this chapter, on learners, deals with issues that we have not already tackled.

The challenging mix of urban and rural communities in the West of England means that the people who live here have a very wide range of needs and ambitions. To achieve higher levels of success we will need to meet individual requirements for learning services. Our consultations with learners, partners and stakeholders have highlighted the issues of choice, access and quality.

'You should not be disadvantaged by where you live.' SWRDA

Our strategy to increase learning numbers takes account of practical barriers such as poor transport facilities, lack of childcare support and financial restrictions. It also recognises the negative effects of:
> a lack of motivation;
> the low value attached to learning;
> poor basic skills;
> bad health; and
> unemployment.

Many potential learners experience a mixture of these factors but could be helped to overcome them if we develop a mentoring service using learners who have a successful and positive experience of learning.

We will pay particular attention to the needs of:
> part-time workers;
> self-employed people;
> people from ethnic minority groups;
> people with disabilities;
> unemployed people;
> people living in disadvantaged areas;
> those who are not taking part in full- or part-time education or training between the ages of 16 and19;
> those outside education before the age of 16 through truancy or exclusion;
> those in public care or leaving care;
> those who have committed an offence or who are in immediate danger of doing so;
> those under 18 who are most at risk of early pregnancy;
> teenagers with a drug-related problem;
> those who will not achieve an NVQ Level 2 or an equivalent qualification (5 GCSEs grades A-C); and
> young people with learning difficulties or disabilities (Connexions has specific legal responsibilities for this group)

The Learning and Skills Council will promote a combined approach to learning provision and decision-making will be learner driven. The needs of learners will be reflected in our future planning and funding decisions.

As a matter of urgency we will identify existing provision and performance so we can fill the gaps. This information will be available by June 2002.

We will widen the choice, positioning and nature of education and training facilities to satisfy the aspirations and demands for learning based upon the needs of individuals and employers.

This plan will make sure that all individuals will be able to access appropriate learning through high quality and impartial information, advice and guidance services.

There will be an increase in new provision from new non-traditional methods following pilots that are already in place.

We will provide extra support through existing mainstream funding to remove barriers.

Learners with learning difficulties or disabilities

We will work with the Connexions service to find and make available education services which are suitable for young people with special learning needs. If these services are not available locally, we will do this by funding and using a network of national specialist colleges.

We will work with local partnership boards, schools and other relevant organisations (including social service departments and health trusts) to plan learning services for people with learning difficulties.

This will include working with these organisations to set up excellent arrangements for people with learning difficulties to move smoothly from one provider to another.

We will also plan, fund and monitor services to make sure that people with learning difficulties have as much access as possible to learning opportunities. This will involve challenging providers where there are not enough services and planning to fill identified gaps.

We will use provider performance reviews and self-assessment systems to make sure we and they are meeting the needs of people with learning difficulties to the highest possible standards.

Equal opportunities

Learners must not be excluded from learning opportunities because of poverty, race, disability, sex or age. Each provider must offer equal access to services. Appendix 3 tables 6 to 9 show the numbers taking part in further education by disability, ethnic origin, sex and age. This data is based on the individual student record (ISR) which colleges keep, but it is not complete. We will work to make sure that everyone has equal opportunities.

There is a long history of social, economic and cultural inequality across the West of England. Rich settlements exist alongside very disadvantaged communities, and this inevitably leads to tension. In some communities there is a generally low level of educational ambition, which reduces the number of young people staying on in learning after 16. This divide wastes ability and repeats through generations.

Throughout our policies and programmes we are committed to promoting equal opportunities and diversity. This applies not only to areas currently covered by legislation (sex, race and disability) but to any group across the whole equal opportunities spectrum, including, for example, age, religion and sexuality. All our partners and contractors must share this commitment, which must be built into our contracts with them.

Good work has already been done locally to promote equality and to challenge stereotyping. But we must accomplish more to meet the requirements of the new post-16 agenda set out in our corporate plan, and the learning and skills legislation.

New learning software being developed by our West of England cluster of multi-media companies will help with this agenda. Computers do not discriminate.

> **We will work with all our partners, training providers, educational establishments and community groups to raise the profile and increase the effectiveness of equal opportunities work. In this way we will provide access for those who are currently disadvantaged and excluded from the benefits and opportunities of learning and skills development.**

> **We will work with our partners to draw up an action plan which will raise expectations to make learning accessible, desirable and relevant to all. Where traditional forms of learning are not succeeding, we will work with providers and communities to promote new ways of achieving equality of opportunity by keeping young people involved in a meaningful and successful learning experience.**

Choice

Historic funding systems have produced competitive approaches to league tables and targets that have been less than productive in positioning people in their ideal place of learning. An element of competition is healthy, but it must not be at the expense of learners.

The Connexions service has a huge task in helping schools to encourage their students to really consider the full range of options available after 16. The role of the personal adviser is most important.

> **We will work with the Connexions service to provide individual access to high quality, impartial information and advice which will help people to make suitable choices for their skill and qualification needs.**

> **We will try to develop co-operation across all education and training sectors (schools, colleges and work-based providers) so that high-quality choices and a wide range of services are available to all learners across the West of England.**

Young people and adults have other requirements for their learning apart from gaining grades and certificates. These requirements commonly include:

> employment goals;
> progress to further learning;
> earnings goals; and
> skill targets (including transferable employment skills).

For many learners these factors are just as important as certificates. So it is important for us to consistently measure how well learning providers deliver what matters to their customers.

Information on the number of learners who stay on to further their education is available from colleges (see appendix 3 table 1). This information is one indication of customer satisfaction. However, different colleges and providers have different approaches to measuring this, so it is hard to make meaningful comparisons. Also, schools do not usually collect customer satisfaction information.

'Only some choice is available for learners. I am not doing what I really wanted to do'. Learner

> **We will introduce a West of England system to regularly and consistently measure learners' satisfaction with learning services.**

Large areas of the West of England (North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset - Chew Valley) have poor access to further education. And there is a lack of work-based training organisation in South Gloucestershire and Bath.

In a recent survey 26.5%[30] of working people in the West of England who had trained or studied in 2000 used some form of ICT.

> **We will increase the use of Information Learning Technology across the West of England. Success in improving individual choice and access to learning will attract more people to the learning process.**

Access

By increasing the areas over which services are provided and using information and learning technology, we can reduce lengthy travel-to-learn journeys. However, we need a new approach to access to overcome:

> local geography (two cities close together both divided by a river);
> bus routes which only radiate out from city centres;
> the transport infrastructure which is nearly grid-locked twice a day; and
> rural communities which are poorly served by public transport.

> **We will work with business and education and training providers to provide programmes which meet these skill needs.**

> **We will continue to promote the use of communication and information technology as a way of improving access to learning.**

For 2002 to 2003 we have agreed allocation of £100,000 from the Local Initiative Fund and TEC Legacy to promote learners' aims (see appendix 2). We will use this to reduce barriers to access and to promote ICT knowledge to increase employability skills.

Impact measures

Changing the existing systems and gathering more detailed information will make learning services more relevant and personally interesting to many more learners.

Summary

A learner focus will change the way traditional thinking works. We can only achieve step change when education and training are felt to be relevant to the individual.

> # 10. General Issues

Consultation

We have consulted widely on developing this strategic plan with our partners and stakeholders. This has included consulting the South West Regional Development Agency, local authorities, local employers and a full range of providers and learners (see appendix 4).

Long-term regional growth and basic skills

We accept the growth forecasts identified in the West of England Strategic Partnership discussion document 'Present Tense, Future Perfect' as a basis to plan learning services. We must match estimates of skills requirements to credible growth plans. Any shortfall in the availability of suitably-skilled workers will stifle economic development.

The requirement for growth to be long term presents a long-term educational challenge that requires academic and vocational progress in all areas of learning services. Too many local people (22,238) have very low literacy skills and (28,596) numeracy skills[30]. And this means that they are:

> vulnerable to economic change if they are employed;
> less likely to find a good job or any job if they are unemployed; or
> unable to fully contribute to or enjoy the social and cultural opportunities that exist in the area.

> **The Learning and Skills Council will work with business and education and training providers to provide programmes which meet these skill needs.**

Local initiative fund

We will use this fund to make sure that local projects and organisations share our priorities in achieving the objectives of this strategic plan. We have agreed the priorities for LIF investment as shown in appendix 2.

For 2002 to 2003 we have agreed allocation of LIF funds and TEC Legacy funds as shown below to further the objectives of our strategic plan.

	LIF	TEC Legacy
Partnerships	100,000	
Providers	100,000	200,000
Business	450,000	1,000,000
Community	600,000	300,000
Learners	100,000	
	1,350,000	**1,500,000 (estimated)**

Please see appendix 2 for a fuller description of the LIF schemes proposed.

[30] Basic Skills Agency 2001 - copyright

'TEC Legacy' refers to the WESTEC reserves. At the time of writing this amount has been estimated at £1.5 million. These are a once-only addition to the funds available to us.

Monitoring and reviewing the strategic plan

This plan and its complementary annual business plans will be the framework on which we will assess and review progress. Our assessment and review process will involve ongoing self-assessment and regular reports. We will follow the same self-assessment processes and standards of assessment as providers who are expected to assess their own progress and performance. We will provide reports at least twice a year at council meetings.

We will review all learning services (except for school sixth forms) and local aims and targets which we have funded or set three times a year. We will also carry out a more formal assessment once a year. We will use the same self-assessment process for ourselves.

Learning accreditation

There are many forms of learning that do not lead to a formal qualification or certificate. An employee may be competent in the workplace and able to perform all tasks at or above the level required by their employer, but recognition of these abilities elsewhere is limited. This forms a real barrier to improving job prospects and future learning opportunities.

Also, the technological advances made by some employers are rapid, as shown by the media sector, and employees' learning and skills are often ahead of the accreditation available.

Vocational qualifications can fall short of the high standards set by leading employers.

We will investigate the feasibility of a local 'accreditation service' to recognise this learning and these skills. We will also develop employability skills training and accreditation with the Connexions service.

We will look further into accreditation for the 'first steps' scheme and for existing employer investment.

We will provide joint academic and vocational accreditation between local providers.

Capital project support

Inspections and an area review have shown some gaps in sixth form education in the Bath and North East Somerset area. The LSC West of England has already reacted to this by supporting capital spending by Norton Radstock College for a new sixth form centre on land leased from the LEA at Broadlands School in Keynsham. There is a proposal for a learning centre in St Paul's and the Bristol LEA is currently undergoing inspections, and the results of this may also lead to capital support.

No inspection plans have been announced for South Gloucestershire or North Somerset, but the Ridge Adult Community Learning Centre at Yate is in urgent need of refurbishment and there is a long-standing proposal to create a new sixth form centre in Weston-super-Mare following the closure of Broadoak School.

We are also committed to increasing support to improve the Soundwell campuses following the merger with City of Bristol College.

We have assessed the information available which we need to carry out a full review of LSC-funded services in our area. And we have identified major gaps in the availability of information. We have decided to commission a detailed asset review to bring forward the development of a long-term infrastructure strategy to identify and better match capacity against infrastructure stock so that the LSC and its partners can better plan and prioritise capital development. We have confirmed financial assistance from our national office for this asset management plan.

Summary

Four key themes emerge from this strategy. But it is important to consider these themes alongside general issues such as long-term regional growth, using the local initiative fund and capital project support to achieve the objectives of this strategic plan.

> 11. Key objectives and targets

The key objectives and targets that follow are organised into the five themes of partnerships, providers, business, community and learners.

Local impact measures are an important part of these objectives. They show clearly how we plan to achieve local targets in partnership with others and the difference it will make. Objectives have been geared to tackle prioritised key local issues and to involve co-operation between organisations.

The key objectives will stimulate and promote co-operation between business and providers to promote growth and prosperity in the West of England based on a highly-skilled, educated workforce.

Each objective has yearly targets which show the step change that will take place.

The objectives are also the means by which we will contribute to meeting national objectives and targets set out in the themes of numbers taking part and learning.

Through these key objectives we will challenge the way things are and make improvements that will put learners at the centre of all learning activity and services.

Partnerships

1.

Start an area-wide programme (including private organisations) to identify and encourage effective practice		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Identify three providers from inspections and the provider performance review. Decide which three areas of practice to develop.	Hold the first Best Practice Conference to recognise and model. Start a best practice newsletter.	Annual conference and awards. Newsletter published twice a year.
Reason		
As yet we do not have systems in place to identify and develop good practice among all providers. As a means of quality assurance, we must review provider development plans to see which have included the effective practices.		

2.

Support and challenge all partnerships we are involved in to make sure they are effective and efficient		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Apply the partnership protocol to all of our partnerships. Identify how each partnership contributes to relevant objectives.	Create a partnership self-assessment process. Get all partners to agree to self-assessment.	Introduce annual partnership self-assessment. Report to our governing council on the range and effectiveness of partnership work.
Reason		
We and our partners invest heavily in partnerships. Although an investment can be easily measured (for example, staff time), the returns from the investment are not as obvious. We will continuously improve quality by applying our partnership standards (the partnership protocol) strictly.		

3.

Create partnerships between sector employers and providers to make sure that the supply of training meets growth in the sector's demand for skills		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Identify partnerships and set up co-operative working relationships. Hold the first meeting. Collect information to inform decisions, including contributions from Jobcentreplus.	Meet three times a year. Produce conclusions on areas of economic growth and the demand for skills. Use sector knowledge to identify whose skills will need to be improved.	Provider strategic plans to reflect the skill needs identified. Develop a strategy for the whole area.
Reason		
We must develop informed predictions of areas of economic growth further to better assess skills gaps. There is a key need for co-operative planning across the whole area to identify and meet skills gaps.		

4.

Set up or improve communication links between us, our partners, providers , business, community learners and our national learning and skills network		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Identify existing methods of communication between the groups listed above. Identify barriers to effective communication. Establish use of our national guidelines as set out in 'Channels of Communication'. Agree our own internal communications strategy. Set up a communications steering group to meet every three months. Identify and monitor ineffective methods. Trial other methods.	Identify and review successful methods and promote their use across the whole area. Continue to identify and monitor ineffective methods. Trial other methods. Make sure that communication within new strategies is suitable and effective.	Identify and review successful methods and promote their use across the whole area. Continue to identify and monitor ineffective methods. Trial other methods. Make sure that communication within new strategies is suitable and effective.
Reason		
Excellent communication links are essential in partnership working. We will decide on chosen methods by consultation and these will promote accuracy, clarity and speed.		

5.

Increase the number of 16- to 19-year-olds taking part in learning by raising learners' awareness and knowledge of the benefits of vocational routes of learning		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Set up a marketing campaign across the whole area. Identify action by individual providers. Set baselines for numbers to take part in learning.	Measure numbers in vocational and academic education. Increase the numbers following vocational routes by 20% each year.	Measure numbers by level. Identify levers that worked. Continue to market at desired levels. Survey learners.
Reason		
Not all learners are best suited to academic routes. Learners need to be able to choose their preferred way of learning depending on the subject.		

6.

Improve choice and access for young people through devising a successful and long term model of collaboration between schools, colleges and work based training providers.		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Analyse report on study of Weston 'family of schools' project. Choose location for new project to begin. Agree choice and access measures.	Put new project in place. Measure improvements to choice and access. Measure the success of the project. Agree revisions if necessary. Choose two further locations for new projects.	Put new project in place. Repeat 2003 to 2004 process.
Reason		
The level of provision and choice is not consistent across schools. Many young people are not able to learn in a way that best suits them. We need to see collaboration between providers.		

7.

Use the student apprenticeship as a model for colleges to expand modern apprenticeships

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Complete and assess the pilot stage of student apprenticeships. Choose an agreed project. Set choice and access measures.	Identify and agree with the relevant sector all local vocational courses which will form part of the 'Cassels' Modern Apprenticeship frameworks. Launch in September 2003. Assess the project. Decide on revisions to the project. Confirm two further projects.	The 2003 to 2004 process becomes the 'norm'. Establish the process in another area.
Reason		
The Cassels report identifies that some learners are not prepared or willing to make a commitment to an employer or specific vocational area when considering vocational learning. This is particularly the case for learners from ethnic minorities. The student apprenticeship model will provide a steppingstone for young people over the age of 16 from vocational courses to modern apprenticeships. This will improve the job-related element of the apprenticeship as employers will be involved in a structured way.		

8.

Increase student apprenticeship placements in areas where there are shortages of skills

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
45 to 50 placements 25 schools All colleges Measure by assessment	50 to 55 placements 30 schools All colleges Measure by assessment Confirm two further projects.	55-60 placements 35 schools All colleges Measure by assessment
Reason		
To target skill shortages in sectors. To bring together employers, students, schools and colleges, and training providers to develop the student and company workforce. To promote long-term employment after education.		

9.

Make learning opportunities as accessible as possible by working with providers to improve technology-based information and access strategies.

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Start planning how the 'map' will apply to new information systems. Secure funding for new information systems.	Introduce e-information and e-access services and systems. Monitor use and effectiveness.	Review and revise services and systems. Set baseline measures of use by learners, providers and employers.
Reason		
At the moment it is virtually impossible for anyone to know everything which providers are offering to learners over 16. This is because each provider has its own information and marketing systems. Every learner and potential learner is entitled to complete and accurate information to help them make the best choice. This aim is key to achieving the 'cafeteria' and 'campus'.		

10.

Investigate the funding available to provide transport to places of learning.

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Use a mapping exercise to identify areas with a lack of transport facilities. Identify funding sources. Define and prioritise need. Negotiate costs and routes with local transport organisations.	Review need in relation to current services provided.	Review need in relation to current services provided.
Reason		
Bus services are not frequent or reliable, and they mainly radiate out from the city centre. Rural communities are often further poorly served by public transport.		

11.

Work with partners (including independent schools) to promote a challenging, interesting and flexible curriculum to improve level 2 achievement rates in bristol by age 19.

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Carry out a Bristol review. Gain an understanding of current services through consultation and research. Consult providers on their capacity to grow. Produce a report to set strategy and indicate the potential for change. Link into the campus and cafeteria initiative.	Agree an action plan for each area or ward. Measure the number of students staying in learning. Identify successful measures and promote their use across the area.	Measure the number of students staying in learning. Measure their achievement. Increase achievement by 50%.

Reason
There is a key strategic need for co-operative planning and working to identify causes and overcome poor student numbers and performance at Level 2. We must take a strategic role in managing change.

12.

Make sure all learning providers effectively carry out their equality and diversity policy.

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
All providers must produce a policy and action plan.	Providers review their policy and action plans effectively. Monitoring through this provider-review process to measure effectiveness.	Providers review their policy and action plans effectively. Monitoring through this provider-review process to measure effectiveness.

Reason
Equal opportunities is a key part of providing learning services. All providers must demonstrate that they recognise the importance of a policy and that they can carry their policy out throughout their activities. Providers will monitor their equality and diversity planning and progress through performance reviews, self-assessment and development plans.

13.

Reduce bureaucracy by simplifying and standardising information systems to support quality monitoring and assessment.

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Identify which elements of quality assessment can be included in the review process without undermining its effectiveness. Examine how providers can gather evidence for the review as part of daily activities.	Complete the process and assess its effectiveness. Examine how the experience has affected the process and whether it can be further streamlined.	Monitor providers less frequently if they show they have high-quality standards.

Reason
The provider review process must be part of its general activities and be efficient. It must meet its aims but not create more bureaucracy than is required.

14.

Carry out research to identify specialist services which will improve level 2 achievement and include successful methods in local service provision.

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Carry out research. Produce a report identifying what services should be promoted, what results they should generate and in what timescales.	Continue research to identify further schemes to adopt. Examine whether the expected results were generated and alter the adopted schemes accordingly. Report on success.	Continue research and reporting activity.

Reason
Innovative services are key to achieving the goals of the strategic plan. A robust process is vital to identify and promote successful schemes and to make sure innovation continues.

Business

15.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Develop a specific workforce development strategy (level 3 and basic skills) for employees of large and medium employers (LMEs).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Local Targets</td></tr>
<tr><td>2002 to 2003</td><td>2003 to 2004</td><td>2004 to 2005</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve at least 50 companies.

Set targets and agree activities.

200 employees to begin Level 3 training activities.

100 employees to begin BS-level training.</td>
<td>Review progress, adjust strategy and targets as necessary.

200 employees achieve Level-2 standard.

100 employees achieve BS Level 2 standard.

Involve a further 25 companies, set targets and agree activities.

100 employees to begin BS Level-2 training.</td>
<td>All original companies still involved.

Review and set new targets in the light of experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Reason</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Our aim is to increase the average level of interest which large and medium employers take in staff development.

Staff who have low basic skills and who are below Level 3 face limited prospects. Quality assurance will be achieved through regular reviews with employers and the quality assurance systems operating within teaching and learning services.

This aim will be adjusted if necessary to fit the new National Workforce Development Strategy when it is released.</td></tr>
</table>

16.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Plan future services to meet the predicted skills needs of the employment sectors.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Local Targets</td></tr>
<tr><td>2002 to 2003</td><td>2003 to 2004</td><td>2004 to 2005</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess existing national, regional, local and sector skills intelligence.

Carry out a local employers' survey, to follow national guidelines, within a regional framework if possible.

Carry out a local household survey to assess individual needs within frameworks as above.

Pass on findings to providers and chosen partners and our own management.</td>
<td>Pass on intelligence to a wide range of partners.

Work with Sector Skills Council and consider and act upon their recommendations.

Use the information to help with yearly planning.</td>
<td>Assess existing national, regional, local and sector skills intelligence.

Carry out a local employers survey, to follow national guidelines, within a regional framework if possible.

Carry out a local household survey to assess individual needs, within the frameworks as above.

Pass findings to providers and chosen partners and our own management.</td>
</tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Reason</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">One of our key functions is to train people so that they are equipped to take on new jobs. Current national, regional and local intelligence is improving rapidly. We now need to consolidate information and apply it to shaping future services. Research professionals will provide high-quality data and the Partnership Protocol will continuously assess the effectiveness of the employment sector advisory groups.</td></tr>
</table>

17.

Increase the number of employers taking part in workforce development and their level of involvement.		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Review the new DfES Workforce Development Strategy and link it to local activity. Target Investors in People development at priority sectors. Targets to December 2002. Organisations with 10 to 49 employees = 190 recognitions. Organisations with 50 or more employees = 294 recognitions.	Adopt the new 'Employer Engagement Measures' which are being developed. Use the new set of measures as a monitoring instrument.	Continue to monitor workforce development.
Reason		
The new national DfES Workforce Development Strategy will have a major impact on our local strategy. Investors in People will remain a key priority for developing the workforce. The percentage of firms receiving or holding Investors in people accreditation and the percentage of staff involved in Workforce Development activity will be the measure of quality.		

18.

Increase the number of learners benefiting from the union learning representative (ULR) activity.		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
25 extra ULRs 7 extra organisations with ULRs 200 learners supported by ULRs 50 learners involved in basic skills 200 learners involved in ICT	We will develop targets to link with the new employer engagement measures being developed by the Performance and Innovation Unit.	We will develop targets to link with the new employer engagement measures being developed by the Performance and Innovation Unit.
Reason		
The union learning representative programme has been an effective way of getting learning into the workplace. Funding has been limited. The quality of united learning representative related activity will be measured by the targets listed above. Partners: employers, unions, providers.		

Community

19.

Increase the number of people taking part in learning from those groups with traditionally lower rates of involvement (for example, adults with no qualifications, those with care responsibilities, people with low family incomes, and those living in the most deprived areas).		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Draw together existing information on the demographics of each group, levels of involvement, obstacles to learning, and potential motivation. Pass this information on to providers. Encourage joint marketing activity among providers to target each of these groups. Reflect the needs of key non-learning groups in the ways training and education are provided.	Update existing information and continue to share it with providers. Carry out joint marketing campaigns targeted at particular groups of non-learners. Continue to tailor services to reflect non-learners' needs. Assess the effectiveness of any changes to the way services are provided in terms of increased learner numbers.	Update existing information and continue to share it with providers. Carry out joint marketing campaigns targeted at particular groups of non-learners. Continue to tailor services to reflect non-learners' needs. Assess the effectiveness of any changes to the way services are provided in terms of increased learner numbers.
Reason		
To effectively target those not involved in learning we must analyse their situations thoroughly.		

20.

Raise basic skills levels through partnerships and use proven good practice to achieve this increase.		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Set up partnerships between providers and employers. Identify proven good practice. Partnerships develop activities based on the basic skills strategy.	Providers adopt practices geared to raising basic skills levels consistently across the area. Measure the change in basic skills levels. Propose changes in practice if the increase is obvious.	Measure changes in basic skills levels.
Reason		
We need to raise the literacy and numeracy skills of 15,341 people in the West of England in line with national aims. We will achieve quality by measuring the numbers involved in and staying on in basic skills learning and other related programmes, and their achievement levels.		

21.

Create community based learning opportunities for people disadvantaged by existing learning services by providing funding of £1,000,000 a year to set up new non-traditional learning environments.

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Identify £1,000,000 of recurrent funding for new services. Set up a backroom service to provide administrative support so that community groups can use funding effectively.	Set up a backroom service to provide administrative support so that community groups can use funding effectively. Measure the effects of this work by identifying the number of projects set up and learners involved. Monitor the number of new learners and the number of learners staying on.	Measure the effects of this work by identifying the number of projects set up and learners involved. Monitor the number of new learners and the number of learners staying on.
Reason		
Consultations have shown that new, effective services are being restricted by a lack of suitable recurrent funding. We will assess quality by monitoring the number of new learners and the number of learners staying on, and achievement in 'softer' targets such as confidence and self-esteem.		

22.

Develop local processes to measure real added value to learners (including confidence, self-esteem and involvement in learning.

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Introduce a system for measuring added value. Standardise this system across the area. Develop value-added measures for learners, providers and employers.	Introduce a trial system to test how helpful the new measures are. The trial will include learners, employers and providers. Revise the system.	Introduce a value-added system across all services. Integrate the system with all other data and provider options.
Reason		
The system for measuring value added is not fully developed and is important to widening the numbers involved in learning and meeting national targets and the real needs of learners, providers and employers.		

23.

Develop partnerships between employers and the community to set up work experience placements, develop training and open up employment opportunities.

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Identify areas and people and employers to take part. Adopt existing partnerships. Set up partnerships where needed. Hold meetings for partnership groups.	Partnership groups meet once a year. Set up work experience placements. Identify and develop training and employment opportunities.	Measure the employers involved. Measure the work experience placements created. Measure the increase in training and employment opportunities.
Reason		
Consultations highlighted the need to develop closer links between employers and the communities they are in. Some areas already have well-established groups which we will support.		

24.

Develop the role of the community learning representative or champion to create partnerships between us, community organisations and local providers of education and training.

Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Establish what existing activities there are. Draw up a brief for the learning representative or champion. Identify people to take part.	Measure the number of community organisations working with providers. Measure the number of learners taking part.	Continue the measurement process. Measure the number of people entering structured learning.
Reason		
To increase the number of adults taking part in learning and raise their level of achievement, we need to place greater emphasis on the role of community and family learning. This initiative, based upon the established TUC learner's representative, will achieve these aims. We will assess quality by applying the partnership protocol and getting each partnership to assess its work.		

25.

Research local communities by ward to understand and meet local needs and so to eliminate barriers and increase access to learning.		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Co-ordinate activities through mapping exercise. Identify priority wards. Identify specific actions. Feed information into established community partnerships. Specify the numbers expected to be involved in each action.	Identify successful methods and copy them. Measure the number of people entering structured learning.	Continue processes from the previous year.
Reason		
Local communities have individual profiles. Understanding the barriers to learning which communities experience will help increase access and learner numbers. It will also contribute to meeting national learner number and achievement targets. Established community partnerships will be able to use the information gained. We will assess quality by assessing the value of the information used, applying the partnership protocol and getting groups to assess their activity.		

26.

Through partnerships with local universities, increase the number of people from non-traditional educational backgrounds who progress to higher education.		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Set up a dialogue with higher-education institutions to explore how progression from the vocational route can increase. Identify funding levers for the higher education funding council. Identify higher-education courses which are suitable for those from vocational backgrounds. Extend admission criteria to include suitable methods for assessing entrants with vocational qualifications.	Carry out the 2002 to 2003 agreements. Monitor the number of people staying on in higher education who are from vocational backgrounds against those from academic backgrounds. Identify reasons for dropping out.Identify the success of this policy by measuring admissions numbers.	Continue monitoring. Set more demanding targets.
Reason		
It is difficult for people from vocational backgrounds to go on to higher education, even if they have suitable skills and knowledge. We will measure the effectiveness of partnerships to decide if they are achieving our goals		

27.

Work with partners to introduce a local basic skills action plan.		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Consult providers to identify potential blockages which may affect progress. Agree steps to remove blockages and build these into the basic skills plan. Produce a report describing unblocking activities and the resources required.	Make sure the plan has been carried out in full. Allocate resources in the business plan to overcome potential problems. Measure the effect of this action in terms of qualifications gained and the increase over the baseline.	Consult providers to identify potential blockages which may affect progress. Agree steps to remove blockages and build these steps into the basic skills plan. Produce a report describing the unblocking activities and the resources needed.
Reason		
The goal to improve literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults nationwide must be supported by clear local approaches to address the issue in a rational and structured way.		

28.

Investigate ways of recognising and funding informal non-accredited learning.		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Take part in national initiatives for non-accredited learning and link this to existing and new local accreditation initiatives. Create steering group to decide local action.	Introduce new learning accreditation systems.	Monitor and report on the effects.
Reason		
There is considerable research which confirms that many learners are mainly interested in learning - not in any award or exams. Also, many learners who would like a recognised award are on courses which do not lead to formal recognition, often because the flexibility of the courses suits their needs. There is work going on nationally on accrediting 'informal' learning. By recognising learning which has not previously been accredited, we can: > reward the learner; > encourage more learning; and > more accurately reflect the wide range of publicly-funded learning.		

29.

Develop a suitable balance between more and less formal approaches to learning to help overcome barriers to learning.		
Local Targets		
2002 to 2003	**2003 to 2004**	**2004 to 2005**
Identify new ways to promote less formal learning methods to non-learners. Report on conclusions. Adopt the most promising approaches and fund the activity.	Report on the approaches adopted in terms of their long-term capacity to maintain or increase learner numbers. Guarantee funding for the activities which will survive long term. Measure success in terms of learner numbers and numbers progressing to structured learning.	Continue to monitor and encourage success. Continue to seek new approaches.
Reason		
A large part of the community is not involved or interested in learning. Many people's perception of familiar learning approaches is a barrier to them entering learning. One way to overcome that barrier is by providing learning in a new location or form.		

Links to national themes and objectives

Relationship between national themes and objectives and local objectives with impact measures.

Themes	Participation		Skills		Learning
	National key objectives				
	Extend participation in education, learning and training	Increase participation of employers in workforce development	Raise achievement of young people	Raise achievement of adults	Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction
Local objectives and impact measures					
1					●
2					●
3		●		●	
4	●	●			●
5	●		●		●
6	●		●		●
7	●	●	●		●
8	●	●	●		●
9	●				
10	●				
11	●		●		●
12	●				
13					●
14			●		●
15		●		●	
16		●		●	
17		●		●	
18	●	●		●	
19		●			
20	●				
21		●		●	
22	●			●	●
23	●				●
24	●	●		●	
25	●			●	
26	●			●	
27	●			●	
28	●		●	●	●
29	●				

12. Supporting strategies and policies
Basic skills

A brief background to literacy and numeracy services in the area

We are working with each of the local authority adult and community learning providers and the learning partnerships to develop a basic skills strategy which is meaningful and consistent across the West of England. This will be in line with our partners' basic skills plans and will encourage provider co-operation to provide enough quality literacy, language and numeracy services.

Literacy and numeracy learning is often embedded in other courses as this is more attractive to learners. Learning is not always accredited. The most common external accreditation is through the Open College Network (OCN). 'Softer' achievements (such as confidence building and developing a taste for learning) are considered to be important for the needs of learners, who are often socially excluded and not otherwise involved in learning.

Providers often use short, taster courses to attract learners. Many community venues are used to provide services, and family learning in primary schools is particularly successful. Adult and community learning (ACL) uses existing community centres and sometimes voluntary organisations to target hard-to-reach learners in neighbourhoods characterised by deprivation. Non-geographical groups targeted for basic skills include:

> lone parents;
> people with sensory impairments;
> people whose first language is not English;
> specific ethnic groups;
> older people;
> homeless people;
> travellers; and
> people returning to work following a break from paid work.

We target potential learners who are thought to be at risk of social exclusion. The information they use to identify these groups generally comes from existing services, particularly through outreach workers. This means that basic skills training is located according to this information about need. It is therefore informal and may not be complete.

The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) is providing literacy and numeracy services in the workplace for UNISON. This includes a programme at pre-entry level. The TUC is using the Union Learning Fund to train union learning representatives in basic skills awareness and how to identify needs in the workplace. Using IT has been identified as a need in the workplace and a way to increase learner numbers. The IT tutors are also trained basic skills tutors so that they can identify and provide basic skills support to workers. We will work closely with the unions to promote and develop basic skills training in the workplace.

The workforce development strategy identifies basic skills as a priority area. It will aim to:

> develop effective partnerships;
> increase learner numbers;
> improve performance and progress; and
> make sure that the needs of employers and workers are met.

Gathering information

We have commissioned research to assess the suitability and scope of the education, training and learning services in our area. This includes assessing how well existing services meet the needs of learners, particularly for disadvantaged groups and communities.

We will also map local voluntary and community organisations for their services, location, funding sources, long-term prospects and capacity for growth. And we will assess the contribution of these organisations to meeting the needs of communities. The project is due to report for the Bristol area in February 2002 and for other areas in June 2002.

Targets and milestones for monitoring progress in learner numbers and achievement

The table below shows the number of people in basic skills training based on strategic plans for colleges, other institutions, work-based learning and life skills.

Institutions	2000 to 2001	2001 to 2002	2002 to 2003	2003 to 2004	Total
Colleges	5,543	8,001	8,515	9,022	31,081
Other institutions	2,029	2,226	2,393	2,664	9,312
Work-based learning	3,600	3,600	3,960	4,356	15,516
Life skills	359	450	495	545	1,849
Total	**11,531**	**14,277**	**15,363**	**16,587**	**57,758**

It shows an increase in learner numbers for the coming years, which means that assuming 30% of people taking part in basic skills and work-based learning courses will achieve a qualification, the achievement for the West of England will be 16,773. The target for achieving a recognised qualification set by our national office is between 15,320 and 16,359. We have agreed that this target should be 15,341.

We will measure achievement locally every month for work-based learning. But further education data will be recorded at our national office. To measure the increase in achievement we will develop systems to analyse data locally without adding any burden to our colleges.

The achievement of key skills for work-based learners is three times higher for learners with no extra needs than for learners with extra needs. Work-based learners with extra needs are disadvantaged and we will work with work-based providers to increase their achievement.

Life Skills is a programme aimed at learners who have not continued learning or taken a job after leaving school. These learners usually have many complicated problems, including:
> learning difficulties;
> an unsupportive home environment;
> carers who leave;
> a history of crime;
> a lack of confidence;
> violent and disruptive behaviour;
> substance abuse; and
> phobic and attitude problems.

In the early stages these learners are not employable, do not attend regularly and demand considerable attention. Many have longer-term prospects of gaining an NVQ or a job, but the immediate priority is to build employability (life) skills so that they can progress to work-based learning, further education or work. Over 50% successfully do this.

UfI Learndirect does not contribute to the target at this stage as the learners do not get a qualification through Learndirect. However, UfI Learndirect is an important partner in increasing the number of basic skills and ICT learners. It is also looking at ways of expanding into the workplace. By working with UfI Learndirect we will define ways of measuring learner numbers, progress, achievement and quality.

The TUC provides workplace basic skills. Little work has been done with non-unionised staff in small and medium businesses and public service workers. To stimulate demand from employers and workers, it will be important to understand the need for and way of providing basic skills services in the workplace. We will use existing research and knowledge to write an action plan to tackle the needs and demands of the workforce. And we will explore ways of funding workplace basic skills ourselves or through partnership arrangements.

The Skills for Life national strategy defines basic skills as literacy and numeracy. It also recognises the effectiveness of ICT as a way of providing learning services and attracting learners. The strategic plans of further education institutions identify ICT as a tool to get people into learning and this will be encouraged and developed through our information learning technology strategy. ICT should be part of basic skills courses wherever practical and suitable.

Providers often use a wider definition of basic skills which includes life and employability skills. These services are generally tailored to meet the needs of specific groups of learners, such as a 'basic budgeting' course for single parents. To avoid labelling and discouraging learners, courses are not often called 'literacy and numeracy'. Alternative titles include 'communication', 'language support' and 'help your child to read'.

There are many initiatives which we do not fund. The National Literacy Trust has a database of initiatives in partnership with the local primary and secondary schools. These cover areas such as family literacy and women returning to work. We will support these initiatives through partnership and raising awareness.

Targets and milestones for recruiting new providers from the voluntary and community sector

We fund 47 providers of basic skills and key skills in the West of England area. These include:
> five further education colleges;
> one sixth form college;
> 34 private providers;
> three city council community education services; and
> four NHS trusts.

They all provide basic skills and key skills in different environments throughout the West of England, either directly or through partnership arrangements. Of the 34 private training providers, 17 offer extra learning or social support and eight provide life skills.

At the moment we are in the process of drawing up new contracts and establishing new baselines with all our existing providers. This will tell us what services are available and will help us to identify whether we need more basic skills providers in the area. The findings of this process and existing research will also help us to identify gaps in services and areas where we can increase numbers. We will use the Local Initiative Fund (LIF) and co-financing to identify and build the capacity of new providers to provide quality education and training. These providers will then need to carry out the necessary work to prepare them for contracting with us.

Equal opportunities
Our strategy aims to include everyone and to reach people who have been excluded in the past. According to a study by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI)[31], the main barrier to learning is a lack of information and advice. Information such as free basic skills training is as important as where and when the courses are on offer.

People who do not speak English are also at risk of being excluded. It is important to have information available in different languages and use interpreters to reach learners whose first language is not English.

We will also need to liaise with providers and networks so that learners are well informed and people working with groups at risk of exclusion are aware of the support available.

Processes for identifying and sharing good practice
Our consultations with partners have indicated that there is no need for new networks. Instead we will encourage existing groups and networks to link up so that we can all share good practice. Conferences, meetings, newsletters and websites are all ways of sharing good practice. We will encourage and support these initiatives and will take the lead on the need to work together to share good practice. Ongoing consultations with partners will also help us all to share information.

Following inspections, providers can use the Standards Fund to share their examples of good practice. We will encourage this as there is evidence from inspections that basic skills training in the area is of a high quality.

Monitoring and assessing the plan
Our Basic Skills Manager will monitor the delivery plan on an ongoing basis. Once we have baseline and benchmarking information, our research department will monitor the progress of the plan to show a clear before and after picture as well as what the changing needs are. In this way we and the relevant organisations can adapt.

Equality and diversity
We will make sure that equality and diversity support all areas of our activity, both within our organisation and through our providers.

We are currently developing a local equality and diversity strategy by consulting our partners and referring to our 'Equality in Practice Guide' (July 2001) and relevant legislation. We plan to publish this strategy by July 2002.

[31] Talisman, issue 5, December 2001.

We will also develop an action plan to promote the strategy and influence local stakeholders on issues of equality and diversity. Once developed, we will review both the strategy and the plan and update them through ongoing consultation.

In developing our strategy and action plan we must :
> Make sure learning is accessible and must include everyone.
> Reduce social and economic disadvantage.
> Challenge prejudice.
> Widen opportunities for learners and employment.
> Make all our staff aware of equality issues and develop their skills in this area.
> Improve research to set baselines and measure results.
> Allocate funding.
> Develop joint approaches with partners and stakeholders.
> Make sure that the values of equality and diversity are at the heart of our culture.

Improving quality
Principles
Our quality strategy is based on three principles. These are:

> to develop the culture of continuous quality improvement throughout our organisation and our providers;

> to give all staff quality-development roles and responsibilities; and

> to simplify roles, relationships and communication.

By following these three principles we aim to continuously improve the quality and raise the standards of all the services we fund.

The first principle supports and extends our national raising-standards goal. Raising standards and continuously improving quality means developing professionalism and a constant, critical review of activity. The self-assessment process is most important as it allows providers to criticise themselves and be realistic about how their systems and services are doing.

The second principle aims to instill the concern for quality in everyone involved - our staff and our providers. We believe that continuous improvement is not a specialist area. It is part of everyone's work.

The third principle develops further the integrated approach to continuous quality improvement. It covers the degree to which our success will depend on relationships and communication among our staff and with providers. The clearest, simplest roles, relationships and communications will result in the highest quality.

To demonstrate our commitment to continuous quality improvement for all, we have a single quality-standards post. This role is mainly one of acting as an internal advisor. Specific staff therefore handle all quality-related issues with particular providers and partners. There are two dimensions to this system - internal (for our staff) and external (for our providers and partners).

Internal

To support continuously higher-quality providers and partners, our staff need accurate information and effective, efficient communications.

Example: To deal confidently and productively with a college, a Contract Manager needs to know large amounts of current, wide-ranging information such as:

> our evolving initiatives;

> local economic issues;

> other services which could affect the provider; and

> details of the provider's performance and history.

To equip our staff to this level, we will continuously develop suitable communication and information systems and ways of involving staff in development.

External

We must continuously make sure that our staff and providers are clear about their roles. Our role is to plan, fund and monitor what providers do. The role of providers is to teach, tutor and train people, including all of the necessary support services.

Real continuous improvement of the learners' experiences depends entirely on the quality of communications between us and our providers. Each provider in the area has a single LSC staff member as their main contact and information source. Other specialist staff (for example, finance, health and safety) become involved as needed. This will simplify issues and encourage access for providers.

We take a strategic approach to all of our external roles and duties. Two early examples are the Partnership Policy (see appendix 1) and the Work-based Learning Standards Fund Strategy (see appendix 5). In both of these we needed to take new action to improve practice.

It is equally important to make sure that the providers we fund meet and beat any standards which are relevant to their services. The framework of quality standards maps 63 separate areas of service, each with its own standards. (For example, the Guidance Council provides standards for information and advice services, and NTOs have standards for different education and training sectors.) We continuously monitor providers to make sure they are working to and beyond these standards. If necessary we will develop local standards, such as those created to prioritise Local Initiatives Fund applications.

Health and safety

Our policy is to:

> provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and work systems for all our employees; and

> provide any information, training and supervision needed for this purpose.

We will make sure that all providers we fund fully meet statutory health and safety regulations. We will carry out risk assessment and review these twice each year. We will regularly inspect those assessed as high risk and visit all providers at least once a year to check they continue to keep to regulations. This policy is overseen by a Health Safety and Welfare Committee which reports to us each year.

All our staff who visit learners in the workplace will have health and safety training to assess the workplace in line with our national process of 'eyes and ears'.

We will promote high standards, good practice and a culture of continuous improvement for health, safety and welfare in all education and training activities. So we will make sure that all learners in all locations receive health and safety induction training and ongoing training throughout the programme.

In line with our national policy, we will make arrangements to make sure that accidents to learners are reported and dealt with promptly. We will also do our best to make sure providers make the same arrangements.

European Social Fund financing

We are a co-financing organisation supporting European Social Fund (ESF) aim 3. This provides funds to support employability and human-resource development activities.

Co-financing is a way of allowing providers to make contact once and receive ESF and matched funding in one package, so reducing administration.

Our co-financing strategy 2001 to 2003 (published on 5 October 2001) is governed by:

> ESF rules on eligible activity;

> the regional development plan (RDP) and its associated activities; and

> our national aims.

We do not have enough ESF funds or resources to try to cover all the activities included in the RDP. (You can ask us for a copy of the ESF co-financing strategy.)

Workforce development strategy

We will promote learners' and employers' increased demand for relevant learning and development to achieve long-term economic success in the sub-region.

We are developing a workforce development framework for our area which we will develop into a strategy following the Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) report which is expected in June 2002 and the national LLS strategy which is due in November 2002. Our aim is to put employers in a position where they can shape the demand for workforce development to meet the current and future needs of individuals and businesses.

When drawing up our strategy we will give priority to:

> bringing together local partners and key stakeholders to tackle local workforce development priorities consistently;

> developing a clear understanding of the target market and trying to remove barriers to learning to develop a local strategy to increase learner numbers;

> working with local workforce development partners (including employers) to develop a workforce development 'performance management' system that will improve performance and progress; and

> making sure all workforce development activity meets the needs and expectations of individuals and employers.

> Appendix 1.
Our partnership policy

Purpose
To establish a general approach to developing partnerships which meet the needs of learners and potential learners more effectively.

Definition
A partnership is where two or more organisations are jointly involved in a shared purpose.

Executive Director's statement
The LSC Remit Letter published by The Secretary of State for Education and Employment stated, ' The success of the Council will depend upon strong partnerships and effective linkages with a wide range of organisations'.

'I am deeply committed to working professionally in partnership with our stakeholders to achieve the aims of the local LSC and add value. We must build on existing arrangements and standardise a professional approach to joint working that focuses clearly on purpose, action and positive results in everything we undertake. By taking this challenge and implementing the partnership policy in a disciplined way, we aim to ensure that the local LSC is truly open, dynamic, informed and accountable to our communities.'

Our 12-point policy statement
a. We will aim to work in all partnerships which are relevant to developing learner choice, access and quality of learning. We will also promote or create partnerships where we have identified a need.

b. Our representative will positively influence equal opportunities and will aim to make sure that choice, access and quality of learning are genuinely available to all.

c. Our role in all partnerships is to champion the learner and plan strategically to promote opportunities, choice and quality. It is our representatives' responsibility to:

> lead in promoting learner-centred partnerships;
> assess the effect on the learner of all partnership proposals;
> provide information on the learner and learning environment which will shape decisions;
> create ways of measuring progress and success which are relevant to the learner;
> review and assess activity for the benefit of the learner; and
> encourage constant reviews of partnership effectiveness.

d. Our representatives will consult local partners about our activity as part of the planning and assessment process.

e. Our representatives have the power to make a commitment for us and also have a responsibility to decide our corporate view and available resources. They must be prepared to challenge common assumptions and views as necessary.

f. It is also our representatives' duty to develop an authoritative voice on their areas of responsibility, and to continually improve their own understanding of effective learning. This includes working closely with learners and suppliers, and keeping up to date with market developments and relevant research.

g. Our representative has a duty to actively support the partnership and pass on any facts and issues relevant to the needs of local learners.

h. Our representative must influence the partnership by promoting a disciplined and professional approach, guided by the partnership checklist. If we are leading a partnership, the partnership must be professionally managed, clearly documented and continually assessed for effectiveness.

i. Our representative must communicate internally on partnership issues by producing written reports on meetings and discussions and distributing these throughout our organisation as appropriate. Each representative must provide an annual report for each partnership. And they must keep records and other documents up to date and available for quality improvement inspections.

j. The Partnership Development Manager must support the development of partnership abilities by providing a programme of quality assurance and personal development. The line manager and representative will identify needs and opportunities for individual training, monitoring and assessment. The requirements for effective partnership working will be reflected in job descriptions, personal aims and individual performance reviews.

k. Our representative will encourage open communication with partners and our other staff to promote regular exchanges of information and views, and to develop consistency and understanding. We will keep a central register of named link staff for all partners.

l. The Partnership Development Manager is responsible for making sure that this policy operates effectively. Our strategic partnership group will set aims for corporate partnership development, review progress and assess results. We will assess this policy and review its effectiveness once a year.

> ## Appendix 2.
> ## Local initiative funding allocation

We allocated £500,000 to community-based learner schemes earlier this year.

We have received 65 other bids, which our officers have considered before our sub-group meeting.

We have allocated £1.35 million of Local Initiative Funding and we are expecting a further £1.5million plus from closing WESTEC. We will use all this money to support relevant work to take forward our strategy plan priorities.

Proposed allocation of remaining amounts

Strategy issue	Example description	£,000
Learners		100
Learner access	Review	
Learners into jobs	ICT for all ages	
Including learners	Community scheme	
Campus		100 (+ 200)
Real	Develop the concept, infrastructure,	
Virtual	capital bids, tutor development	
Cafeteria style		
Business sectors		450 (+1,000)
Manufacturing		
Public sector	Sector development	
Finance sector		
Small business		
Multi-media		
Tourism		
Curriculum planning	Liaison	
Education Business Links revised	Develop scheme	
Student apprentices	Develop	
Employable Skills	Develop	
Adult Information Advice & Guidance	Develop New scheme	
Community learner	Develop	
Bargaining for skills	New scheme	
Education Unlimited		
Community		100 (+300)
New community learning service	New	
First steps scheme	New	
Teacher training	New	
Accreditation scheme	New	
Mainstream initiatives	New	
Networks and partnerships		100
West of England Strategic		
Partnership and Regional	Commitment	
Development Agency		
Contingencies		

> ## Appendix 3.
> ## Table 1: Numbers staying on in further education

Institution	Percentage staying on for long courses		Percentage staying on for short courses	
	16 to 18	19 and over	16 to 18	19 and over
City of Bath College	81	86	98	98
City of Bristol College	81	81	96	96
College of Care and Early Education	72	84	99	99
Filton College	75	81	95	91
Norton Radstock College	92	91	94	99
Soundwell College	82	86	90	92
St Brendan's Sixth Form College	80	92	94	100
Weston College	76	83	94	88
LSC West of England	80	84	94	95
England average	80	79	-	-

Source: Our further education college benchmarking data 1999 to 2000

Table 2: School achievement rates
GCSE: Percentage with five or more grades A* to C

Local Education Authority	1998	1999	2000	2001
Bath and North East Somerset	53.2	54.7	57.1	56.4
North Somerset	52.0	51.7	53.4	50.8
South Gloucestershire	45.1	47.6	47.7	48.7
Bristol	29.0	31.0	31.2	31.8
England average	46.3	47.9	49.2	50.0

Source: DfES performance tables

Table 3:
GCE A-level: Average point score for two or more A or AS levels

Local Education Authority	1998	1999	2000	2001
Bath and North East Somerset	17.8	15.1	16.8	15.2
North Somerset	17.2	16.9	16.8	17.3
South Gloucestershire	16.1	16.0	16.5	15.0
Bristol	13.6	13.8	15.4	14.9
England average	17.8	18.2	18.5	17.8

Source: DfES performance tables

Table 4: School sixth forms
Number of students enrolled (16- to 18-year-olds in 1999 to 2000)

Local Education Authority	Number in Schools	
	State	Independent
Bath and North East Somerset	1704	826
City of Bristol	1215	1431
North Somerset	1461	135
South Gloucestershire	2118	40
Total	6498	2432

Source: DfES performance tables 2000

Table 5:
Percentage achievement rates (levels 1-5) in further education
(16- to 18-year-olds)

College	1997 to 1998	1998 to 1999
City of Bath College	62	58
City of Bristol College	77	72
College of Care and Early Education	60	73
Filton College	83	86
Norton Radstock College	77	70
Soundwell College	45	54
St Brendan's Sixth Form College	69	69
Weston College	65	53
LSC West of England	68	67
England average	71	74

Source: ISR data

Table 6:
Disabled status for 1999 to 2000

1999 to 2000	With learners recording a disability		
	Yes	No	Not Answered
West of England	4.2	2.9	42.9
England	4.8	1.3	33.9

Source: ISR data

Table 7:
Ethnic origin

College	Percentage of students from ethic minority	Percentage of white students	Percentage of unknown origin
City of Bath College	5	81	14
City of Bristol College	11	83	6
Filton College	7	79	13
Norton Radstock College	1	40	60
Soundwell College	7	84	9
St Brendan's Sixth Form College	8	91	1
Weston College	2	87	11
West of England	7	79	14
England average	12	75	12

Ethnic minorities include Bangladeshi, Black - African, Black - Caribbean, Chinese and Indian.
Source: ISR data

Table 8:
Percentage of male and female students enrolling for 1999 to 2000

	Total number (thousands)	Total percentage		Full time (Full year)		Full time (Part year)		Part Time	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
West of England	71	56.8	43.2	9.5	7.8	3.9	4.6	43.4	30.8
England	3,465	58.4	41.3	10.5	9.2	2.7	3.4	45.2	28.7

Source: ISR data

Table 9:
Breakdown of ages in learning enrolling for 1999 to 2000

	Total number (thousands)	Total percentage		Full time (Full year)		Full time (Part year)		Part Time	
		16 to 18	19 or over	16 to 18	19 or over	16 to 18	19 or over	16 to 18	19 or over
West of England	71	15.3	4.5	1.1	6.3	0.6	6.9	3.7	70.4
England	3,465	18.6	1.2	3.8	5.9	50.5	5.7	4.4	69.6

(There is a 0.2% difference in total percentages because of under-16 services.)

Source: ISR data

> Appendix 4.
Consultation process for the 2002 to 2005 strategic plan

We have given our partners and stakeholders the opportunity to contribute to this strategic plan. These groups include the South West Regional Development Agency, local authorities, local education authorities and a full range of providers and learners.

> We gave all our partners and stakeholders a copy of
> our national corporate plan;
> the 'Changing Lives.......Building Futures' booklet; and
> a West of England strategic plan consultation briefing paper.

We arranged the workshops shown in the table below to give representatives from a full range of providers, partners and stakeholders the opportunity to discuss the briefing paper. The groups invited included employers and under-represented groups. We also gave partners and stakeholders the opportunity to comment in writing.

Date of workshop	Groups which attended
25 October and 1 November	South West Regional Development Agency
25 October	Connexions
26 October	Adult community learning providers
29 October	Further education colleges
30 October	Work-based training providers
31 October	Employers
31 October	Business Link West
31 October and 1 November	Interest groups for those who are under-represented or under-achieving in learning
1 November	Adult community learning learners
6 November	Work-based training learners
7 November	Local authorities
8 November	Local education authorities and / sixth form heads
9 November	Bristol Chamber of Commerce
9 November	Further education college learners
12 November	Sixth form learners
20 November	Jobcentreplus
26 November	Independent school heads
14 December	Local learning partnerships
14 December	Government Office for the South West

We sent copies of the draft of the strategic plan to partners and stakeholders during January 2002 so that they could make further comments.

The Learning and Skills Standards Fund 2002/03

The Learning and Skills Standards Fund has undergone a radical and welcome change for 2002/03. The many separate funds have now come together into a single, unified programme. Most of the available funding is for us to allocate according to local priorities.

We will use the Standards Fund 2002/03 to support quality improvement and to help Council-funded providers to raise standards. School-sixth forms will continue to be covered by the DfES' Schools Standards Fund. This is because for 2002/03 there has been no reduction in the Schools Standards Fund paid to LEAs, and no increase our Standards Fund for schools with sixth forms. As a result, all whole-school improvements that would benefit the sixth form equally with the rest of the school will continue to be funded from Schools Standards Fund.

Types of providers in our area covered by the Standards Fund for 2002/03 are:

> further education (FE) colleges;
> work-based learning ;
> adult and community learning ;
> higher education institutions offering further education; and
> University for industry hubs.

We expect that some provider-development activity will be supported by the Local Initiatives Fund (LIF). We will co-ordinate all Standards Fund and LIF activity to make sure it is as efficient and effective as possible.

Local council members

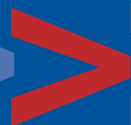The local council members have a broad range of talent and experience

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Muhammad Ali
Regional Director, Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisation - South West (CEMVO)

Michael Amos
Local organic farmer who represents the National Farmers Union's educational needs

Shirley Arayan
Principal and Chief Executive, Norton Radstock College

Andrea Arlidge
Head Teacher,
St Katherine's School Pill,
North Somerset

Adrian Becker
Councillor,
Bristol City Council

Russell Clease
Chair of Monk's Park School, Bristol governing body and Chair of North Bristol NHS Trust Negotiating & Consultative Committee

Asher Craig
Director of Programmes - CEMVO Chair of Bristol Regeneration Partnership and Chair of the Black Development Agency

Pamela Hayes
Education/People Management Consultant

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Paul May
Executive Director for West of England Local Learning and Skills Council

Alfred Morris
South West Regional Development Agency representative and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West of England

Stephen Parsons
Chief Executive of Redcliffe Ltd & Redcliffe Holdings Ltd and Chair of Wells Cathedral Stonemasons Ltd

John Savage (Chair)
Managing Director and Chief Executive of Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative

John Simpson
Director of Education for the Tribal Group

Geoffrey Shopland
Chairman and Chief Executive of Training for Tomorrow with business interests in the healthcare sector

Jane Taylor (Deputy Chair)
Senior Community Education Co-ordinator for Bristol City Council

Learning+Skills Council
West of England