

Learning and Skills Council

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A Strategy for Learning and Skills 2002 – 2005

Greater Merseyside



Learning+Skills Council
Greater Merseyside

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> Chair's Foreword

I am delighted, as Chair of Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council, to present to you the Strategy for Learning and Skills in Greater Merseyside.

The Learning and Skills Council has been set up with a clear remit to raise levels of skills and knowledge for all adults and young people to world-class standards. Our task is to ensure that the people of Greater Merseyside are equipped, through learning, with the necessary skills to participate fully, both in the economy and as citizens. We need to develop a culture where lifelong learning is an integral part of people's lives and is seen as a way of expanding life chances and creating better futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

Whilst the LSC's key objectives are common across England, our role is to ensure that our local plans reflect local needs. We will do this by understanding where Greater Merseyside differs from other parts of the country and developing appropriate responses. Local challenges include:

- > Low levels of participation in learning and below average levels of achievement amongst both young people and adults;
- > A higher than average number of people who lack the basic skills of literacy and numeracy;
- > A concentration of lack of access to learning and work amongst particular communities of people – both by geography and characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, gender, disability) – compounded by high levels of economic and social deprivation;
- > The general absence of a learning culture across Greater Merseyside, within both communities and the employer base.

In developing our Strategy, we have set out an ambition for ourselves, and for Greater Merseyside. We want to work with our partners to create a learning culture in Greater Merseyside, in which everyone is encouraged and enabled to reach their potential, where high quality provision is available to meet the needs and desires of learners, and people are equipped with the skills needed to enable the development of a prosperous and inclusive local economy.

We recognise that achieving this ambition will take time, and is probably beyond the lifetime of this plan. However, we have set out within our plan some challenging targets for participation and achievement for both young people and adults, which if achieved, will make a significant contribution towards delivering the ambition outlined above.

We have consulted widely on this Strategy, and have taken on board a large number of comments. These have been invaluable in developing a strategy that responds to a shared learning and skills agenda for Greater Merseyside. We know that we cannot achieve our ambition alone. We need to secure your involvement – as partners, deliverers of learning, employers, communities, young people and adults – in delivering this Strategy. We believe that by working together to identify the key challenges we face and agreeing how best we can face them, we have developed a Strategy that will provide a framework for everyone to more effectively align their resources and better meet local needs.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to deliver the stretching and challenging Strategy set out in this document.



Jim Michie
Chair, Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council
March 2002

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> National Planning Context – The LSC’s Objectives and Targets

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) came into existence at the end of March 2001, with a remit to integrate the planning and funding of all post-compulsory learning outside of Higher Education. Since April 2001, the LSC has been responsible for further education, work-based learning, workforce development and adult and community learning. Responsibility for funding school sixth form provision will pass to the LSC from April 2002. The LSC published its Corporate Plan in July 2001, setting out the organisation’s strategic framework to 2004. This strategic framework also provides the framework for the development of this local Strategic Plan. The Corporate Plan sets out our national mission and vision and our key objectives and targets for 2004.

Our mission is to raise participation and attainment through high quality education and training which puts learners first. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.

Nationally, our key tasks are:

- > To raise participation and achievement by young people
- > To increase demand for learning and achievement by adults and equalise opportunities through better access to learning
- > To raise skill levels for national competitiveness
- > To improve the quality of education and training delivery
- > To improve effectiveness and efficiency

Each of these objectives has associated outcome targets: these are national targets but their achievement is made up of the sum of local progress towards the targets. These targets, to be achieved by the end of 2004, are set out below. Our local objectives, targets and actions have been developed within this national framework, and relate back to these national key objectives. This plan therefore needs to be considered both in the context of this national planning framework, and the local planning environment, as described over.

Key Objectives	Targets for 2004
1. Extend participation in education, learning and training	80% of 16-18 year olds in structured learning (2000: 75%)
	Baseline and targets for adults to be set next year
2. Increase engagement of employers in workforce development	Develop measure of employer engagement next year
3. Raise achievement of young people	85% at Level 2 ¹ by age 19 (2000: 75%)
	55% at Level 3 by age 19 (2000: 51%)
4. Raise achievement of adults	Raise literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults
	% of adults at Level 2: target to be set next year
	52% of adults at Level 3 (2000: 47%)
5. Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction	Baselines and targets to be set next year

¹ See Annex 1 for explanation of qualification levels

> Local Planning Context

The local strategic environment

In developing this plan we are seeking to produce a framework for all our partners involved in the planning and delivery of learning and skills in Greater Merseyside, not just a Strategic Plan for Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (GMLSC). We would like our partners to contribute to and sign up to this learning and skills agenda, and as a starting point, we have sought to align our strategic objectives to those of our key regional and sub-regional partners – the North West Development Agency (NWDA), The Mersey Partnership (TMP), Greater Merseyside Connexions (GM Connexions), Jobcentre Plus, the Objective 1 Partnership and Greater Merseyside Enterprise (GME).

The NWDA has set out a vision for a learning region and offered a framework for achieving this vision. The Regional Learning and Skills Action Plan embraces four strategic objectives, which align closely with those for the Greater Merseyside area. These objectives are:

- > To raise the demand of employers for skilled people, to increase their skills investment and to improve their workforce development capacity;
- > To raise individual demand for skills;
- > To invest in equality of opportunity for learning leading to increased social inclusion; and
- > To invest in improvements to the regional labour and learning market.

Table 1 sets out where we see the linkages between our strategic objectives and the strategies of the NWDA and our other key strategic partners.

Table 1

GMLSC OBJECTIVES	NWDA	Connexions	Objective 1	Jobcentre Plus	TMP	GME
1. Increasing the participation and achievement of young people	•	•	•		•	
2. Increasing the participation and achievement of adults	•		•	•	•	
3. Meeting the workforce development and skills needs of employers	•		•	•	•	•
4. Improving the quality, relevance and coherence of local learning provision	•	•	•	•	•	

We are developing this plan within a landscape of local strategic change. TMP has recently taken on a strategic role on behalf of local partners and has just published its Action Plan for Merseyside. We have a new Connexions service for Greater Merseyside, with a role to provide coherent support and guidance for young people. The new Jobcentre Plus, which brings together the Employment Service and the Benefits Agency, has a broad focus to support all people of working age that are in receipt of benefits. The Objective 1 programme, running from 2000 to 2006, is being managed more strategically with an emphasis on commissioning activity that meets the needs of Merseyside. GME are responsible for providing business support to SMEs across the area and are key partners in delivering the workforce development agenda. The NWDA has been given the role of developing, in collaboration with GMLSC, Jobcentre Plus, GONW, and Local Authorities, a Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action, ensuring a coherent approach to employment, skills and economic development.

All of these organisations (together with many at district level) have an important role to play in responding to the skills and learning needs of Greater Merseyside. We will make most progress by agreeing what the local skills and learning priorities are and working together to deliver this Strategy.

Working in partnership

It is essential that GMLSC works in partnership to achieve the objectives set out in this Strategy. Whilst the LSC is a young organisation with a new remit, we have the benefit here in Greater Merseyside of working in an area with a long history of partnership working. We will seek to be a positive influence and establish a reputation for collaboration and partnership. In addition to our key regional and sub-regional partners set out earlier, our partners include:

- > Learning providers
- > Local Education Authorities (LEAs)
- > Local Learning Partnerships
- > Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)
- > Voluntary sector, community groups and agencies
- > Local authorities
- > Education Business Links
- > Employers
- > Merseytravel
- > Chambers of Commerce
- > Diocesan Trustees
- > Trades Unions
- > Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Maximising our contribution to economic development

Learning plays an important role in the economic development and regeneration of an area, and our activities form a key element of local regeneration plans. We have focussed on developing a shared agenda with sub-regional, district and neighbourhood level partnerships through our participation on many of our local strategic partnerships and through sitting on the boards of many local regeneration partnerships.

We also play an active role on Objective 1 partnerships, at both a strategic and operational level, to ensure the effective alignment of Objective 1 funding with our own. The Objective 1 Partnership, as set out in their Corporate Plan, have undertaken to use this Strategy as 'a shared strategic framework against which GMLSC and partner investment in learning and skills can be planned'.

We also sit on the Board of TMP, and have signed up to their recently produced 'Action Plan for the City Region'. This Action Plan will be used by the NWDA to inform their investment decisions in Merseyside, and provides a vehicle for co-ordinating the economic development activities of partners. We worked closely with TMP to develop the learning and skills dimension of the Action Plan, and have reflected within this Strategy the economic development priorities identified for the sub-region and the role that learning can play in achieving these priorities.

To support us in focussing our resources on local economic development and regeneration priorities, we plan to set targets for participation in those wards in Greater Merseyside that are within the 10% most deprived wards in the country. This will enable us to align our resources to those procured by LSPs through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and to other regeneration funding such as the Single Regeneration Budget and Objective 1.

> Needs Analysis

In developing this Strategy, we have considered:

- > the skills needed to support the local and regional economy;
- > the needs of learners if they are to achieve their potential; and
- > the extent to which our learning infrastructure meets these needs.

In the pages that follow, we set out a summary of the analysis used to inform our identification of local challenges, described within the main body of the Strategy. It is these challenges that we must address if we are to achieve our ambition.

Background – the local socio-economic context

Greater Merseyside remains an area facing enormous challenges to upskill its current and future workforce. It is one of England's most densely populated urban areas with 1.5 million people living in the six districts of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral. The resident labour force is around 916,000, of whom around 652,000 are economically active (71% compared to 79% in England). There are 596,000 in employment, of whom 543,000 are employees and 48,000 are self-employed. Of those not in employment, 264,000 are economically inactive, with around 40,000 (6.2%) claiming benefit at the end of 2001, a proportion far higher than for England overall (3.0%).

Employment has been growing over the past five years and now 553,000 people are employed in Greater Merseyside businesses, with growing sectors in finance, retail and tourism. The area has a large public sector, representing a much higher proportion of employment than that of England, with nearly four in ten employees working in this sector. A lower proportion of the workforce is employed in manufacturing than elsewhere, but this still represents around 80,000 people (14%, England 15%).

Greater Merseyside has 26,000 businesses registered for VAT, with a registration rate below that for England (Greater Merseyside 29%, England 41%). Compared to the national average, the area has fewer small firms and a higher proportion of large firms. By most measures, the Greater Merseyside economy performs poorly when compared to the rest of the country. For example, GDP per head stands at 70% of that for the UK (1998).

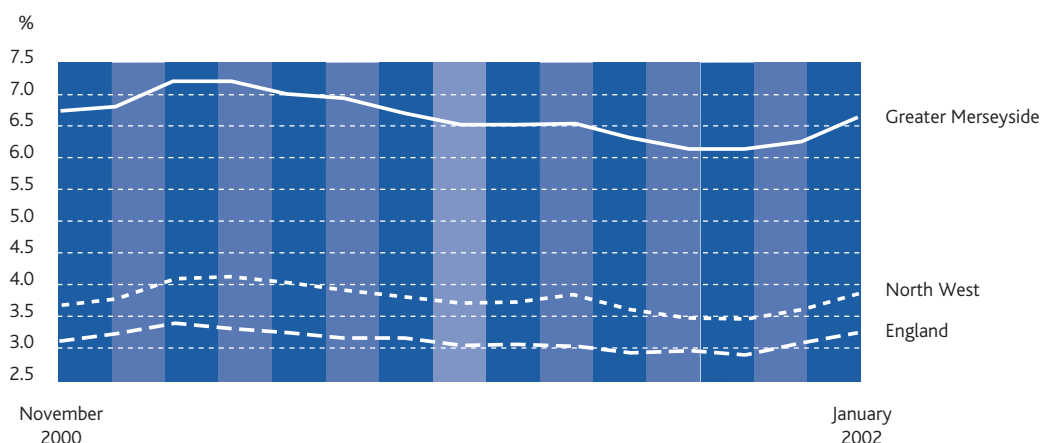
Within an overall population decline forecast for the Greater Merseyside area, the population in the 19 year old cohort is expected to rise from 19,800 in 2000 to 20,900 in 2004. Similarly, the cohort aged 16-18 is anticipated to increase from 60,200 to 62,800.

Out of 139 wards in the Greater Merseyside area, 74 are within the top 10% of the most deprived in England as defined by DTLR's Index of Deprivation. In total, these wards contain around 50% of the working age population.

Despite continuing to fall, unemployment rates in Greater Merseyside remain higher than for England overall. Claimant unemployment remains twice the England average. Chart 1 clearly demonstrates the disparities between Greater Merseyside and the rest of the country. There are also disparities within Greater Merseyside. Table 2 sets out the unemployment rates for each district.

There remains significant unemployment amongst 16-19 year olds in Greater Merseyside. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) annual estimate for 2000 suggests that around 11,000 young people (10%) are unemployed at any one time (Local Labour Force Survey, 2000). In areas of high unemployment employees who do not develop the necessary skills are most at risk of becoming unemployed and have difficulty in becoming re-employed.

Unemployment Rates November 2000 to January 2002



Source: National Statistics (NOMIS)

Table 2: Unemployment by District: January 2002

	Male Claimants	Male Rate %	Female Claimants	Female Rate %	Total Claimants	Total Rate %
Halton	2,388	7.2	611	2.6	2,999	5.3
Knowsley	3,988	12.6	1,099	5.2	5,087	9.7
Liverpool	13,228	11.1	3,357	2.9	16,585	7.1
Sefton	4,815	8.6	1,328	2.3	6,143	5.4
St Helens	3,061	8.3	937	3.3	3,998	6.1
Wirral	6,114	9.7	1,646	2.8	7,760	6.3
Greater Merseyside	33,594	9.9	8,978	2.9	42,572	6.6
North West	102,149	5.7	28,427	1.9	130,576	3.9
England	618,996	4.5	197,715	1.7	816,711	3.2

Source: National Statistics (NOMIS)

At the time of the 1991 Census of Population, people from ethnic minorities made up 6% of the total UK population. In Greater Merseyside, it was only 2%, amounting to some 27,000 people. Between 1991 and 1997, the local ethnic population grew by some 12% bringing it to over 30,000. During the same period, the white population decreased. Local data on the nature and size of the ethnic population is difficult to obtain although it is possible to identify Merseyside's three biggest communities for whom English is a second language as the Chinese, Arabic and Somali communities. Liverpool has the main concentrations of these groups. Additionally, there is a significant Gujarati speaking community in Wirral.

There is evidence to suggest that ethnic minorities have an unemployment rate twice that of the white population and that unemployment is particularly high amongst black populations.

The demand for skills

Working with employers to understand their skills needs is paramount in meeting the LSC's agenda. Our first step in developing this understanding has been an extensive survey of employer skills needs, the results of which are described here.

Skill gaps within the existing workforce

In 28% of establishments in Greater Merseyside, the employer believed that not all their staff are fully proficient to do their job; in other words, they thought their organisation had a 'skills gap'. The incidence of skills gaps is highest in the construction sector at 35% and lowest in other personal service industries at 17%. Within those organisations with skill gaps, the key gaps identified tended to be generic skills such as customer handling skills (26%), verbal communication skills (23%), written communication skills (20%), problem solving skills (18%) and team working skills (17%).

In almost a third of these cases, the cause of the skill gap was identified as new staff who had only been in the job for a short while. However, the next two most frequently cited reasons – that employees are reluctant to accept/make the most of training opportunities (23%) and that the employer themselves had failed to train and develop staff (23%) – are clearly problems to be tackled if we are to fill these skills gaps.

These skill gaps have a direct impact on employers. The key impacts identified by employers were difficulties in meeting the required quality standards (28%), difficulties in meeting customer service objectives (27%) and increased operating costs (25%).

Whilst many employers have taken action to overcome skills gaps – by providing further training (58%) and increasing/expanding trainee programmes (27%) – a significant minority (35%) had not used training as a way of dealing with gaps in their employees' skills. Over a fifth of these employers said that there was no particular reason why they hadn't provided training. Of those that could identify a reason, the most frequent responses were that they could not afford to have people taken out of the workplace (9%), there was no/not much training available (9%), and that employees weren't motivated to train and wouldn't take it up if offered (5%).

Skills shortages within the labour pool

Greater Merseyside organisations indicated fewer skills shortages than nationally, but the indications are that these are a higher proportion than would be expected given the unemployment levels in the area. At the time of the survey, 12% of businesses had vacancies, 6% of organisations had 'hard-to-fill' vacancies, and 3% of organisations had 'skill shortage' vacancies. We estimate that some 1,300 employers across Greater Merseyside are facing skill shortages.

The greatest number of vacancies in Greater Merseyside are in sales and customer service occupations, skilled trade occupations, administrative and secretarial occupations and associate professional and technical occupations. More employers in construction, transport and other personal services had vacancies than those in other sectors.

Employers identified the key causes of skill shortage vacancies to be a low number of applicants with the required skills, a low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality and a lack of the qualifications the company demands. The skills characteristics of the skill shortage vacancies were identified as technical and practical skills, customer handling skills, oral and verbal communication skills, personal attributes and problem solving skills.

As with skill gaps, skill shortages impact directly on companies. The impact of vacancies caused by a skills shortage includes a loss of business or orders to competitors, difficulties in meeting customer service objectives and delays in developing new products or services. To try and attract applicants with the right skills, employers have increased the salaries to make the jobs more attractive, increased advertising or recruitment spend and expanded the recruitment channels.

Future skills needs

Companies were asked to identify the type of skills their staff were likely to need in future, considering the broad occupational areas within their companies (Table 3).

Table 3: Future skill needs by broad occupational areas

Occupational area	Skill need
Managers/professional and associate professional and technical staff	Advanced IT or software skills (16%)
	Customer handling skills (9%)
	Management skills (9%)
Administrative and secretarial staff	Advanced IT or software skills (23%)
	Basic computer literacy skills (14%)
	Customer handling skills (6%)
Personal service occupations	Customer handling skills (12%)
	Other technical and practical skills (8%)
	Team working skills (5%)
Sales and service staff	Customer handling skills (27%)
	Advanced IT or software skills (10%)
	Oral or verbal communication skills (7%)
Skilled trade, operations and elementary staff	Other technical and practical skills (13%)
	Customer handling skills (7%)
	Basic computer literacy skills (7%)

Source: Greater Merseyside Employer Skills Survey 2001

Participation and achievement

Participation by young people

Overall, 80% of young people in Greater Merseyside continued in some form of learning at the end of their compulsory education, more than 16,000 young people (based on 1999/00 data). This varies from 61% in Knowsley to 92% in Sefton. At least 3% of young people leave school at 16 and go into employment without any training. These young people are less likely to have achieved a Level 2 qualification by the end of their compulsory learning. We estimate current participation in learning of 16-18 year olds to be 46,500. 48% of these are in further education, 25% in school sixth forms and 17% in work-based learning.

Figures from DfES suggest that participation in learning by young people is not significantly behind the national average. However, this still means that more than 4,000 young people stop participating in learning when they leave school at 16. By the age of 17, this has risen to 5,500, and based on national estimates, to almost 8,000 by the age of 18.

Particular groups of young people are less likely to participate in learning. National research suggests that young people with disabilities are twice as likely to not participate in post-16 learning. Teenage mothers are less likely to participate in learning, and local evidence suggests that in parts of Greater Merseyside there are higher rates of teenage pregnancy than in the country as a whole.

Achievement of young people

Level 2 achievement rates at the end of compulsory learning are lower in Greater Merseyside (43%) than the England average (50%). Table 4 indicates that achievement varies substantially across the districts.

In recent years, the gap between local and national performance has reduced, with the performance of all six LEAs at 5+ A*-C grade GCSEs increasing at a faster rate than the England average.

Table 4: GCSE achievement at age 16: 2001

	% achieving 5+ A*-C grade GCSEs
Halton	40
Knowsley	27
Liverpool	37
Sefton	53
St Helens	46
Wirral	51
Greater Merseyside	43
North West	46
England	50

Source: DfES

A sizeable minority of young people who leave education at 16 have failed to achieve the equivalent of a Level 1 qualification. In 2001, it was estimated that 1,500 young people in Greater Merseyside failed to achieve any passes at GCSE (7% across Greater Merseyside compared to an England average of less than 6%). Across the six LEAs, the proportion of pupils who failed to achieve any GCSE passes in 2001 ranged from 4% to 11%.

Female pupils have higher levels of achievement than males. 48% of female 16 year olds achieved 5 A*-Cs at GCSE compared to 39% of males. 6% of young women failed to achieve any passes at GCSE compared to 9% of young men.

Nationally, participation and achievement in education is higher amongst ethnic minorities than the white population, although this of course varies between different ethnic minority groups. Local data is difficult to obtain.

Achievement of Level 2 at 19 is slightly below the national average. We estimate the percentage of 19 year olds with a Level 2 qualification to be 73% (14,606 aged 19), compared to 75% for England as a whole. However, the challenge is enormous if we compare our current achievement to that for the national target for 2004 of 85%.

Some young people are failing to achieve because they do not reach the end of their course. Retention rates vary across all providers: for example, in-year retention in the FE sector in Greater Merseyside ranges from 72%-95%. In the two recent Area Inspection reports, poor retention rates were identified as a key weakness in the work-based learning programme.

Participation of adults

Nationally, it is estimated that around 26% of the working age population have not undertaken any form of learning in the last 3 years. Locally, indications are that around 224,000 aged 16 to retirement age have not undertaken any learning in the past 3 years, a higher proportion than nationally.

There are significant obstacles to increasing the demand for learning. Almost a third of female respondents to the DfES's 1997 Adult Learning Survey did not have time for learning because of family commitments, whilst more than a fifth of adults cited the cost of learning as a barrier. The reasons why non-learners don't participate are wide ranging and are set out in Chart 3.

Some groups are less likely to participate than others. Nationally, the participation rate for adult learning is 77% for men, compared to 71% for women. Women's lower participation in the labour market probably explains this, given the role of the workplace in driving learning.

Additionally, women are significantly under-represented in learning at NVQ Level 3.

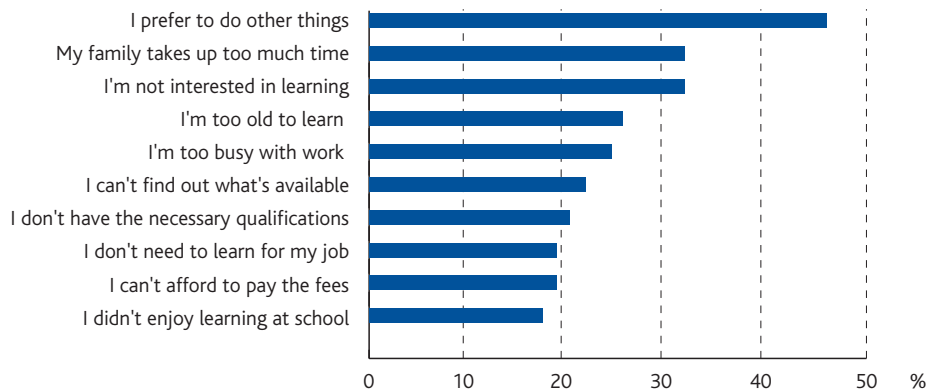
Participation in learning is also influenced by age. The participation rate for 18-24 year olds is 86%. As retirement approaches, the rate drops to 66% (55-59 year olds). There is a marked decrease in participation rates after the age of 60 which is again probably largely due to the decreased participation of the older groups in the labour market. People over the age of 50 represent less than 10% of people in training, although they represent 30% of the working age population. However, people are living longer, and working longer: approximately 16,000 Greater Merseyside residents are over retirement age and still in employment.

Chart 2: Proportion of adults (aged 16-69) participating in learning in the last 3 years



Source: Local Labour Force Survey, National Statistics, 2000

Chart 3: Reasons why adult non-learners don't participate in learning



Source: National Adult Learning Survey, 1997

Achievement of adults

The Labour Force Survey indicates that 44% of economically active people aged between 18 and retirement have achieved a Level 3 qualification, equivalent to 282,000 people (46% in England overall). Across Greater Merseyside, the proportion of adults with a Level 3 or higher qualification varies from 36% to 47%.

In Greater Merseyside, 22% of people of working age have no qualifications, equivalent to 199,000 people (16% across England), compared to 14% of those who are economically active (89,000 people).

Table 5: Adult qualification achievement: 2000

Economically active persons of working age	Greater Merseyside	England
No qualifications	14	12
Level 1 or above	86	88
Level 2 or above	63	63
Level 3 or above	44	46
Level 4 or above	24	27

Source: Local Labour Force Survey, National Statistics

There are a significant number of adults in Greater Merseyside who lack necessary basic skills. Almost 29% of working age adults (259,000 people) have poor numeracy skills, and more than 27% have poor literacy skills (245,000 people). Adults with poor basic skills are more likely to be on lower incomes, be unemployed, have low self-confidence and low motivation and have children that struggle at school.

Nationally, figures suggest that some ethnic groups have lower levels of achievement. For example, less than 25% of African-Caribbean boys achieve 5 GCSEs (A*-C) compared to nearly 50% of all white pupils. Amongst youth trainees, young people from minority ethnic groups are less likely to obtain qualifications and jobs. Post-16 educational achievement also varies, with 74% of white students in colleges achieving a Level 3 qualification, compared to 69% for Indian students (the next best performing ethnic group) and 59% for Black Caribbean students (the lowest performing ethnic group).

Nationally, disabled people are twice as likely to have no qualifications as non-disabled people. The Local Labour Force Survey 2000 suggests that Greater Merseyside has the greatest proportion of people with disabilities who did not have a qualification (40% compared to an England average of 30%).

Greater Merseyside's learning infrastructure

Colleges

There are 16 organisations in Greater Merseyside delivering further education (FE) funded by GMLSC, of which there are 11 colleges, 2 LEAs, 1 HEI and 2 institutions. Of the colleges, 7 are general FE colleges and 4 are sixth form colleges.

In 2000/01, 136,426 students attended these institutions. Table 6 shows the breakdown of these students by age and full/part-time status. In recent years, we have seen an expansion in FE, with growth in numbers of 28% over the last 4 years.

A wide range of different subjects are available within the FE sector, with at least 70 subjects (sub-programme level) offered. Retention and achievement rates, although generally at or above average, do vary. For full-time students, retention varies from 79% to 95% between institutions. Achievement rates between institutions vary from 61% to 96%.

Table 6: Students in FE: 2000/01

		Male	Female	Total
16-18	Full-time	7,557	7,661	15,218
	Part-time	4,065	3,640	7,705
	All	11,622	11,301	22,923
19+	Full-time	4,042	4,562	8,604
	Part-time	40,905	61,666	102,571
	All	44,947	66,228	111,175
Total all students				136,426

Note: Full-time part-year students are counted as part-time. Total all students includes those under 16 and those with a 'missing age'
Source: ISR20

Within the sub-region, we have two beacon colleges, Knowsley Community College and Carmel Sixth Form College. In general, this sector is meeting and exceeding quality standards, with satisfactory or better inspection grades across the board.

Schools

There are 148 secondary schools in Greater Merseyside, including 39 special schools. Of the 109 mainstream schools, 72 have their own sixth forms. There are 33 faith schools providing 16-18 education. There are also 17 special schools, offering provision for 16-18 year old young people with learning and/or physical disabilities. Approximately 11,570 16-18 year olds were studying in schools across the sub-region in 2001. Table 7 shows the breakdown of pupils in schools.

The size of school sixth forms varies across Greater Merseyside. Excluding special schools, sixth form sizes range from 15 to 440 pupils. 32 schools have sixth forms with less than 150 pupils. There appears to be a correlation between the size of a sixth form and the performance of its pupils, as set out in Chart 4. However, we need to ensure that any assessment of provision takes into account the value added a school gives to its students.

Table 7: LEA School Participation data: 2001

	Halton	Knowsley	Liverpool	St Helens	Sefton	Wirral	GMLSC
11-16 schools	3	8	3	6	10	6	36
Pupils	3,113	6,835	1,455	4,311	7,014	5,339	28,067
11-18 schools	4	3 ²	30	6	12	17	72
11-15 pupils	5,008	3,082	27,854	6,798	11,545	15,662	69,949
16-18 pupils	466	323	4,161 ³	1,050	2,117	3,171	11,288
Special 11-16 schools	2	4	8	3	2	3	22
Pupils	145	256	397	240	159	202	1,399
Special 11-18 schools	2	2	5	1	4	3	17
11-15 pupils	47	59	256	39	94	330	825
16-18 pupils	29	36	85	15	39	74	278
Total all schools	8,808	10,591	34,208	12,453	20,968	24,778	111,806

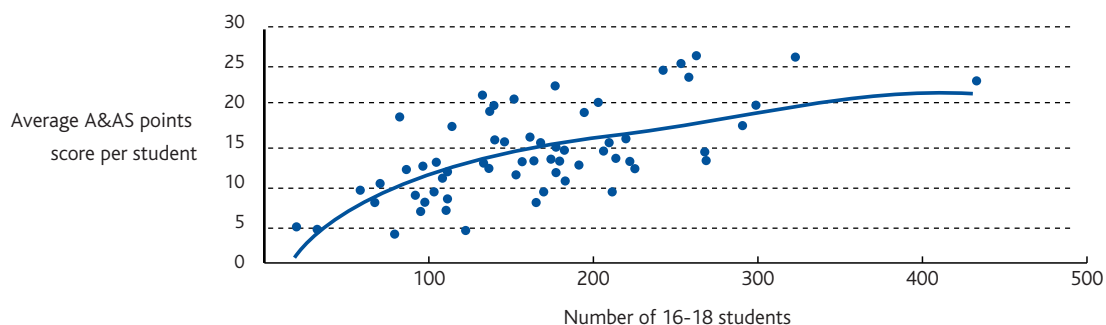
Source: Annual Schools' Census (Form 7)

² From September 2002 there will be two 11-18 schools operating in Knowsley

³ Includes 14-19 year olds

Chart 4

Relationship between size of Sixth Form and average A & AS points score per student



Source: DfES

Most school sixth forms offer A/AS level qualifications, with many also making AVCEs available. One school only offers vocational qualifications in its sixth form. Achievement at GCE A/AS level varies across schools, from an average point per pupil score of 4.3 to 26.1. Issues about the range of subject areas and qualification types and levels available to young people in school sixth forms have been raised in both Area Inspection reports to date.

Work-based learning provision

Within Greater Merseyside, a higher proportion of school leavers enter work-based learning than nationally (13% in Greater Merseyside compared to 9% in England). More than 12,000 people are currently in training and we expect this figure to be higher by the end of 2001/02. More than 80% of trainees are Advanced or Foundation Modern Apprentices. In addition, 300 young people who need further support before moving into vocational training are currently accessing Lifeskills or Preparatory Training provision.

A breakdown of trainees by age and employment status in each area is set out in Table 8.

Work-based learning is supported by many of the sub-region's employers, with 73% of trainees employed. The programme offers training in all major occupational areas and at all levels. The biggest take up of training is in retailing and customer service (18%), followed by business administration (16%), construction (14%) and health care (14%).

The work-based learning programme is currently delivered by some 102 providers, 7 of which are colleges. The size of providers varies widely in terms of number of trainees, with the smallest having 7 GMLSC funded trainees and the largest 1,100.

Table 8: Work-based learning trainees: 2001

Area	16-18	19+	Employed
Halton	70%	30%	70%
Knowsley	66%	34%	70%
Liverpool	66%	34%	66%
Sefton	60%	40%	77%
St Helens	72%	28%	65%
Wirral	66%	34%	74%
Out of Area	58%	42%	87%
Total	64%	36%	73%

Source: GMLSC Management Information

Although there is some excellent work-based learning provision, there are also some poorly performing providers. Based on an analysis of inspections carried out to October 2001 (covering 75% of the provider base), over half of providers were awarded an unsatisfactory grade within one or more areas of inspection.

LEA Adult and Community Learning (ACL)

ACL provision is a key tool for facilitating access to learning for those traditionally difficult to engage, by delivering learning in community locations, using delivery methods that will engage traditional non-learners. Provision has tended to offer the first step into learning and many people have used this as a non-threatening route back into learning. The emphasis has been on offering support to ensure progression into more formal types of learning.

The adult education curriculum is a varied one, and the provision that has been offered in Greater Merseyside includes family learning, family literacy and numeracy, basic skills, ICT, ESOL, community capacity building, access to further education and employability initiatives, as well as recreation and leisure classes. Some LEAs have also offered vocational provision as designated External Institutions, and some have their own information, advice and guidance services in recognition of the role learner support services play in progression.

LEAs have traditionally had a strong relationship with the voluntary and community sector. There are a range of collaborative arrangements across Greater Merseyside where LEAs have provided support or partnership arrangements to encourage community organisations to develop their role in widening participation by attracting under-represented groups into learning.

The precise volume of delivery is not easy to determine currently because the data reporting arrangements for LEAs have changed recently. In 1999/00, more than 22,000 ACL opportunities were delivered, including repeat participants. Of these opportunities, 1,300 were in basic skills training. Almost three-quarters of these opportunities were taken up by females, and almost a quarter by people over 60 years old.

Emerging issues

In Autumn 2001 we commissioned a strategic review of education and training provision across Greater Merseyside. This review will be concluded in March, but has already identified a number of emerging issues we will need to address in the lifetime of this plan. In summary, these are:

- > The need for all pupils to receive comprehensive and impartial careers advice to avoid drift into unsuitable options. In particular, the review identified a lack of awareness and low perceptions of work-based learning, particularly amongst school based careers advisers.
- > A lack of cohesion in the work-based learning offer, with 80% of provision concentrated in 13 of the 60 occupational groups, and the poor quality of some WBL provision.
- > The limited effectiveness of progression routes from special schools.
- > The low value placed on key skills by learners, parents and employers.
- > The limitations of smaller sixth forms and the need to offer high quality provision while maintaining a sixth form environment for those for whom it is appropriate.
- > A lack of outstanding college based provision in many curriculum areas, together with a lack of trust in labour market information as a basis for curriculum planning and a limited R&D culture in FE.
- > Readiness to travel to learn is limited by attitudinal factors and (in some cases) the transport infrastructure.
- > Adult opportunities are fragmented and lacking clear purpose in some areas, and adult outreach provision is substantially dependent on (temporary) external funding. There is limited availability of adult guidance points and only limited sharing of delivery premises.
- > There is no clear responsibility for parental awareness and commitment.
- > Learner feedback variable in reliability and effectiveness and is over-reliant on quantitative data of limited reliability. There is a clear need for an overview of the pattern and causes of drop out from learning.
- > There is a lack of consideration of cross-border issues in strategic planning (e.g. South Sefton/North Liverpool).
- > There is a lack of engagement with employers in planning and supporting the curriculum. In particular, there is a need for coordination of efforts to address basic skills in the workforce.
- > There is a need to ensure sufficient flexibility in funding streams to address Greater Merseyside's basic skills and Level 1 and 2 needs against a national drive for higher level progression.

> Our Ambition and Targets

Our ambition for Greater Merseyside

Our ambition for Greater Merseyside reflects the local challenges we face and the scale of change that we believe is necessary to enable us to address the barriers to learning faced by the people and employers of Greater Merseyside.

"To create a learning culture in Greater Merseyside in which everyone is encouraged and enabled to reach their potential, where high quality provision is available to meet the needs and desires of learners, and people are equipped with the skills needed to enable the development of a prosperous local economy."

Achieving this ambition will take time, and is probably beyond the lifetime of this plan. Below we set out our local strategic targets for 2004 which represent our first step towards achieving that ambition.

Our key objectives and targets for 2004

Table 9: Strategic Plan Targets 2002/04

Strategic			
Strategic Objective (SO)	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target 2004
SO1 Increasing the participation and achievement of young People	16-18 participation in learning	46,468	+5,000
	19 yr olds achieving level 2	14,600	+1,415
	19 yr olds achieving level 3	7,892	+ 1,152
	16-18 year olds participating in FE or WBL from wards in the 10% most deprived in England ⁵	15,345	Tba ⁶
SO2 Increasing the participation and achievement of adults	Adult participation in learning ⁷	453,000	Target tba
	Adults achieving level 2	413,000	Target tba
	Adults achieving level 3 ⁸	283,000	+ 52,493
	Basic Skills achievements	N/a	23,336
	Adults participating in FE or WBL from wards in the 10% most deprived in England ⁹	54,926	Tba ¹⁰
SO3 Meeting the workforce development and skills needs of employers	Indicator for employer engagement	Indicator tba	Target tba
SO4 Improving the quality, relevance and coherence of local learning provision	Indicator for provider quality	Indicator tba	Target tba
	Learner satisfaction	Indicator tba	Target tba

⁵ Baseline includes FE 16-18 and WBL 16-18

⁶ To be agreed Summer 2002

⁷ Population 16+

⁸ Economically active population only

⁹ Based on FE 19+ and WBL 19+ data

¹⁰ To be agreed following agreement of national and local participation targets

As part of our local planning process, we have set local targets that will contribute to the achievement of the LSC's national targets. This enables us to clearly demonstrate the link between what we do locally and our progress towards the national targets. These local targets represent a huge challenge for us all and it will only be possible to achieve them if we are able to access the resources required to fund the additional levels of participation they indicate. Our Strategy has been structured to support us in the achievement of our targets:

- > Increasing the participation and achievement of young people
- > Increasing the participation and achievement of adults
- > Meeting the workforce development and skills needs of employers
- > Improving the quality of local learning provision

We have set out in Table 9 these key strategic objectives and the impact targets we have set to measure the progress that GMLSC and our partners make towards them.

Our approach to equality of opportunity and social exclusion

Underpinning all that we do is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and social inclusion. In implementing our plans, we will strive to give everyone the chance through education, training and work, to realise their full potential and thus help to build an inclusive and fair society and a competitive economy.

It is the role of the LSC to work towards becoming a beacon of good practice, promoting, mainstreaming and prioritising equality of opportunity and social inclusion in all its functions, and working with local providers to make a genuine difference to learners. GMLSC is committed to promoting equal opportunities and diversity internally through policies and procedures, and externally by embedding equal opportunities and social inclusion into all programmes, policies and actions.

We have mainstreamed equality of opportunity and social inclusion throughout this Strategy, addressing inequalities of race, gender and disability, together with inclusion of those disadvantaged by age or multiple deprivation. Mainstreaming builds equality openly and actively into policy-making processes at all levels and at all stages. It ensures policies, programmes and actions specifically seek to achieve equality, and do not put any group at a disadvantage. In cases where some groups are already at a disadvantage, mainstreaming identified where special measures are needed. The aim is to provide equal opportunities for everyone in Greater Merseyside.

We will measure and track progress towards our local targets for all such groups, and have produced a detailed Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Delivery Plan, which sets out our operational priorities for 2002/03, with delivery targets to reflect our commitment to equalising opportunities in learning and increasing social inclusion throughout Greater Merseyside. Nationally, the LSC is developing a set of Equality and Diversity Impact Measures, which will be used by all LSCs to monitor their progress.

Our planning framework

From these strategic objectives, we have developed a planning framework that links our strategic impacts to our operational outputs and results. This framework is set out over. A more detailed table at Annex 2 sets out for each strand of the Strategy the key operational objectives and targets that we must deliver against if we are to achieve our strategic targets, together with definitions of the measures we are using. The appropriateness and usability of these targets will be reviewed in Autumn 2002 as part of the development of our 2003/06 Strategic Plan.

Strategic Objective 1: Increasing the Participation and Achievement of Young People

Operational Objective 1.1: Bring back into learning those young people who are currently disengaged

Operational Objective 1.2: Improve the retention, progression and achievement of young people

Strategic Objective 2: Increasing the Participation and Achievement of Adults

Operational Objective 2.1: Drive up the demand for learning amongst adults

Operational Objective 2.2: Enable adults to progress through learning and increase achievement

Strategic Objective 3: Meeting the Workforce Development and Skills Needs of Employers

Operational Objective 3.1: Stimulate the workforce development activity of employers

Operational Objective 3.2: Ensure that learning provision meets employer needs

Operational Objective 3.3: Stimulate employment growth

Strategic Objective 4: Improving the quality, relevance and coherence of provision

Operational Objective 4.1: Raise provider quality and standards

Operational Objective 4.2: Develop a coherent and responsive learning infrastructure

GMLSC and our partners believe there is great value in setting targets at district level, both to reflect the differences between areas and to increase their relevance to local partners. Once Greater Merseyside targets have been agreed, we will work with Learning Partnerships to disaggregate the strategic targets set out in Table 9. We also recognise that even within districts there can be wide variations in participation and achievement, and will set targets for participation from the most disadvantaged wards in Greater Merseyside over the summer.

> Strategic Objective 1: Increasing the Participation and Achievement of Young People

The analysis of local needs is set out in greater detail in the section on participation and achievement earlier. In summary, key local challenges are:

- > To re-engage those young people who drop out of learning. Around 4,000 young people stop participating in learning in Greater Merseyside when they leave school at 16 (estimated 20% of cohort), rising to 5,600 by the age of 17 (estimated 28% of cohort).
- > To reduce the number of young people that currently drop out of learning at 16, and critically, at 17. Retention rates vary across all providers: for example, in-year retention in the FE sector in Greater Merseyside ranges from 72% to 95%.
- > To differentiate the delivery of the Strategy across the Greater Merseyside area to reflect the different needs each district. For example, there is significant variation in the percentage of young people not continuing in learning at the end of compulsory education across the Greater Merseyside area – from 39% in Knowsley to 8% in Sefton.
- > To work with LEAs to ensure that young people are given the best opportunity of achieving Level 2 qualifications by the age of 16. Whilst our best performing district has a 5 or more GCSE A*-C achievement rate of 53% at 16 (compared to a national average of 50%), in our poorest performing district this is only 27%.
- > To provide a range of learning opportunities post-16 that reflect pre-16 achievement. A sizeable minority of the young people who leave education at 16 have failed to achieve the equivalent of a Level 1 qualification.
- > To respond to the needs of young people less likely to participate and achieve. Groups particularly affected include care leavers, teenage mothers, disabled young people, certain ethnic minorities and those suffering social exclusion.
- > To continue to increase the achievement of Level 2 at 19 which is currently broadly similar to the national average. We estimate the percentage of 19 year olds with a Level 2 qualification to be 73% in Greater Merseyside, compared to 75% in England as a whole.
- > To improve achievement of Level 3 qualifications where Greater Merseyside currently lags a long way behind the national average. Only 40% of 19 year olds are currently qualified to Level 3 in the sub-region, compared to the national rate of 51%.

This analysis suggests that the Strategic Objective to **'Improve the Participation and Achievement of Young People'** can be secured by pursuing two key operational objectives:

- > To bring back into learning those young people who are currently disengaged; and
- > To improve the retention, progression and achievement of young people.

The Strategy outlined in this section will rely heavily on effective close working relationships with Greater Merseyside Connexions, LEAs and our providers for its delivery. This objective is very much about widening, not just increasing, participation and we will need to ensure that we effectively link with the work of other agencies involved in supporting young people, such as the Youth Service, Youth Offending Teams and Education Business Link Organisations.

We have also reflected within this section of the Strategy the Government's 14-19 agenda and have, where appropriate, set out action we will take in relation to 14-16 year olds. The recent Green Paper '14-19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards' sets out a clear role for the LSC in supporting schools, FE colleges and work-based learning providers to develop new learning options that support the development of flexible individual learning pathways. We, and our partners, believe that the changes proposed in the Green Paper offer a real opportunity to give young people access to learning that truly meets their needs and address the poor levels of participation and achievement in parts of Greater Merseyside. Full implementation of the changes envisaged in the Green Paper will take longer than the lifetime of this plan, but we will continue to work with providers and local LEAs to develop local timetables that meet the needs of young people across Greater Merseyside.

Operational Objective 1.1: To bring back into learning those young people who have disengaged

This operational objective targets those young people who are disengaged from and/or disaffected with learning. The analysis above suggests three categories of tactical response:

- a) An appropriate and accessible curriculum;
- b) Developing and sustaining support mechanisms; and
- c) Marketing and promotion.

Appropriate and accessible curriculum

GMLSC will **fund a range of education and training opportunities** that relate to the needs of disengaged young people. A key element of this will be ensuring that there is sufficient, appropriate Entry Level and Level 1 provision, including basic skills, to enable those young people who have not achieved this standard by the age of 16, and for whom it is an appropriate 'first step', to enter learning. We will continue to develop the range of support available to young people through our Lifeskills programme which plays a key role in supporting young people to engage in learning (see box below). We also need to ensure that we use appropriate delivery methods (e.g. evening access, remote learning, community based provision) that respond to the barriers faced by some young people, and work with partners to address other barriers to learning such as transport links.

Lifeskills – helping to bring young people back into learning

The Lifeskills programme is designed to help those young people who require intensive support to progress into mainstream training, education or employment. Typically, the programme supports those young people who have been excluded from school or have been long-term non-attendees, young offenders or those who, by particular circumstance or attitude, need intensive additional support to engage in learning.

Lifeskills offers a wide range of support and provision, tailored to meet exactly an individual's needs. Some of the areas that could be included on a training plan are vocational tasters, confidence building, self-awareness raising, youth arts, sport and leisure, job seeking skills and money management. Given the diverse needs of this client group, providers offer the type of support required to meet the preferred learning style of the individual and deliver the support in a variety of settings e.g. community and youth centres.

We will continue to develop, with our delivery partners, new pathways for learning that will encourage young people to view learning as a continuous process from 14 to 19 and beyond. In particular, GMLSC will **fund vocational learning opportunities for 14-16 year olds** for whom the school environment is not working and who are at risk of disaffection from the learning process.

Ensuring **equality of opportunity** in learning is a key responsibility for the LSC. We will work with our providers to remove barriers to learning – in relation to e.g. access, learning materials – in terms of race, gender, disability, age, marital status, religion, sexual orientation or that experienced by those suffering social exclusion. Our Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Delivery Plan for 2002/03 sets out in detail some of the activities planned in relation to provision for young people.

Learner support

For young people outside learning to be able to access **information, advice and guidance** we need, with GM Connexions, to ensure local, community based access. Such support may need to be delivered through community venues or linked into other support mechanisms accessed by young people.

For some young people – those with particular social or learning needs who are not engaged in learning – we will need to **respond directly to the needs of those individuals**. We will work with Connexions to identify and implement targeted strategies for engaging disengaged young people through integrated multi-agency provision.

We need to help young people to **overcome the barriers** they may face to engaging in learning by offering appropriate support. This could be financial support (e.g. LEA administered Educational Maintenance Allowance), learner support (e.g. dealing with dyslexia) or pastoral support (e.g. supporting those with substance misuse problems or homelessness).

Marketing and promotion

For some young people in Greater Merseyside there is little value attached to learning. High levels of deprivation and social exclusion in some areas have eroded any link between learning and employment. As part of any marketing strategy for young people, we will need to work with our partners to **demonstrate the benefits of learning** – for employment, income, social interaction and pleasure – and the consequences of not learning. We will work closely with GM Connexions and providers to ensure that both young people and their families/carers understand the opportunities available to them.

We need to ensure that young people currently employed without training and their employers are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to **paid time off for study**. We will work with Greater Merseyside Connexions, who have lead responsibility for this, to develop appropriate promotional, support and evaluation strategies.

Operational Objective 1.2: To improve the retention, progression and achievement of young people.

This operational objective targets those young people who are already engaged with learning to ensure that they achieve their potential. The earlier analysis suggests three categories of tactical response:

- a) An appropriate and accessible curriculum;
- b) Better support for learners; and
- c) Marketing and promotion

Appropriate and accessible curriculum

GMLSC will **fund a comprehensive range of education and training opportunities** that relate to the aspirations and needs of young people, and where appropriate, employers, ensuring that the volume, level and range of opportunities funded strike a balance between these.

We will **ensure that provision is planned collaboratively** with our providers. We will agree realistic and challenging targets with providers and ensure that the funding allocation process

reflects our local targets and the ability of providers to deliver. We are working with providers to undertake a Greater Merseyside wide strategic review of provision, which will be supported by district level reviews and Area Inspection reports, to determine how best to shape provision over the coming years to meet the needs of young people. Additionally, we will develop arrangements with GM Connexions to ensure that the needs of young people they identify are effectively fed into the planning cycle.

To support the progression of young people we will work with partners to create **clear and stimulating pathways up to and beyond 19**, including Foundation Degrees, which reflect both vocational and academic preferences. We will work with a wide range of partners, including HEIs, to raise young people's learning aspirations and ensure that young people are equipped to effectively make the transition between different levels of learning through to HE. A joint HEFCE/LSC publication, 'Partnerships for Progression', sets out how HE and the LSC can work together to help achieve the Government's target of 50% participation in HE by 2010. We will agree with our local HEIs the joint actions we can take to deliver this agenda.

Knowsley 14-19 Collegiate – a new approach to learning

Knowsley is one of the poorest performing districts in the country in terms of its achievement levels at 16 and 19. In direct response to a recent Area Inspection report, all local partners – the LEA, schools, Knowsley Community College, GM Connexions, work-based learning providers and GMLSC – are working together through the Learning Partnership to develop a ground breaking model for 14-19 learning in Knowsley which will dramatically improve levels of achievement.

This approach places individual learners at the centre of the system, rather than the institution by enabling learners to have access to the best learning opportunities available across the area rather than in any one provider. It seeks to tackle the institutional and systematic barriers to a 14-19 phase of learning through proposals for greater collaboration between schools, colleges and other providers in providing learning for 14-19 year olds. It also recognises that achievement in both academic and vocational routes has a parity of esteem, and will develop vocational options for all students, which are linked to individual potential and employability.

The Knowsley Collegiate approach consists of four main strands:

- > The development of an enhanced learner-focussed curriculum, which is planned across the Borough, drawing on the expertise, specialisms and resources of all partners.
- > A coherent delivery mechanism that can be accessed across institutions, supported by a comprehensive ICT network. There will be a robust management structure for the collegiate approach which represents the needs and philosophies of each institution.
- > The development of innovative vocational and learning centres, linked to industry. Such centres will focus in individuals vocational aptitudes and accessible to the full ability range. The first stage of this, a Vocational Learning Centre for the 14-19 phase at Knowsley College, is currently under development.
- > The creation of a virtual learning environment that is accessible in all learning centres and supports an 'any place, any time' approach to learning.

It is intended that the first phase of this innovative approach to 14-19 learning be available to learners in Knowsley from September 2002.

We need to ensure that education and training for young people is delivered in **a high quality learning environment**. We will work with providers to provide young people with appropriate, up to date equipment, including ICT access, and support proposals for capital developments that facilitate the participation and achievement of young people.

Appropriate learning opportunities need to be made available for **young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities** to enable them to go on from compulsory education and achieve their potential. We will secure appropriate provision for these young people in accordance with Section 13 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

We will encourage young people to improve their **understanding of the world of work** by developing and promoting links between schools, post-16 providers and employers, working with the Greater Merseyside Education Business Link Organisation and its constituent organisations.

We will work with providers and Connexions to ensure that young people are **recruited onto appropriate courses** – in terms of both level and type of learning – that will best enable them to fulfil their potential.

Learner support

Key to attracting young people into learning and retaining them once there is **providing high quality, impartial information, advice and guidance**. Recent Area Inspections of Knowsley and Liverpool identified sometimes inappropriate pre-16 guidance as a significant factor in poor participation and achievement rates in these areas. Greater Merseyside Connexions have been charged with the lead on this and GMLSC will work closely with them in their work with schools, colleges and work-based learning providers. We will ensure that the Connexions Service has access to information on learning opportunities, the achievement of young people and how this relates to the local labour market.

GMLSC will work with providers to ensure that all young people for whom poor literacy or numeracy skills might be a barrier to achievement have **access to high quality basic skills support** and that this is delivered in a way that will break down taboos about basic skills education/training. Details of proposed actions are set out in GMLSC's draft Basic Skills Action Plan, which will be implemented from April 2002.

We will work with providers to **develop support mechanisms to improve retention** and retain young people at risk of leaving their programme or course early. Some of the ways in which this issue will be addressed include the development of mentors for work-based learners, financial incentives for learners to complete, the provision of pastoral support to help young people deal with problems outside learning, and support for disabled young people to access learning.

We will secure high quality **work experience and education business link activity** including mentoring, industry days and development programmes. We will also provide professional development opportunities for teachers so that they are better able to prepare their pupils for the world of work.

Marketing and promotion

We need to ensure that young people are aware of the different routes and opportunities available to them to enable them to progress and develop. Whilst individual providers will be responsible for marketing their programmes and courses, organisations such as GM Connexions and ourselves will deliver effective PR and marketing campaigns to young people that **promote greater understanding of the value of learning and the landscape of choice** in relation to post-16 learning.

Strategic and operational targets

The strategic and operational targets for Strategic Objective 1 are set out in Table 10. The operational targets will be central in informing business planning and contracting priorities in the next planning cycle. Operational targets have been chosen as stepping-stones to achieve the overall strategic targets. In establishing and setting operational targets, care has been taken to ensure that perverse outcomes are not generated (e.g. through unanticipated changes to provider behaviour).

The first two targets for Operational Objective 1.1 – Participation in Learning at 16 and Participation in Learning at 17 are shared with the Greater Merseyside Connexions Service and, as such, will be secured through the effective operational integration of activities supported by both Connexions and GMLSC.

Figure 1 illustrates how funding mechanisms link our strategic and operational objectives. Set out are GMLSC and partner funding streams for young people, both core and discretionary, that can be marshalled to support the achievement of our operational objectives and hence our strategic impact targets.

Table 10: Strategic Plan Targets 2002/04: Strategic Objective 1

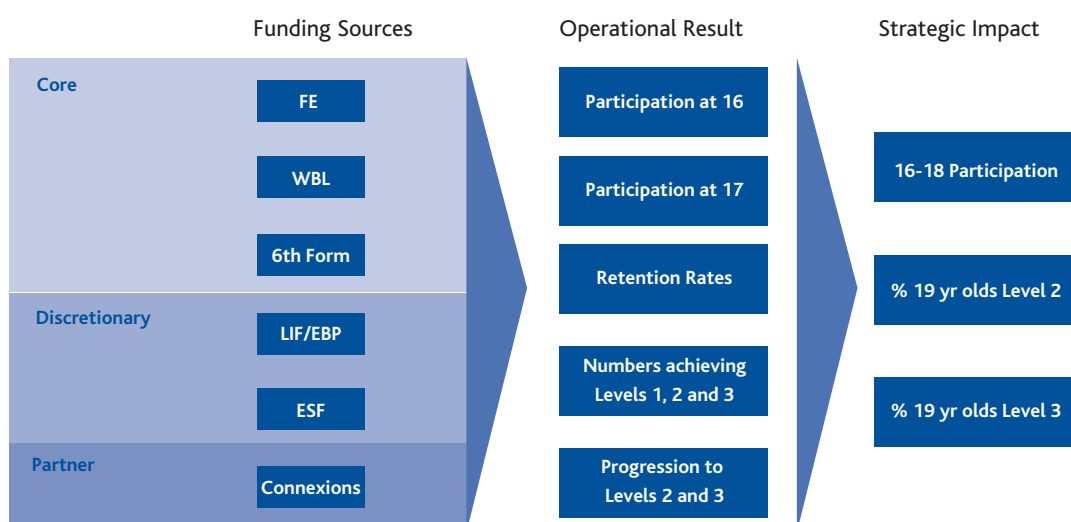
Strategic Targets			
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target 2004
SO1 Increasing the participation and achievement of young People	16-18 participation in learning	46,468	+5,000
	19 yr olds achieving level 2	14,600	+1,415
	19 yr olds achieving level 3	7,892	+ 1,152
	16-18 year olds participating in FE or WBL from wards in the 10% most deprived in England	15,345	Tba

Operational Targets			
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target 2004
Operational Objective 1.1 Bring back into learning those young people who are currently disengaged	Participation in learning at 16	16,270	17,991
	Participation in learning at 17	14,391	16,758
Operational Objective 1.2 Improve the retention, progression and achievement of young people	FE retention rate	83.3%	85.2%
	FE achievement rate	76.2%	82.7%
	WBL retention rate	69.0%	75.0%
	WBL NVQ achievement rate	69%	75%
	WBL framework achievement rate	63.6%	70%
	Basic Skills achievements	N/a	11,760

Figure 1

Strategic Objective 1: From Investment to Impact

Increasing the participation and Achievement of Young People



> Strategic Objective 2: Increasing the Participation and Achievement of Adults

The analysis of local needs is set out in greater detail in the section on participation and achievement earlier. In summary, key local challenges are:

- > To narrow the gap between adult participation in Greater Merseyside (currently 65%) and England as a whole (currently 77%).
- > To use learning as a tool to increase economic activity (Greater Merseyside has the lowest economic activity rate in England) and to better enable people to access employment (Greater Merseyside has the highest unemployment rate). For many adults in Greater Merseyside, the first challenge will be to tackle poor basic skills. Almost 29% of working age adults have poor numeracy skills and more than 27% have poor literacy skills.
- > To help adults overcome the barriers to learning. A great deal of research has been carried out nationally to identify the barriers to learning faced by adults. The cost of learning, family and caring commitments, a lack of confidence and poor prior experience of education or training are all significant in preventing adults from accessing learning.
- > To ensure equality of access and achievement for those groups least likely to access learning, including ex-offenders/prison populations, people suffering from high levels of deprivation, specific cultural/ethnic groups, disabled people, those with social, domestic or caring responsibilities and people aged 50+.
- > To improve achievement rates amongst adults and reduce the gap between Greater Merseyside and England. Currently 41.5% of adults have achieved a Level 3 qualification (compared to 46% nationally), and 22.1% have achieved a Level 4 qualification (nationally this figure stands at 26.5%).

This analysis suggests that the strategic objective to **'Increase participation and achievement by adults'** can be achieved by pursuing two key operational objectives:

- > To drive up the demand for learning amongst adults; and
- > To enable adults to progress through learning and increase achievement

Operational Objective 2.1: Drive up the demand for learning amongst adults

This objective focuses on how we can encourage adults to return to learning. The analysis above suggests three areas of response:

- a) Improving our promotion and marketing of learning;
- b) An appropriate and accessible curriculum; and
- c) Providing better support mechanisms

Promotion and marketing

We will work with our partners, including the Greater Merseyside IAG Partnership, Learning Partnerships and LEAs, to develop ***promotional materials that demonstrate the benefits learning brings*** in terms of employment prospects, family benefits and personal satisfaction.

We will utilise national campaigns and our in-house marketing and PR expertise to ensure that **local PR and marketing** builds on national LSC and government campaigns, adding a local perspective where this adds relevance and impact. We will work with our providers to develop ways to **draw into learning those people who have not engaged in any structured learning in the previous three years**, building on existing practice of University for Industry (Ufi), Adult Learners' Week and other initiatives.

We will **target the promotion of learning at the hardest to reach** non-learners through other agencies working with these groups, such as social services, probation services, employers, trade unions and health services and through the development of an 'outreach' approach.

Addressing the needs of deprived communities - working with partners to add value

Addressing the needs of deprived communities - working with partners to add value

A key forum for local partners to work together in Greater Merseyside is the emerging Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). LSPs have been asked by the Government to develop local community strategies that set out how the partners will work together to achieve improvements in service delivery to their communities. These community strategies will also set out how the local partnership intends to use allocation from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to tackle deprivation in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

As the key partner in post-16 learning in each of our districts, we want to ensure that we use our mainstream programmes, as well as discretionary funding, to target those areas of deprivation identified as within the 10% most deprived in the country, in line with the methodology used for the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. We have therefore included targets for increased participation in those wards identified as most deprived. The wards we will target are:

Halton: Castlefields, Riverside, Kingsway, Murdishaw, Palace Field, Grange, Brookvale, Halton Brook, Norton and Mersey

Knowsley: Princess, Longview, Cherryfield, Kirkby Central, Northwood, Cantril Farm, Tower Hill, Knowsley Park, St. Michaels, St. Gabriels, Halewood South, Whitefield, Page Moss, Park, Halewood West, Prescot East, Whiston South, Whiston North

Liverpool: Speke, Everton, Vauxhall, Granby, Pirrie, Breckfield, Melrose, Clubmoor, Smithdown, Dovecot, Netherley, Kensington, St. Mary's, Valley, Abercromby, County, Dingle, Tuebrook, Fazakerley, Anfield, Broadgreen, Picton, Old Swan, Gillmoss, Warbreck

Sefton: Linacre, Orrell, Derby, Netherton, Ford, Litherland, St. Oswald, Church

St Helens: Parr and Hardshaw, Broad Oak, West Sutton, Marshalls Cross, Queen's Park, Thatto Heath, Grange Park

Wirral: Bidston, Birkenhead, Tranmere, Seacombe, Leasowe, Egerton

Appropriate and accessible curriculum

Local access to learning is important to encourage participation by those who have not recently participated in learning. GMLSC, with its providers and other partners will develop **better local access to learning**, including basic skills. A key element of this will be support for LEAs in the provision of more family learning programmes. We will also work with learning providers and other agencies to develop a network of facilities to bring learning opportunities to communities. Local companies will also be encouraged to open up their learning facilities to communities in evenings and at weekends. We also need to ensure that we make available learning opportunities that are flexible enough to attract employed people. Additionally, we need to work with partners such as Merseytravel to ensure that transport strategies respond make links between communities and learning opportunities.

Improving the basic skills of adults is a key element of our Strategy, and reflects the substantial proportion of adults in Greater Merseyside who have problems with basic literacy and/or numeracy. Our Basic Skills Action Plan (which runs from April 2002) sets out ways in which, working with partners and through the providers we fund, we can contribute to the National Strategy for Basic Skills and achieve our challenging basic skills targets. In working towards this target, we will work closely with Jobcentre Plus to ensure that appropriate linkages are made with their Work Skills programme. We will use development funding to encourage innovative basic skills provision and ensure that basic skills learning materials are relevant to adults and their daily lives. If we are to meet our targets for basic skills we will need to increase the number of basic skills tutors, and in particular seek to encourage more tutors from disadvantaged backgrounds to act as role models.

We will encourage and promote **the use of new technologies** as a way of enabling adults to access learning in their communities and homes, as well as with their employer, working with learndirect to ensure that appropriate courses and support are available to new learners.

We will ensure that **specialist provision** is available to meet the needs of those adults disadvantaged in the learning market. For example, we will provide appropriate learning opportunities for minority ethnic groups, including English for Speakers of Other Languages, so that adults have the opportunity to reach their potential. We will also support access to inclusive and specialist learning opportunities for disabled people and those with learning difficulties.

With our partners, we will ensure that we have a wide range of **'first step' or 'taster' opportunities** to encourage participation in learning.

Learner support

We will work with GM Connexions and local Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Partnerships to ensure that **high quality adult information, advice and guidance services** are available to people in appropriate locations, at the right times and in a range of formats (e.g. face to face, online, Braille, printed); and that appropriate linkages to learndirect are in place.

We will help to **overcome financial barriers** to learning by promoting Career Development Loans and working with LEAs and colleges to devise imaginative fee admission schemes in order to make provision for adults more accessible and easy to understand. The LSC has been tasked, working with DfES, to develop a successor to ILAs to support individual learners.

We will work with partners to overcome other barriers to learning faced by adults. In particular, we will work with Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs) and learning providers **to improve access to learning for those with childcare or other caring responsibilities**. We will also work with EYDCPs to promote working in childcare settings and provide funding to support their training strategies.

Operational Objective 2.2: Enable adults to progress through learning and increase achievement

This operational objective is focussed on adults who have accessed learning to ensure that they are able to achieve their full potential. The analysis above suggests the following responses:

- a) An appropriate and accessible curriculum; and
- b) Improved support for learners

Appropriate and accessible curriculum

We will provide **a range of high quality learning opportunities** for adults that meet their needs. For young adults, we will continue to offer work-based learning opportunities through the Modern Apprenticeship programme. Vocational and academic learning opportunities will be available to adults through the Further Education sector, and we will work with providers to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility to enable employed adults to access education and training. More informal learning will be available through a network of Adult and Community Learning centres across Greater Merseyside. Given the comparatively low level of adult achievement in Greater Merseyside, we will ensure that sufficient entry level basic skills and ICT learning opportunities are available and that these are presented in imaginative and attractive ways.

If we are to begin to develop a culture of lifelong learning, we need to ensure that there are clear **progression routes** between different types and levels of learning. There is a particular need for us to work with providers to develop routes to enable people to move from informal and basic skills provision into formal learning. We will work to develop a flexible and responsive programme of learning opportunities that will support such progression and promote greater collaboration between providers. We will also work with providers, local HEIs and the Merseyside Open College Network to continue and develop routes for adults to access HE, and ensure that LSC and HEI provision is complementary.

We recognise the potential of ICT to transform access to learning, enabling adults to learn at work, at home, or within their community, at a time and pace that meets their needs. We will work with our partners to develop **an e-learning strategy** for Greater Merseyside which brings together the existing range of activity currently being funded by the Government (such as UK Online) and those funded locally through the Objective 1 programme and other regeneration funds.

We need to ensure **equality of access and of success** for adults. Further details of our approach are in our Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Action Plan, but will include, for example, the development of learning materials that take into account the different characteristics of learners from different cultural and social backgrounds.

Providing appropriate support

We will work with the six adult IAG networks to **improve the availability of information and advice on progression** to other learning to keep adults in learning and encourage a culture of lifelong learning. In addition, we will provide up to date analysis of the labour market to support adults in making learning choices and career progression.

We will work with providers to ensure that **appropriate financial, pastoral and learning support** mechanisms are in place to enable adults to complete their course and achieve. Our partners have told us that it is important to celebrate the achievement of adult learners, and we will work with them to develop recognition schemes.

We will provide **support for adult learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities** and ensure that disadvantaged groups of learners have access to the additional support they need to achieve their learning goals.

Strategic and operational targets

The strategic and operational targets for Strategic Objective 2 are set out in Table 11. The operational targets will be key in developing our business planning and contracting priorities for 2001/02. Figure 2 illustrates how we can utilise different funding streams, both core and discretionary, to support the achievement of our operational objectives for adults, and hence our strategic objectives.

Table 11: Strategic Plan Targets 2002/04: Strategic Objective 2

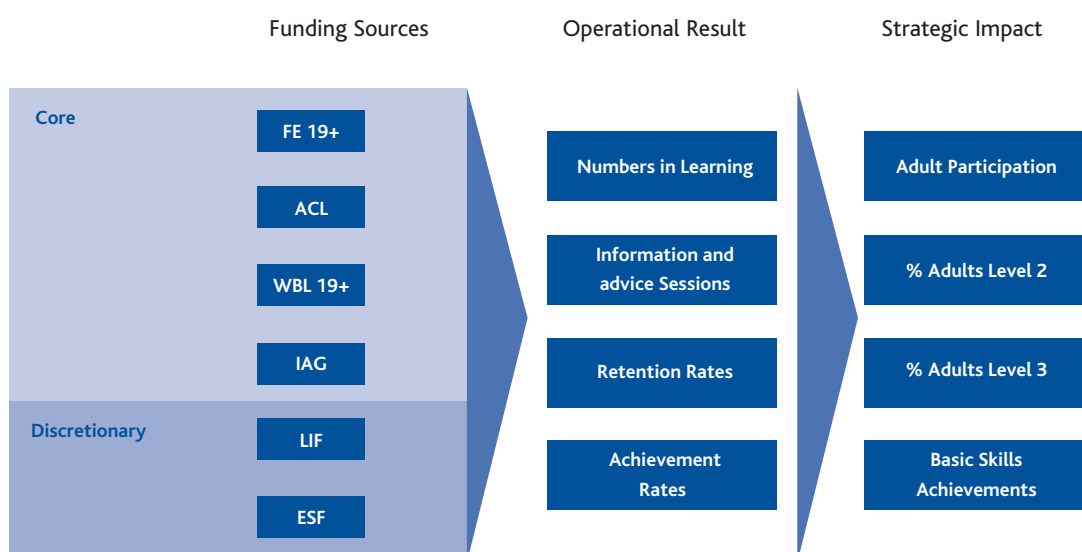
Strategic Targets			
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target 2004
SO2 Increasing the participation and achievement of adults	Adult participation in learning	453,000	Target tba
	Adults achieving level 2	413,000	Target tba
	Adults achieving level 3	283,000	+ 52,493
	Basic Skills achievements	N/a	23,336
	Adults participating from wards in the 10% most deprived in England	54,926	Tba

Operational Targets			
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target 2004
Operational Objective 2.1 Drive up the demand for learning amongst adults	Numbers in LSC supported provision	99,362	+9,214
	Information sessions	4,679	Tba
	Advice sessions	8,010	Tba
Operational Objective 2.2 Enable adults to progress through learning and increase achievement	FE retention rate (adults)	83.0%	84.4%
	FE achievement rate	74.8%	78.5%
	WBL retention rate	60.9%	64.5%
	WBL NVQ achievement rate	82.7%	85.0%
	WBL framework achievement rate	47.3%	65.0%
	Basic Skills achievements	N/a	12,240

Figure 2

Strategic Objective 2: From Investment to Impact

Increasing the participation and Achievement of Adults



> Strategic Objective 3: Meeting the Workforce Development and Skills Needs of Employers

The analysis of local needs is set out in greater detail in the section on skills needs earlier. In summary, key local challenges are:

- > To increase the proportion of Greater Merseyside workforce receiving job related training, currently 11% compared to a figure of 13% for Britain. Part of the explanation for this is that Greater Merseyside has a higher proportion (than the national figure) of employees in lower skill occupations and a smaller proportion of the workforce qualified to NVQ 3 or above.
- > To tackle basic skills in the workplace. Greater Merseyside is behind the national average in terms of both literacy and numeracy, with the problem being most severe in Halton, Knowsley and Liverpool, and less pronounced in Sefton and Wirral. Further analysis shows particular wards in Halton, Knowsley and Liverpool having approximately four in ten adults lacking these basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- > To ensure that the local population has the skills necessary to meet existing skills shortages and to take advantage of anticipated employment growth (0.5% p.a. in the North West).
- > To overcome barriers to employers training their staff. Such barriers include a fear of staff being poached, a failure to recognise the benefits of training, financial constraints, loss of working time, appropriateness of courses/qualifications and resistance from employees.
- > To ensure that the workforce is equipped with the generic employability and key skills required by all employers, irrespective of sector and technical skill requirements.
- > To ensure that planners, providers and users of workforce development support are able to access comprehensive shared information in skill needs.
- > To maximise employment opportunities in the sub-region, providing support for existing employers to grow their workforces and for new employers to locate in Greater Merseyside.
- > To promote equality of opportunity in the workplace and in recruitment practices.

In responding to these issues, we have identified three operational objectives where we believe we need to take action if we are to ensure that the workforce of Greater Merseyside is equipped with the right skills to improve the area's competitiveness and to promote economic growth:

- > Driving up the demand for workforce development from employers;
- > Developing a learning infrastructure that responds to local employers' needs; and
- > Stimulating employment growth

In developing this element of the Strategy, we have considered the conclusions of both 'Skills for Productivity and Employability', a report commissioned from the CBI and TUC by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and 'In Demand: Adult Skills for the 21st Century', published by the Cabinet Office's Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU). The Government has asked the PIU to continue to work with DfES, DTI and the Treasury to take their work forward to develop the Government's workforce development policy and implementation plan. This will be published in the summer of 2002. The LSC's national workforce development strategy, due for publication in April 2002, sets out the LSC's response to the issues identified in the PIU report. Our own Strategy will be reviewed next year in light of national policy.

We also, in response to our analysis of the challenge facing us, propose to adopt – in line with national policy on the role of Sector Skills Councils and key local strategies – a sectoral approach to skills development. In doing so, GMLSC will work with all sectors that are important to the local economy. This sectoral approach will underpin our activities in relation to workforce development, and indeed inform our approach to securing appropriate vocational learning opportunities for adults and young people. However, we recognise that many companies straddle more than one sector, and that all sectors of our economy need to be supported to engage more in workforce development.

In its recently published Action Plan for Greater Merseyside, TMP has identified the following sectors as being critical to the future prosperity of the sub-region:

- > Biotechnology/life sciences
- > Port and related activities
- > Construction
- > Health
- > Tourism
- > ICT and new media

These sectors will be the focus of NWDA investment in Greater Merseyside in the period 2002/04. These will also therefore be included in the sectors with which GMLSC proposes to **proactively** engage in the period of this Strategic Plan.

Operational Objective 3.1: To stimulate the workforce development activity of employers

This operational objective seeks to stimulate a culture change in Greater Merseyside's employers through promoting the benefits of workforce development and through providing advice, guidance and support in adopting best practice. The analysis above suggests three categories of tactical response:

- a) Improving the promotion and marketing of workforce development to employers;
- b) Improving the advice and guidance available to employers; and
- c) Identifying and disseminating best practice

Promotion and marketing

Together with our key strategic partners, we will seek to develop **persuasive messages** aimed at employers and individuals highlighting the benefits of learning at all levels (including basic skills), and for all sectors of the workforce in terms of impact on business and individual performance.

We will also promote **collaborative activity** for providers targeting their marketing with particular sectors or geographies to reduce employer confusion. We will also seek to establish data sharing protocols between GMLSC, GME and providers to support the development of a more coherent and customer-focussed service.

Advice and guidance

Employers tell us that it is not clear how they access the right support for workforce development, and we need to rationalise the number of agencies contacting businesses. We will work with partners to **reduce employer confusion** about workforce development services and learning opportunities available to them and their staff, and seek to establish a single agreed point of access for employers to access up to date information and advice.

We will also collaborate closely with GME and Objective 1 partners to ensure that **workforce development is integral to the diagnostic business support service** offered to SMEs in Greater Merseyside. This will be supported through the use of core LSC budgets and ESF from Objectives 1 and 3.

Best practice

We will utilise existing networks (e.g. excellence-net) to promote **best practice sharing** and enable employers to overcome the barriers to workforce development. In collaboration with partners, we will develop **sectoral clustering** and networking to support the sharing of excellent workforce development practices and ideas in key local sectors. Sectors we intend to proactively work with will include biotechnology/life sciences, port and related activities, construction, health, tourism, ICT and new media.

We will continue to support companies to take up **Investors in People**. Both GMLSC and GME (who deliver IiP support to SMEs) will support the development of practices that underpin the standard.

Operational Objective 3.2: To ensure that learning provision meets employers needs

This operational objective seeks to affect a step-change in the ability of the provider infrastructure to respond to employer needs. The analysis above suggests that a dual focus is required to both respond to the immediate needs of employers and their employees and to plan for the longer-term skill needs of the local economy. This approach suggests the need for three categories of tactical response:

- a) Responding to the current skill needs of employers;
- b) Responding to the skill needs of employees; and
- c) Planning and provision to meet the future needs of the local economy

Responding to the current skill needs of employers

GMLSC will deliver the workforce development elements of the demand-led company development programme that will be mediated by GME's diagnostic Action Planning process. GMLSC will deploy core budgets (WBL, FE, WfD) alongside co-financed ESF (Objectives 1 and 3) to deliver **bespoke services to companies** that will encompass the development of company and individual learning plans, basic, technical, functional and management training.

We will work with employers to provide **basic skills** learning to their employees, through e.g. the introduction of the National Basic Skills Brokerage Scheme; working with the TUC Learning Services to develop the skills and knowledge of learning representatives in the workplace to support those with identified basic skill needs.

We will make available appropriate learning provision to enable local employers and their staff to maximise their **use of new technologies** in the workplace. In addition, we will promote the use of online learning in the workplace to improve access to learning, working closely with Ufl to ensure that learning materials are developed that meet the needs of SMEs.

We will procure a comprehensive range of **work-based learning opportunities** for young people that meets both the needs of employers and individuals. GMLSC has commissioned a major review of the WBL route in Greater Merseyside to ensure that the scope and quality of provision and providers is sufficient to meet the needs of learners and the local economy, and will use this to inform the planning of WBL provision.

We will support HEIs to improve the employment and retention of graduates in local business and **promote links between HEIs and industry**.

Responding to the skill needs of employees

Together with partners, GMLSC will foster and develop **employee development programmes** and promote new and innovative approaches including online learning in the workplace. This will include collaboration with relevant organisations such as Ufl to ensure that learning materials are developed that are appropriate to the needs of SMEs. Much of the provision development activity outlined under strategic objective 2, 'Improving the participation and achievement of adults' will contribute to this operational objective.

Employee Development – Linking Learning to Business Support

One of the best ways of encouraging employers and their employees to get involved in learning is by integrating skills support into business support. GMLSC is currently developing a unique project to support companies implementing the Business Excellence Model. Not only are they provided with practical training and consultancy support on the European Foundation Quality Model, but delegates on the programme can use this programme to gain units towards an NVQ level 3 or 4. Participants can then be supported to work towards the additional units required for the full award. This will be the first of its kind.

We will work with initiatives such as the TUC's Learning Services to promote the development of **work-based mechanisms** to support and extend learning in the workplace, for example, through the creation of work-based learning champions.

We will work with GMLSC's provider network to ensure that appropriate community-based opportunities are offered to those employees unlikely to receive training from their employer. We will target those in **low skill occupations** and those with **low levels of qualification**, and promote delivery at a time and location convenient to these individuals.

Meet the future needs of the local economy

We will work with partners to improve the quality and availability of sectoral labour market and skills information, and to develop a shared understanding of Greater Merseyside's **future skill needs and skill gaps**. This analysis will be used by the LSC and its partners to procure and provide appropriate learning provision.

We will ensure that workforce development support and training provision responds to **sectoral skill needs**, working closely with the new Sector Skills Councils.

The Greater Merseyside Skills Research Forum is convened and chaired by GMLSC and involves a wide range of stakeholders who commission or undertake research and evaluation of labour market and skills issues in the sub-region. The Forum will ensure that **research into employer needs is coherent** and that findings are shared and understood.

Operational Objective 3.3: To stimulate employment growth

This operational objective seeks to affect a step-change in the ability of the provider infrastructure to respond to growing and inward investing employers. A dual focus is required to both respond to the immediate needs of these employers and to plan for the longer-term skill needs of growth sectors in the local economy. This approach suggests the need for two categories of tactical response:

- a) Responding to current skill needs; and
- b) Responding to future skill needs

Responding to current skill needs

GMLSC will work with local agencies, including TMP, GME and Objective 1 (Objective 3 in Halton) to ensure that local resources are galvanised to present relevant packages of workforce

development **support to potential inward investors**. It is our intention that this 'offer' to inward investors be integrated with the site, premises, infrastructure and business support 'offers'. Inward investors should be offered a holistic service through a single point of contact (such as an Account Manager). GMLSC will actively support the development of such a customer-focused and demand-led approach.

GMLSC will deploy core budgets (WBL, FE, WfD) alongside co-financed ESF (Objectives 1 and 3) to deliver **bespoke services to growth companies** that will encompass the development of company and individual learning plans, basic, technical, functional and management training.

Future skills needs

GMLSC will source appropriate research, analysis and intelligence (including drawing on the work of partners such as NWDA and TMP) to enable us to **respond to the needs of identified growth sectors** for Greater Merseyside in our procurement processes to ensure that we are continuously developing an appropriately pool of local skills.

We will develop a **cultural change programme** based on successful models used locally to support large employers where industrial and economic change is prevalent.

Strategic and operational targets

The strategic and operational targets for Strategic Objective 3 are set out Table 12. The operational targets will be central in informing business planning and contracting priorities in the next planning cycle. Operational targets have been chosen as stepping-stones to achieve the overall strategic targets. In establishing and setting operational targets, care has been taken to ensure that perverse outcomes are not generated (e.g. through unanticipated changes to provider behaviour).

The targets for companies undergoing diagnostics, companies assisted, and employees assisted are shared with GME (our local SBS franchise) through the Priority 1 funded workforce development programme and, as such, will be secured through the effective operational integration of activities supported by both GME and GMLSC.

Table 12: Strategic Plan Targets 2002/04: Strategic Objective 3

Strategic Targets			
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target 2004
SO3 Meeting the workforce development and skills needs of employers	Indicator for employer engagement	Indicator tba	Target tba

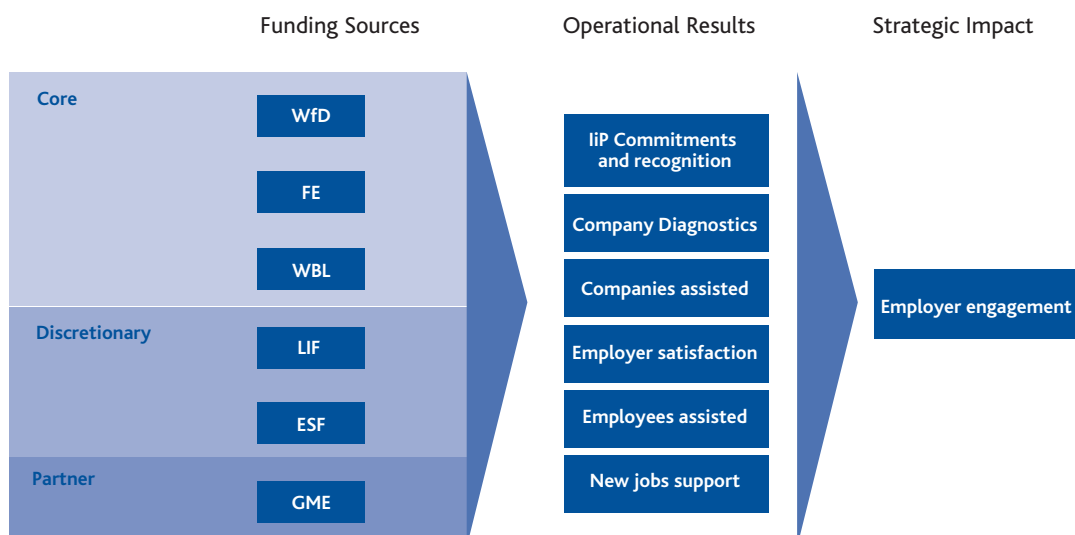
Operational Targets				
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target 2004	
Operational Objective 3.1 Stimulate the workforce development activity of employers	liP Commitments	755	+258	
	Companies helped to identify their training and skills needs	N/a	678	
Operational Objective 3.2 Ensure that learning provision meets employers' needs	liP Recognitions - stock	598	700	
	Companies assisted	N/a	1024	
	Basic Skills achievements	N/a	1,000	
	Employers rating provision as responsive to their needs:	Colleges	77.0%	82.0%
		Training Providers	82.1%	87.1%
Operational Objective 3.3 Stimulate employment growth	Companies assisted	N/a	10	
	Employees assisted	N/a	1349	
	Gross no. of new jobs linked to support	N/a	80	

Figure 3 below illustrates how funding mechanisms link our strategic and operational objectives. Set out are GMLSC and partner funding streams to support workforce development, both core and discretionary, that need to be brought together to enable us to achieve our operational objectives and hence our strategic impact targets.

Figure 3

Strategic Objective 3: From Investment to Impact

Meeting the Workforce Development and Skills Needs of Employers



> Strategic Objective 4: Improving the Quality, Relevance and Coherence of Learning Provision

A description of Greater Merseyside's learning infrastructure is set out in the section on the learning infrastructure earlier. The key challenges in developing a high quality, relevant learning infrastructure are:

- > To improve collaboration between providers in the planning and delivery of learning. In assessing the quality of provision in Knowsley and Liverpool during Area Inspection, OfSTED Inspectors identified the need for better collaboration across providers and within sectors.
- > To enable voluntary and community sector providers to meet the LSC's resource and quality requirements. Given the levels of deprivation in Greater Merseyside and the success of this type of provider in accessing the hard-to-reach, we need to develop and maintain the capacity of the voluntary and community sectors to meet the needs of learners.
- > To develop management information systems and data that enable GMLSC, its partners and providers to better assess, manage and plan provision.
- > To improve the quality of our providers, as evidenced by inspection, achievement and learner satisfaction data.
- > To ensure that learners have equality of access to a wide range of provision, in terms of type, level and subject of learning, irrespective of where they live, their personal circumstances or heritage.
- > To effectively manage the use of regeneration funding to add value to mainstream funding of learning activities.
- > To capture learner feedback to ensure that account is taken of their views in the planning of provision.

To deliver the high quality provision envisaged in our ambition statement, we will need to develop and implement a detailed Quality Improvement Strategy. This will be done within the framework of the national Quality Improvement Strategy and place the experience of learners at its heart. By doing so, we believe we will develop a network of providers to support the increase in participation and achievement we require in Greater Merseyside. Within this strategic plan, we set out the framework for our Quality Improvement Strategy, based on the analysis above. This analysis suggests that we can break down the strategic objective of **'Improving the Quality, Relevance and Coherence of Learning Provision'** into two operational objectives:

- > Raise provider quality and standards; and
- > Develop a coherent and responsive learning infrastructure

Many of the activities detailed here will form part of a broad supplier development programme that will be designed by the GMLSC, working with local providers and national agencies.

Operational Objective 4.1: To raise provider quality and standards

This operational objective focuses on improving quality of learning delivered by individual providers. The analysis above suggests three areas in which we need to respond:

- a) Better teaching and learning;
- b) More effective and efficient systems; and
- c) A learner-centred focus

Teaching and learning

At the heart of a learner's experience is the quality of the teaching and training they receive. We will encourage and support teachers and trainers to take up **professional teaching and training qualifications** and require all providers to demonstrate their commitment to investing in their people.

We will encourage the concept of **provider excellence** in subject areas relevant to the needs of the Greater Merseyside economy. In particular, we will actively support our Further Education Colleges in developing their plans for becoming Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), and work with those that are successful within the lifespan of this plan to enhance the quality, flexibility and responsiveness of their specialist provision.

Centres of Vocational Excellence

In July 2001, the Government set out its prospectus for Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs). CoVEs are intended to develop new, and enhance existing, excellent vocational provision that will be focussed on meeting the skills needs of employers, locally, regionally, nationally and sectorally. The Government wants half of all general FE colleges to have at least one CoVE by 2003/4.

CoVEs will be characterised by close links between colleges, other providers, business partners, other employment interests and communities. They aim to produce appropriately qualified and skilled workers with excellent employment and career prospects which meet the needs of the economy. To do this, they will work closely with business and industry to develop:

- > a shared understanding of skill needs;
- > learning opportunities that meet employer and learner needs in terms of delivery method and content; and
- > excellent quality provision and teaching staff with up to date knowledge and skills

The first round of initial proposals for CoVE status closed in December 2001. Within Greater Merseyside, initial proposals have been put forward in the vocational areas of media and journalism, health and care, business and information technology and vocational business and management training. Final decisions on the first CoVEs in Greater Merseyside will be made in March 2002, with proposals then dealt with on a quarterly basis. Once CoVE proposals have been formally approved, colleges join the CoVE programme and receive support to develop their specialist area with the aim of obtaining formal recognition within 12 months.

Effective and efficient systems

We will support the Inspectorates in **the inspection process** through the provision of information, advice and data analysis and will develop and foster links with OfSTED and ALI inspectors assigned to work with GMLSC. We will support providers in producing post-inspection action plans and utilise Standards Funding where appropriate to support their implementation.

We will support **continuous quality improvements** by supporting providers in undertaking a rigorous annual self-assessment against the Common Inspection Framework and preparing and submitting their self-assessment report and development plan. In particular, we will provide support for raising standards in adult and community learning where previous inspection arrangements have been weak.

The regular review of provider performance is a key element in our Quality Improvement Strategy. As a result of **the Provider Performance Review**, we will make decisions on interventions, rewards and sanctions. Where concerns arise, we will agree an action plan with the provider and provide support during implementation.

We will, working with the national office, seek to improve the **collection, analysis and use of data** by both the LSC and providers to promote better planning and delivery. A key issue to be addressed in the short to medium term is the use of **value added** as a tool for measuring individual and provider achievement, particularly for informal learning, and we will work with the national office to build on good practice being developed locally.

We want to ensure that our providers are not subjected to unnecessary bureaucracy, particularly where they are also contracting with Jobcentre Plus. We will work with Jobcentre Plus to develop a **joined up approach** to inspection and quality development.

We will place **health and safety** at the forefront of all contractual and partnership arrangements and use best endeavour to ensure that learners in Greater Merseyside can learn within a safe working environment. Whilst responsibility for health and safety rests with providers, GMLSC will act as a support mechanism and catalyst for continuous improvement through the sharing of good practice and dissemination of information.

Learner focus

We will work with providers to **remove inequalities in learning programmes** – in relation to e.g. access, learning materials, outcomes – in terms of race, gender, disability, age, marital status, religion, sexual orientation or that experienced by those suffering social exclusion. As part of our capacity development programme, we will address the need for continuing professional development (CPD), systems development and other aspects of learning.

We will work with GM Connexions, Learning Partnerships and providers to **ensure that learners influence the development of provision**. GM Connexions have recently set up a 'Youth Consultative Forum' which will have a direct impact on the way in which Connexions operates and delivers its services to young people. We will develop arrangements with GM Connexions to enable feedback from young people developed in this way to influence the provision we fund. Learning Partnerships have already carried out work to access adult learner views on local learning provision, and we will work with them to develop approaches that will enable adults to influence their provision. Additionally, providers should themselves be gathering regular and comprehensive learner feedback, and we will seek to improve the coherence of their approaches.

Operational Objective 4.2: To develop a coherent and responsive learning infrastructure

This objective focuses on the quality of the learning infrastructure as a whole, in terms of the appropriateness, relevance and accessibility of the education and training on offer. The analysis above suggests that there are three areas for action:

- a) Needs led planning;
- b) Joining up funding; and
- c) Developing capacity and sharing good practice.

Needs led planning

We are currently undertaking a Strategic Review of Education and Training provision across Greater Merseyside, which will provide us with a detailed picture of our current provision for adults and young people and a clear view of current and future demand. We will use the outcomes to inform the development of our learning infrastructure through the development and implementation of an **asset management plan**.

We will also use this review to support us in **expanding provision that meets the needs of individuals**, communities and employers – whether that is delivered by school sixth forms, FE colleges or work-based learning providers – and rationalise that which does not. This will be taken forward through our business planning and funding allocation processes. Where appropriate, and in particular in light of Area Inspections and area reviews, we will work with LEAs and other partners to develop options for structural changes to existing provision.

We will make use of available resources to deliver innovative projects to **enhance the range of learning provision and encourage new types of provision to meet identified needs**. We intend, where appropriate, to develop relationships with new providers who can offer high quality learning that meets identified need and complements our existing provision. Such providers will be supported to develop any necessary systems for them to access LSC funding. Where appropriate, we will work together with Jobcentre Plus to bring in new provision.

We need to work with our local partners, in particular Merseytravel and our Local Authorities, to ensure that **the transport infrastructure** facilitates access to learning opportunities.

Post-16 Area Inspections are an important tool in developing a learning infrastructure that responds to the needs of learners. We will continue to work with partners take forward the Area Inspection Action Plans in Knowsley and Liverpool. We expect the other four districts of Greater Merseyside to be inspected during 2002 and will work with the Inspectorates in this process. We will lead partners in developing Area Inspection Action Plans and funding bids, working closely with the Learning Partnerships. As one of the earliest LSCs to complete Area Inspection Action Plans, we will also work with the national office to develop good practice in action planning.

Joined up funding

The Government has initiated a number of **partnership led initiatives to drive up standards and increase participation and achievement**, such as Excellence Challenge and Excellence in Cities. GMLSC will seek to participate fully in any such partnerships to ensure effective alignment of post-16 funds with partners to support such initiatives.

There is significant additional resource available for learning in Greater Merseyside, thanks to the European Objective 1 and 3 programmes, and we will seek to bring coherence to the deployment of **European funding**. Co-financing for ESF will be key to ensuring this coherence whilst promoting flexibility and minimising bureaucracy for providers. The alignment of our Strategy to Objective 1 ESF is set out in Annex 7.

We will play an active role on local partnerships e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships, Pathways, Strategic Investment Areas to ensure that any **additional funding to be spent on learning adds value** to existing LSC budgets.

Developing capacity and sharing good practice

We are keen to promote **provider collaboration** as a key tool for quality improvement. Significant strides have been made in improving collaboration between work-based learning providers in Knowsley and Liverpool as a result of the Area Inspections and we will actively support the development of further collaborative arrangements across the Greater Merseyside area, utilising the Greater Merseyside Training Federation. We will continue to utilise learning partnerships as the most appropriate vehicles to promote self-managed provider collaboration and quality improvement work.

We will encourage and support our providers to improve their capacity to deliver our objectives and **respond flexibly** to emerging skill needs and policy developments.

We will, as part of our supplier capacity development programme, provide a range of quality support initiatives, which **identify and promote good practice** and stimulate the sharing of information and resources across post-16 sectors.

We recognise the importance of **the community and voluntary sector** in providing provision for those hardest to engage, and also the difficulties this group of providers face in developing and maintaining the systems and resources required by the LSC. We will seek to identify appropriate ways of building this capacity within the community and voluntary sector to enable them to bid for and deliver LSC funded programmes to appropriate quality standards.

Provider collaboration – working together to improve learning

A key issue identified during the area inspection of Liverpool was the lack of collaboration between work-based learning providers, which has hindered them in improving the quality of work-based learning programmes available to young people in Liverpool. During the action planning in response to the Area Inspection report, Liverpool's work-based learning providers came together to decide how best they could together tackle some of the weaknesses identified within the programme and share best practice that already existed.

Following agreement by DfES of the Liverpool Post Area Inspection Action Plan, the Liverpool work-based learning providers set up collaborative working groups to take forward the four key issues of initial assessment, retention, working with employers and learner review. These groups are making real progress in developing shared approaches to various aspects of the programme. As a result of the work of the initial assessment working group, for example, providers have developed and agreed an initial assessment model that providers will follow when conducting this most important aspect of learning. All the working groups are now finalising their proposals and in early 2002 the task groups will report back and make recommendations to the Liverpool provider group and GMLSC. The Liverpool providers are now starting to work with providers from other areas through a rejuvenated Greater Merseyside Training Federation to share the good practice developed by the working groups.

The Merseyside Training Federation has a critical role to play in supporting providers in collaborative quality improvement activities and from 2002 GMLSC will provide resources to support the Federation in co-ordinating provider activities.

Strategic and operational targets

The strategic and operational targets for Strategic Objective 4 are set out in Table 13, and will inform our business planning and contracting as we move through the planning cycle.

Figure 4 illustrates how funding mechanisms link our strategic and operational objectives. Set out are the funding streams available to support the development of the learning infrastructure, both core and discretionary. These funding streams are brought together to enable us to deliver the operational targets outlined above, and hence achieve the strategic impact targets.

Table 13

Strategic Plan Targets 2002/04: Strategic Objective 4

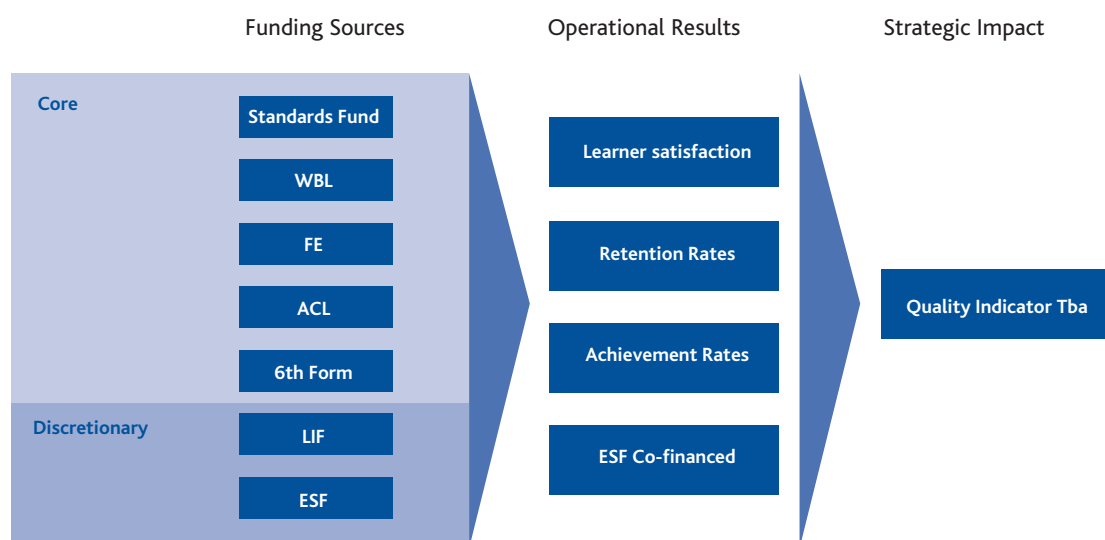
Strategic Targets			
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Targets
SO4 Improving the quality, relevance and coherence of learning provision	Proportion of learners in GMLSC funded providers with no unsatisfactory inspection grades	Indicator tba	Target tba
	Learner satisfaction	Indicator tba	Target tba

Operational Targets			
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Targets
Operational Objective 4.1 Raise provider quality and standards	Learner satisfaction rates	Measure Tba	Target Tba
	Retention and achievement rates detailed elsewhere are also measures of the extent to which the standard of provision has improved		
Operational Objective 4.2 Develop coherent and responsive learning	£m co-financed pa	£0	£15m
	Indicator tba		

Figure 4

Strategic Objective 4: From Investment to Impact

Improving the quality, Relevance and Coherence of Local Learning Provision.



> GMLSC - Organisation

The LSC is a national organisation that combines the advantages of national programmes and resourcing with local flexibility and initiative. Each of the 47 local delivery arms of the LSC has a Council made up of non-executive representatives of the LSC's major partners in the planning and delivery of post-16 learning. The local Council is responsible for ensuring that funding is deployed locally to meet the needs of local individuals, employers and communities. Membership of GMLSC's Council is set out in Annex 3.

To support the Council in its leadership and steering role, there are three advisory committees. These committees provide advice on learning for young people, learning for adults, including workforce development, and equal opportunities and social inclusion. In addition, there is an audit committee.

The local office for Greater Merseyside, based in Liverpool, is headed by Paul Holme, Executive Director. The organisation is structured into six areas. The diagram below describes this structure and includes a summary of the key responsibilities of each directorate.

Figure 5: Organisation Structure

GMLSC Council – Chairman: Jim Michie					
Executive Director: Paul Holme					
Corporate & Finance	Strategy & Europe:	Development	Service Delivery	Organisational Development	Special Projects
Director: Rob Burn	Director: David Brennan	Director: Richard Merritt	Director: Elaine Bowker	Head: Susan Wood	Head: Jim Mulvaney
Functions: Financial Assurance Facilities Management Finance and Resources IT Services	Functions: Strategic Planning Business Planning Skills analysis Research Information Provision Evaluation European Funding Area Inspections	Functions: Equal Opportunities Basic Skills Marketing and Publicity Local Initiative Fund Education Business Links Adult and Community Learning Adult Information, Advice & Guidance Local Partnerships	Functions: Work Base Learning FE Colleges FE Institutions Sixth Form Colleges Workforce Development	Functions: Secretariat Human Resources Quality and Standards Training & Development	Functions: Special Projects - Internal and External

> Consultation Arrangements

Our approach

Early in the development of this Strategy, the Council decided that this Strategy should provide a framework for all planners and deliverers of learning and skills in Greater Merseyside, not just a Strategy for GMLSC. Given this, it became even more important that we take an approach to consultation that was as open and wide-ranging as possible. In addition, it was important that we secured the buy-in of our key strategic partners to this approach. These regional and sub-regional organisations – TMP, the Objective One Partnership, GM Connexions, GME, the NWDA and Jobcentre Plus – have been consulted regularly as we have developed our emerging Strategy, with a view to them providing a formal sign up to the completed Strategy.

Process

The consultation on the Strategy has taken place in two phases: an informal consultation on our challenges and priorities during Autumn 2001, and a formal consultation on the Strategy early in 2002. Below we set out the process for each phase.

Phase 1: Informal Consultation

Over 600 organisations, agencies, partnerships, stakeholders, etc. were identified and written to enclosing copies of the consultation document, and inviting feedback and comment. A full list of those with whom we have consulted is detailed in Annex 4.

Two provider workshops, attended by more than 80 provider representatives, were held during the last two weeks of November to enable more detailed discussion of some of the key issues to be addressed within the Strategy, namely: retention and achievement, employer engagement, quality, and participation.

In addition, a series of 'Inquiry Panels' were held that adopted a parliamentary inquiry method of operation and that allowed partners and others to present their views through a series of researched presentations. Each panel consisted of a series of 15 minute presentations of evidence followed by 15-30 minutes of questioning by the panel to clarify points being made. Panel members included members of GMLSC's Council, senior GMLSC staff and representatives from a number of our strategic partners. Four separately themed panels were held in Southport, Liverpool, Widnes and Wirral on the themes of quality, participation achievement of adults, the engagement of employers in workforce development, and participation and achievement of young people.

In parallel to this consultation on the Strategic Plan, we held a number of workshops with the voluntary and community sector and other agencies involved in the issues of gender and age, disability, ethnicity, and social inclusion. The feedback from these workshops has been used to inform both the development of our Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Action Plan. Attendance at these workshops was dominated by the voluntary and community sector, and other agencies with interest in these themes.

We have also sought to get feedback from employers. Members of the Executive visited some of our largest employers to obtain their views on skills and learning. In addition, we have utilised existing employer links through Liverpool Chamber and GME to encourage employers to contribute to the development of the plan.

Phase 2: Formal Consultation

During this phase of the consultation, partners and stakeholders involved in the first consultation round were asked to provide written feedback on the full Strategy, prior to finalisation of the Strategy.

Additionally, we offered all Learning Partnerships the opportunity to run an LSC supported workshop to facilitate open discussion of the full Strategy. Workshops were held in three of our districts and in another, the Strategy was presented for discussion to all the partnership's sub-groups. This generated a lot of positive feedback on the plan, as well as some further detail for us to consider for inclusion both in the Strategy and as part of our business planning.

Outcomes

The feedback from the consultation has been invaluable in shaping this Strategy, and we are grateful to our partners for the considerable time and effort that they have put into responding to the consultation. A report summarising the feedback that we have received is available on request and will also be posted on the national website: www.lsc.gov.uk.

> Outline Evaluation Arrangements

GMLSC and its partners are firmly committed to evidence-based planning. Central to this is the development of a robust and coherent evaluation framework. Underpinning the framework is the quantification of the anticipated results and impacts of the Strategy. This approach ensures that there is a clear and transparent linkage between all levels of planning from the strategic to individual provider contracts. This relationship can be visualised from the top down or from the bottom up:

From the top down:

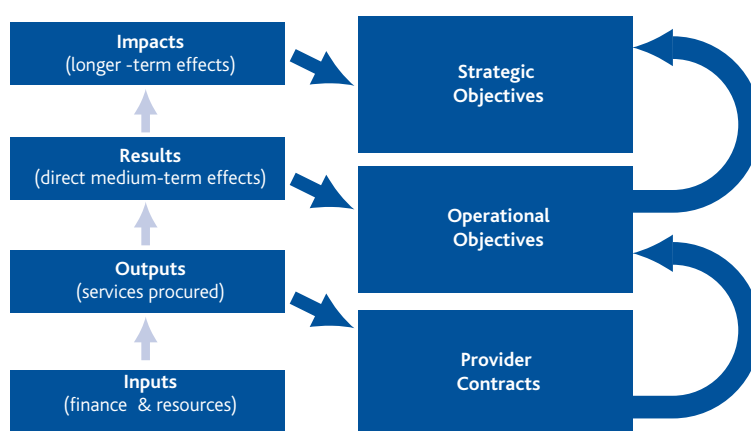
- > All provision is planned in a specific context relative to our ambition for Greater Merseyside.
- > This underpins the Strategy and gives rise to four strategic objectives. The strategic objectives are directly quantified by our overarching targets (**impacts**).
- > Each specific strategic objective is in turn implemented through operational objectives. Each operational objective can be measured by the **results** it generates.

From the bottom up:

- > Operational objectives are implemented through contracts, funding agreements or partnership working using various (financial, human, technical or organisational) means or resources (**inputs**).
- > Expenditure and associated contracts give rise to a series of physical **outputs** (for example, number of training places provided, advice and guidance sessions, etc.).
- > **Results** are the (medium-term) effects of the activity supported (e.g. number of qualifications, institutional retention rates etc.).
- > These results directly contribute to achieving our overarching targets (**impacts**).

Figure 6 below illustrates this.

Figure 6



Our approach to evaluation addresses relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and utility:

Evaluation issues

- > **Relevance:** To what extent are the Strategy's objectives relevant in relation to the evolving needs and priorities of Greater Merseyside?
- > **Efficiency:** How were the resources (inputs) turned into outputs or results?
- > **Effectiveness:** How far has the Strategy contributed to achieving its objectives (impacts)?
- > **Utility:** Did the Strategy have an impact on the target groups or populations in relation to their needs?

The evaluation of the Strategic Plan for Learning and Skills in Greater Merseyside will be in three phases; namely, prior, formative, and summative.

The **prior evaluation** of this Strategy involves testing:

- > The relevance of the agreed output, result, and impact indicators; and
- > The linkage and consistency between the strategic plan, business plan and contracting process.

In practice, there will be three phases to the prior evaluation of the Strategy:

- > Phase 1 – Testing the relevance and appropriateness of the indicators and targets through a wide-ranging process of consultation with key stakeholders in Greater Merseyside. This document forms the basis of that consultation;
- > Phase 2 – Establishing consistency between GMLSC's Business Plan and the Strategic Plan; and
- > Phase 3 – Establishing consistency between contracting activity and the Business Plan.

The **formative evaluation** of the Strategy will examine the degree of effectiveness achieved on the basis of the indicators collected. It will also assess the quality and relevance of these indicators. Formative evaluation, as its name suggests, is used to inform improvements in programmes and suppliers. The detailed content and approach to be adopted will be developed and agreed by the Greater Merseyside Skills Research Forum.

Finally, the **summative evaluation** will compare the expected impacts of the Strategy with those actually achieved. The approach adopted will be developed and agreed by the Greater Merseyside Skills Research Forum.

> Annex 1

National Qualifications Framework

Level	General Qualifications	Vocationally Related Qualifications	Occupational Qualifications
Level 4	Higher level qualifications		NVQ Level 5
Level 3	AS/A Levels AEAs	Vocational A level (Advanced GNVQ)	NVQ Level 3
Level 2	GCSE Grades A*-C	Intermediate GNVQ	NVQ Level 2
Level 1	GCSE Grades D-G	Foundation GNVQ	NVQ Level 1
Entry Level	Certificate of achievement		

> Annex 2

Planning Framework and Associated Operational Targets¹¹

Operational Objectives	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Targets
Strategic Objective 1: Increasing the Participation and Achievement of Young People			
Operational Objective 1.1 Bring back into learning those young people who are currently disengaged	Participation in learning at 16	16,270	17,991
	Participation in learning at 17	14,391	16,758
Operational Objective 1.2 Improve the progression and achievement of young people	FE retention rate	83.2%	85.2%
	FE achievement rate	76.2%	82.7%
	WBL retention rate	69.0%	75.0%
	WBL NVQ achievement rate	69.0%	75.0%
	WBL Framework achievement rate	63.6%	70.0%
	Basic Skills achievement	N/a	11,760
Strategic Objective 2: Increasing the Participation and Achievement of Adults			
Operational Objective 2.1 Drive up the demand for learning amongst adults	Numbers in LSC supported provision	99,362	+ 9,214
	Information sessions	4,679	Tba
	Advice sessions	8,010	
Operational Objective 2.2 Enable adults to progress through learning and increase achievement	FE retention rate	83.0%	84.4%
	FE achievement rate	74.8%	78.5%
	WBL retention rate	60.9%	64.5%
	WBL NVQ achievement rate	82.7%	85.0%
	WBL Framework achievement rate	47.3%	65.0%
	Basic Skills achievement	N/a	12,240
Strategic Objective 3: Meeting the Workforce Development and Skills Needs of Employers			
Operational Objective 3.1 Stimulate the workforce development activity of employers	liP Commitments	755	+ 258
	Companies helped to identify their training and skills needs	N/a	678
Operational Objective 3.2 Ensure that learning provision meets employer needs	liP Recognitions – stock	598	700
	Companies assisted	N/a	1,024
	No. employees improving basic skills	N/a	1,000
	Employers rating provision as responsive to their needs:		
	Colleges	77.0%	82.0%
Training providers	82.1%	87.1%	
Operational Objective 3.3 Stimulate employment growth	Companies assisted	N/a	10
	Employees assisted	N/a	1,349
	Gross no. of new jobs linked to support	N/a	80
Strategic Objective 4: Increase the quality, relevance and coherence of provision			
Operational Objective 4.1 Raise provider quality and standards	Learner satisfaction rate	Tba	Tba
	Targets for retention and achievement outlined above will contribute to our achievement of this objective		
Operational Objective 4.2 Develop a coherent and responsive learning infrastructure	£m co-financed pa	£0	£15m
	Indicator tba		

¹¹ Further work will be undertaken over the summer with our partners and providers to test the appropriateness and measureability of these targets.

> Annex 3

Greater Merseyside LSC Council Members

Jim Michie - Chairman
Non-Executive Director:
Passport and Records Agency
Manchester 2002 Ltd
Cheshire Building Society

Paul Holme,
Executive Director
Greater Merseyside
Learning and Skills Council

David Atkin
Headteacher
Rainhill High School

Gordon Burns
Personnel Director
Stoves Plc

Dr Martin Carey
Executive Dean
Liverpool Hope
University College

Sue Carmichael
Principal
Constructive Futures

Claire Dove
Chief Executive
Women's Technology
& Education Centre
and Blackburne House

Mike Doyle
Deputy Chair
North West Development
Agency

John Firr
Chief Executive
Partnership for Learning

Veronica Laird
Managing Director
Newbreed Freight Ltd

Richard Marbrow
Councillor
Liverpool City Council

Geoffrey Piper
Chief Executive
North West Business
Leadership Team

Kath Boullen
Chief Executive
St Helens Chamber of
Commerce and Industry

Brian Davies
Regional Union Officer
AEEU

Heather Hardcastle
Human Resources and
Training Contract Manager
Local Solutions

Sir George Sweeney
Principal
Knowsley Community College

> Annex 4

Consulted Organisations

ACME
Age Concern
Archdiocese of Liverpool
Arden College
Barnardo's
Birkenhead Sixth Form College
Business Dynamics
Carmel Sixth Form College
CDS Housing
Churches Action for Racial Equality
Commission for Racial Equality
Construction Industry Training Board
Diocese of Chester
Diocese of Liverpool
Disability Rights Commission
Dyslexia Association Wirral
Edge Hill College
Employers
Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities
Employment Service
Equal Opportunities Commission
Equality North West
Expanding Horizons
Early Years Childcare and Development Partnerships
Fairbridge in Merseyside
Forum Housing
Greater Merseyside Connexions
Greater Merseyside Enterprise
Greater Merseyside IAG Partnership
Greenbank Project
Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers
Halton Borough Council
Halton Business Forum
Halton College
Halton LEA
Halton Learning Partnership
Halton Voluntary Action
Higher Education Institutions
HM Prisons
Hugh Baird College
King George V College
Knowsley Association of Secondary Headteachers
Knowsley Chamber of Industry and Commerce
Knowsley Community College
Knowsley CVS
Knowsley LEA
Knowsley Learning Partnership
Knowsley MBC
Learning and Skills Development Agency
Liverpool Archdiocesan Education Department
Liverpool Association of Secondary Headteachers
Liverpool Black Sisters
Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Liverpool City Council
Liverpool City of Learning
Liverpool Community College
Liverpool Compact
Liverpool CVS
Liverpool Hope University College
Liverpool Housing Trust
Liverpool John Moores University
Liverpool LEA
Liverpool Learning Partnership
Liverpool Muslim Society Mosque & Cultural Centre
Liverpool Somali Association
Liverpool Women's Technology Centre
Local Strategic Partnerships
Merseyside Association of Colleges
Merseyside Bangladesh Association
Merseyside Caribbean Council
Merseyside CVS
Merseyside Disability Federation
Merseyside Employers Network on Disability
Merseyside Probation Service
Merseyside Skills Training
Merseyside Society for Deaf People
Merseytravel
MPs
National Housing Federation - Merseyside
North West Aerospace Alliance
North West Development Agency
Objective One Partnership
Other Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and agencies
Pakistan Centre
Partnership for Learning
Pathways Partnerships
PSS
Refugee Action
Riverside Housing Association
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Secondary Schools
Sefton Association of Secondary Headteachers
Sefton Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Sefton EBP
Sefton LEA
Sefton Learning Partnership

Sefton MBC
SETPOINT
Shrewsbury Diocesan Schools' Commission
Southport College
SRB Partnerships
SSDA Partnerships
St Helens Association of Secondary
Headteachers
St Helens Chamber of Commerce and Industry
St Helens College
St Helens District CVS
St Helens EBP
St Helens LEA
St Helens Learning Partnership
St Helens MBC
The Big Issue
The Dark Horse Venture
The Knowsley Compact
The Mersey Partnership
The Nugent Care Society
The Pagoda Chinese Community Centre
The Probation Service
Trades Union Congress
Trident Trust
University of Liverpool
Venture Housing Association
Weston Spirit
Widnes and Runcorn Sixth Form College
Wirral Action
Wirral Association for Disability
Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers
Wirral Autistic Society
Wirral Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Wirral CVS
Wirral Drugs Services
Wirral LEA
Wirral Learning Partnership
Wirral MBC
Wirral Metropolitan College
Wirral Society for the Blind and Partially
Sighted
WITCH
Women's Technology and Education Centre
Work-based learning providers
Workers' Educational Association
Young Enterprise
Young Persons Advisory Service

> Annex 5

Glossary

ACL	Adult Community Learning
A Level	Advanced Level Qualification
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
AS Level	Advanced Subsidiary Level Qualification
AVCE	Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CoVEs	Centres of Vocational Excellence
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
EBP	Education Business Partnership
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
FE	Further Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GM Connexions	Greater Merseyside Connexions
GME	Greater Merseyside Enterprise
GMLSC	Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
GONW	Government Office for the North West
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
IAG	Information Advice and Guidance
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IiP	Investors in People
ILAs	Individual Learning Accounts
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LEAs	Local Education Authorities
LIF	Local Initiative Fund
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSPs	Local Strategic Partnerships
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
NWDA	North West Development Agency
O1	Objective 1
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PIU	Performance and Innovation Unit
SBS	Small Business Service
SMEs	Small/Medium Sized Enterprises
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
TMP	The Mersey Partnership
TUC	Trade Union Congress
Ufi	University for Industry
WfD	Workforce Development

> Annex 6

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> Annex 7

Mapping of Objective 1 ESF against the Strategic Plan for Learning and Skills in Greater Merseyside

Operational Objectives/ ESF Measures	Measure 4 Training for SMEs	Measure 12 Training for specific sectors	Measure 13 Action for employment	Measure 14 Promoting social inclusion for access to labour market	Measure 15 Lifelong learning	Measure 17 Positive action for women	Measure 25 Action for employment in Pathways areas	Measure 26 Promoting social inclusion in Pathways areas	Measure 27 Lifelong learning in Pathways areas
Strategic Objective 1: Participation and Achievement of Young People									
Operational Objective 1.1 Bring back into learning disengaged young people			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Operational Objective 1.2 Improve the retention, progression and achievement of young people					•				•
Strategic Objective 2: Participation and Achievement of Adults									
Operational Objective 2.1 Drive up the demand for learning amongst adults	•	•		•	•	•		•	•
Operational Objective 2.2 Enable adults to progress through learning and increase achievement	•	•		•	•	•		•	•
Strategic Objective 3: Meeting Skills Needs									
Operational Objective 3.1 Stimulate the workforce development activity of employers	•	•							
Operational Objective 3.2 Ensure provision meets employer needs	•	•							
Operational Objective 3.3 Stimulate employment growth	•	•							
Strategic Objective 4: Increase the quality, relevance and coherence of provision									
Operational Objective 4.1 Raise provider quality and standards	•	•		•	•	•		•	•
Operational Objective 4.2 Develop a coherent and responsive learning infrastructure	•	•		•	•			•	•

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