

Learning and Skills Council

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Local Strategic Plan 2002-05

County Durham



> Contents

Chairman's Foreword	
1. Executive Summary	2-8
2. Mission, Values and Vision	9-10
3. Context	11
4. Analysis	12-19
Overview of Provision	20
5. Local Priorities	21-23
6. National Key Objectives	24-30
7. Supporting Strategies	31-36
Equality and Diversity	31
Basic Skills	32
Workforce Development	32-33
Quality Improvement	34
Health and Safety	35
Marketing	36
European Social Fund Co-financing	36
8. Cross Cutting Activities	37-39
Adult & Community Learning	37
14-19 Provision / Sixth Form	37
Education Business Links	37
Information, Advice and Guidance	37
E-Learning	37
Voluntary Sector Learning	38
Partnerships	38
Rural	38
Entrepreneurship	38
Further Education	38
Higher Education	39
9. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation	40
10. Capacity to Deliver	41
11. Consultation Process	42
ANNEX 1 – Regional and County Links	43-44
ANNEX 2 – Supporting Strategies	45-48
ANNEX 3 – European Social Fund and Co-financing	49-51
ANNEX 4 – Matrix	52
ANNEX 5 – Partners Consulted	53
ANNEX 6 – Key Documents	54-55
LSC Council Members	56

> 1. Executive Summary

1.1 Local Priorities

This three year Plan has been developed within a national framework through structured and comprehensive consultation. Table 1.1 outlines priorities identified for County Durham as a result of this process. The priorities directly support improvement of three key themes; skills, participation and learning and will require actions by the Learning and Skills Council and all our partners. Our annual plans will detail the actions to be undertaken by the Learning and Skills Council.

Skills	Participation	Learning
<p>To: Encourage employers to recognise the economic benefits of investing in Workforce Development;</p> <p>Promote a range of basic and generic skills within the workforce that supports the requirements of a range of occupational areas;</p> <p>Build capacity to strengthen the basic skills of people at all levels of employment;</p> <p>Nurture and encourage improvement in generic skills, extending these to include better problem solving, communication, team working and ICT skills;</p> <p>Support organisations to develop a range of employability skills to prepare people for entry to the labour market;</p> <p>Support the development of management skills, including leadership and coaching, of people in all sectors, at all levels of responsibility;</p> <p>Increase the number of people qualified to NVQ level 3 and 4 in order to raise skill levels for local and national competitiveness. Baseline figures level 3 – 41.3%, level 4 - 20.6% (Source: Labour Force Survey Aug 2001);</p> <p>Support employers and organisations to offer high quality, flexible, work-based learning preferably leading to qualifications or unit accreditation;</p> <p>Work with the higher education sector and employers to ensure that the higher level skills needs of the economy are met;</p>	<p>To: Create equal access to appropriate learning provision for individuals and groups regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, disability or learning difficulty;</p> <p>Increase participation in learning among those currently economically inactive, those who completed their formal education at an early age, older people and those affected by social deprivation. People aged 50 and over currently represent 30% of people of working age but only 20% of the working population and under 10% of people in training;</p> <p>Increase the participation of young people in full time education and training. 81% of 16 year olds and 73% of 17 year olds currently participate in education and training. (Source: ONS Statistics of Education, bulletin No 11/00);</p> <p>Identify and remove barriers to learning in terms of the geographical location of opportunities, the ways in which those opportunities are delivered and the financial support for learners. We will work continuously with Local Strategic Partnerships and local Learning Partnerships to clarify the nature of barriers to participation and to explore the best ways of overcoming them;</p> <p>Widen participation in Higher Education, working with Further and Higher Education partners to raise expectations in this field. We will engage with the Excellence in Schools programme and endeavour to support providers' outreach initiatives;</p> <p>Increase the demand for, and participation in, work-based learning</p>	<p>To: Ensure that preparatory provision, including provision for people with special needs, is available for learners not yet ready to progress into recognised programmes of learning or work placement;</p> <p>Provide access to high quality basic skills provision;</p> <p>Increase the availability and quality of Modern Apprenticeship opportunities;</p> <p>Encourage progression through the NVQ route in order to meet the requirements for highly skilled occupations;</p> <p>Facilitate and support the development and delivery of a range of high quality provision, particularly in areas where standards are low;</p> <p>Develop provision which will widen the entitlement to learning for young people and adults.</p> <p>Raise aspirations to increase the number of individuals progressing to higher education;</p> <p>Promote the benefits of learning and celebrate learning achievements</p> <p>Build on existing local good practice in the development of high quality, informal learning opportunities</p>

1.2 National Key Objectives (NKO)

Earlier this year the national Learning and Skills Council identified objectives which are key to the achievement of the national vision. The following five tables identify local actions we will undertake in support of each national key objective.

For clarity, links are also made to the three themes; skills, participation and learning. Many of the actions will require the Learning and Skills Council to work in partnership. Key partners have been identified in the tables. Within the timescale of the plan, we will work towards purchasing only quality provision that will ensure that we fully contribute to the National Key Objectives.

NKO1: Extend participation in Education, Learning and Training

During the timescale of this plan we will attract an additional 1,590 young people to participate in education, training and learning. We will also use promotion, celebratory and financial support to encourage greater participation in learning.

Local Actions for NKO1	Key Themes	Partners
Draw up an equality and diversity strategy and action plan in consultation with key partners to tackle under representation, under achievement and discrimination in respect of gender, age, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status	Participation	Connexions Service County and Local Learning Partnerships
Promote discussion and ownership of our local targets for participation within our network of partners;	Participation	County Durham Business and Learning Partnership
Work with the Connexions Service and the IAG network to ensure that people get impartial advice, guidance and support to recognised standards to enable them to make the best choices;	Participation	County Durham Youth Offending Service
Work with the LEA and County Durham Lifelong Learning Partnership to follow up 16-19 inspections and secure local breadth and quality of provision and encourage increased collaboration between providers;	Learning	Employers Employment Service Further Education sector
Deliver robust progression routes to degree level including the further development of Education Business Links and Modern Apprenticeships;	Participation	Bishop Auckland College, New College Durham, East Durham & Houghall College & Derwentside College
Build the capacity of basic skills provision in the County through a programme of training of community learning mentors;	Skills	IAG network
Ensure that the views of adult learners and young people are sought to inform the development of learning provision in County Durham;	Participation/ Learning	Local Education Authority Local Strategic Partnerships
Support learners and potential learners to manage and overcome the personal barriers they face in order to take up or continue with their learning activity;	Participation	Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships
Work with the Voluntary Sector as a key partner to engage the socially excluded	Participation	Providers of learning Rural Development Agency
Work towards the development of an integrated approach to the provision of adult, community, informal, distance and family learning and maximise ICT based opportunities;	Learning	Voluntary and Community Organisations
Establish effective links with local learning, regeneration and strategic partnerships and with regional partnerships to maximise learning opportunities, access funding, improve learner motivation and increase learner participation.	Participation	

NKO2: Increase Engagement of Employers in Workforce Development

We will work closely with employers and Sector Skills Councils to match the supply of skilled labour with the requirements of employers.

Local Actions for NKO2	Key Themes	Partners
Work in partnership with employers to increase their investment in raising skill levels and ensure that workforce development is an integral element of business strategies;	Skills	
Provide high quality labour market information and skills data and opportunities to engage the business community in its interpretation;	Participation	Business Link County Durham Business & Learning Partnership
Collaborate with Durham County Council's plans to encourage greater networking and share good practice among employers;	Skills/Participation	Durham County Council
Foster links between employers and the Higher Education and Further Education sectors to promote graduate business start ups and sustained professional development for highly skilled employees;	Skills/Participation	Employers Employment Service
Continue to promote and support Investors in People within organisations;	Skills/Participation	Further Education sector
Promote through Higher Education and Further Education (and locally through the LSPs) already validated mechanisms to accredit work-based learning, especially in the Small to Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) sector;	Skills/Participation/ Learning	Learndirect Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) Providers of learning
Develop through our key partners, an infrastructure of distance learning opportunities using ICT to promote learning in rural areas;	Participation/ Learning	Trade Unions Universities
Encourage employers to engage with the family learning agenda and encourage the development of work-based learning champions and collaborative work with basic skills providers, Trade Union learning initiatives and Learndirect;	Skills/Participation	Voluntary & Community Organisations TUC
Help employers to make connections with learning support systems in their local community, including Education Business Links.	Skills/Participation	

NKO3: Raise Achievement of Young People

Within the timescale of this plan, we aim to increase by 410 the number of young people gaining a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19, and increase by 334 the number of young people gaining a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19.

Local Actions for NK03	Key Themes	Partners
Ensure that opportunities for young people develop in a planned way in relation to need and that young people are not disadvantaged through unhelpful competition among providers;	Participation/ Learning	
Engage with partners and initiatives such as the Education Action Zones, County Durham Sure Start, Community Education, the Youth Service, County Durham Youth offending Service and special projects, to work creatively with disaffected young people;	Participation	Connexions Service County Durham Business and Learning Partnership
Work with County Durham Connexions Service in their role to co-ordinate social inclusion issues affecting young people;	Learning	County Durham Youth Offending Service
Adopt the national funding system across all sectors of 16–19 education which will better meet individual needs and encourage higher standards;	Learning	Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
Support DfES in developing and implementing its reforms of 14-19 learning;	Learning	Education Action Zones
Address issues of retention and tackle under-achievement through use of the Standards Fund;	Participation/ Learning	Employers Further Education sector
Make sustained efforts to improve achievement at all levels, focusing particularly on the numbers of young people achieving qualifications at NVQ levels 2 & 3 and encouraging progression into Higher Education and lifelong learning;	Participation	LEA
Enable young people to make connections between their personal goals and the learning opportunities available to help them to achieve and to improve their own lives;	Participation/ Learning	Local Strategic Partnerships
Enhance the work of Education Business Links and Connexions to ensure that appropriate awareness, information and guidance is given to young people about the world of work and progression into Work-based Learning, Sixth Form provision and Further and Higher Education;	Skills/Participation	Providers of learning Sure Start Universities Youth Service
Facilitate effective collaboration between schools, Work-based Learning Providers, Further Education and Higher Education establishments to ensure progression opportunities;	Participation	
Support the LEA and schools in responding to the challenges of the White Paper "Schools Achieving Success" in ensuring that young people become engaged in lifelong learning.	Participation	

NKO4: Raise Achievement of Adults

Within the timescale of this plan we aim to raise the literacy levels of 6,692 adults and to increase by 16,226 the number of adults gaining a Level 3 qualification.

Local Actions for NK04	Key Themes	Partners
Support the development of new and improved adult, community and family learning provision, making effective use of neighbourhood learning centres, Learndirect and e-learning;	Learning/ Participation	DfES Employment Service Further Education sector IAG network LEA Learndirect Providers of learning Voluntary and Community Organisations
Encourage the accreditation of learning taking place within community based initiatives (e.g creche workers, classroom helpers);	Learning/ Participation	
Support the development of non accredited learning as a means of widening participation through pathways to accredited learning opportunities;	Participation	
Facilitate and support individuals to overcome basic skills barriers to learning and employment and take an active part in delivering the national Skills for Life strategy;	Participation	
Work with DfES in the development of national support arrangements for adult learners;	Participation/Skills	
Work with the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) network to further develop its services to national standards, in order to support adults (including volunteers) in County Durham;	Participation	
Work with the Employment Service to make learning available to people who are economically inactive or the victims of industrial and economic change.	Participation/Skills	

NKO5: Raise Quality of Education and Training and User Satisfaction

Improving quality is central to our strategy in raising standards of provision and achieving the increases in participation and attainment of learners in County Durham.

Local Actions for NKO5	Key Themes	Partners
Develop among all providers supported by the Learning and Skills Council an agreed Quality Improvement Strategy, systems of self assessment and appropriate targets by which improvement can be measured;	Learning	Community and youth work professionals Further Education sector LEA OfSTED / Adult Learning Inspectorate Providers of learning Universities Learners
Ensure that mechanisms are in place to enable key stakeholders to comment on the quality of provision, performance of courses and learners and build a cycle of continuous improvement;	Learning	
Review with providers in Further Education and Sixth Forms the ways in which data from management information systems and external inspections can best be used to improve the quality of provision and consistency of standards across the County;	Learning	
Encourage provider staff to strengthen professional qualifications in teaching and staff development;	Learning/Skills/ Participation	
Explore with Higher Education and Further Education providers, as well as appropriate professional bodies in community and youth work, the most effective ways to strengthen the skills of community educators and work-based trainers;	Participation/ Skills	
Celebrate successful learning achievement through awards ceremonies, publicity and prizes.	Participation	

> 2. Mission, Values and Vision

2.1 Our local Mission, Values and Vision are derived from the National Learning and Skills Council's Mission and Vision, which we fully endorse.

Our mission is to be a major partner in the economic and social regeneration of County Durham to achieve the local, regional and national objectives that will improve the knowledge and productive skills of young people and adults. Our goal is to raise participation and attainment in education and training through the provision of high quality learning opportunities tailored to individual interests and needs.

The mission statement acknowledges that economic regeneration requires higher levels of educational attainment, better work-based training and continuing professional development. This will make County Durham attractive to inward investors by promoting employment growth. Improvements in education and in work-related learning cannot be secured without changes in the wider culture in ways that encourage learners, build their confidence and increase their commitment to learning. For this reason the Learning and Skills Council attaches great importance to the promotion of learning in families and communities.

2.2 We will actively promote the following values:

- We are proud to put learners' interests at the heart of decision making;
- We recognise that all individuals are capable of improving their learning achievements;
- We appreciate diversity and promote fairness and equality of opportunity for learners and for the staff of the Learning and Skills Council itself;
- We strive for continuous improvement and to be a learning organisation;
- We encourage and foster: flexibility, innovation, commitment and contributions from all learners including our own staff.

2.3 Our vision is clear.

"By 2010 County Durham will be in the top five of the 'most improved' areas of the country for participation, achievement and quality of learning".

History has left its imprint on the resources of the County, the attitudes and values of its people and in very restricted learning opportunities in particular places. These patterns can be changed and the educational profile of the County can be improved. We intend to play our part in making, sustaining and measuring that improvement in ways that build a climate of hope and higher aspirations.

2.4 What connects our mission, values and vision is a broad-based view of learning. We think of learning as:

“a process of acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills throughout life that promotes both personal development and effective participation in work and the community.”

Learning is a process through which individuals, groups and organisations enhance their capability to continue to develop and respond creatively to the problems they are required to solve. Through new learning, people develop the skills that enable them to reflect on their experience and to build new understanding and opportunities for themselves, their families and the people with whom they work.

We are very conscious that the experience of successful learning in one context carries over into others. We therefore seek to promote learning in whatever ways best meet individuals’ needs and circumstances. The Learning and Skills Council will continue to engage partners and providers in discussions about this approach to learning and the ways in which opportunities are provided.

The Learning and Skills Council hopes that this Strategic Plan encourages further analysis, research, debate and evaluation among key partners and the Council itself will become a key influence on policy development in this field.

> 3. Context

3.1 The Learning and Skills Council will fulfil its mission in ways that relate directly to the national, regional and local context. We will ensure that our work locally dovetails with regional economic development strategies and is co-ordinated with national aims and objectives.

3.2 The national remit for the Learning and Skills Council is a challenging and wide-ranging one:

“to help build a learning society in which educational opportunities are open to all.”

Specifically, the national key objectives of the Council are:

- To raise participation and achievement by young people;
- To increase demand for learning by adults, and to equalise opportunities through better access to learning;
- To engage employers in improving skills for employability and national competitiveness;
- To raise the quality of education and training delivery;
- To improve effectiveness and efficiency.

These key tasks translate into a range of specific targets for improvement and together amount to a national strategy for a radical improvement in skills, participation and learning.

3.3 The Learning and Skills Council County Durham will co-ordinate its strategic planning with key partners in the Northern Region and County Durham (as detailed in Annex 1). Key areas of co-operation include work with Government Office, Local Strategic Partnerships and Neighbourhood Renewal. Links will also be made with the North East Assembly and the Regional Education Forum. We will contribute to the development of the Regional Skills Observatory and the Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action. The Council recognises the major contribution of the voluntary sector to the economic and social structure of the County.

> 4. Analysis

4.1 The specific plans of the Learning and Skills Council have been developed to reflect County Durham's economic and social diversity. The County is made up of seven diverse districts. Three (Teesdale, Wear Valley and Derwentside) are dominated by agricultural land. Easington District is ranked 4th (out of 354 national districts) in terms of Incidence and Distribution of Social Disadvantage¹. In contrast the neighbouring Durham District is ranked 155th. Sedgefield has the highest proportion of manufacturing employment (44.7%) in the County. Chester-le-Street is the only district that is expected to experience a significant increase in population between 2001 and 2006.

In 2001 the total population in County Durham is estimated to be 485,300, with a working age population of 295,000. Proportions of those in the 16-24 and 50+ age groups are each projected to increase by around 3% between 2001 and 2006.²

In recent years the economy of the County has not performed well in relative terms. In 1998, Gross Domestic Product for the County stood at £8,199, lower than the regional (£9,741) and national (£12,548) figures³, a trend that has been increasing over recent years. The statistics for Gross Value Added follow a similar pattern.

Between 1994 and 2000 the County experienced a net decrease of 0.6% in the business stock compared to a net growth across the country of 0.3%. Business survival rates are also lower in the County than national rates⁴. The County has a large number of Small to Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) employing less than 250 people. A high proportion (79%) of these SMEs are micro businesses. Although the local situation has fluctuated, County Durham has consistently had one of the lowest rates of self-employment in any of the Learning and Skills Council areas.⁵

In 2000 the average gross weekly wage in County Durham was £299 compared to £304 in the North East and £344 nationally.⁶

4.2 Demand for Skills

In 1999 County Durham had 150,700 employed jobs (excluding self employed) compared to 157,500⁷ in 1998. Employment is dominated by three industrial sectors:

- Public Administration, Education and Health
- Manufacturing
- Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants

There is an agreement in the County that these sectors require people with good basic skills, good communication skills, especially general ICT skills and an ability to be flexible. The current demand for high level ICT skills is relatively low.

¹ DETR. Indices of Deprivation 2000

² Durham County Council, 1999 Based Population Projections

³ ACOP / COE Regional Accounts

⁴ Small Business Service

⁵ Labour Force Survey

⁶ New Earnings Survey

⁷ Annual Business Inquiry

4.3 Occupational Profile

There is a higher proportion of employment nationally (13.9%) in managerial and senior official positions than in County Durham (10.8%), a pattern reflected in other highly skilled areas of employment. Conversely the County has greater levels of employment in process, plant and machine operatives, and elementary occupations. At 15.7%, elementary occupations account for the highest overall proportion of employment locally.

Growth Industrial Sectors:

Distribution and Transport. Regionally, employment is forecasted to increase by 0.5% per annum between 1999 – 2010 and nationally employment is expected to increase by 0.7%⁸. County Durham has a lower proportion of employees (25.2%) in this growth sector compared to regional (28.1%) or national figures (30.3%).

Business and Miscellaneous Services. Employment at a regional level is forecasted to increase by 1.5% per annum between 1999 – 2010, significantly less of an increase than that expected nationally (where an increase of 2.2% per annum is expected). Additionally only 11.5% of all employed jobs in County Durham are within this sector compared to 17.1% regionally and 24.0% nationally. Therefore, not only is growth in this important sector lower than the United Kingdom average, but the local sector is starting from a significantly lower base.

The Regional Development Agency is actively promoting policies to develop business clusters to build the knowledge economy. The clusters cover manufacturing, process industries and transactional services e.g. health, software, media, tourism and logistics, as well as public authorities and the voluntary sector. County Durham will contribute to and benefit from this work. The Learning and Skills Council will therefore monitor labour market changes and make connections between these and the work of education and training providers. The challenge is to raise aspirations for the new jobs of the future and to put in place mechanisms to enable young people and adults to be in a better position to enter them.

Declining Industrial Sector:

Manufacturing. Manufacturing is the main sector that is expected to experience a decline in employment between 1999 and 2010. Employment in manufacturing is expected to reduce by 1.4% regionally per annum. Given that 26.7% of all County Durham employment is within this sector (compared to 18.1% regionally and 15.7% nationally), the forecasted decline poses significant jobs losses within the local manufacturing sector in SMEs.

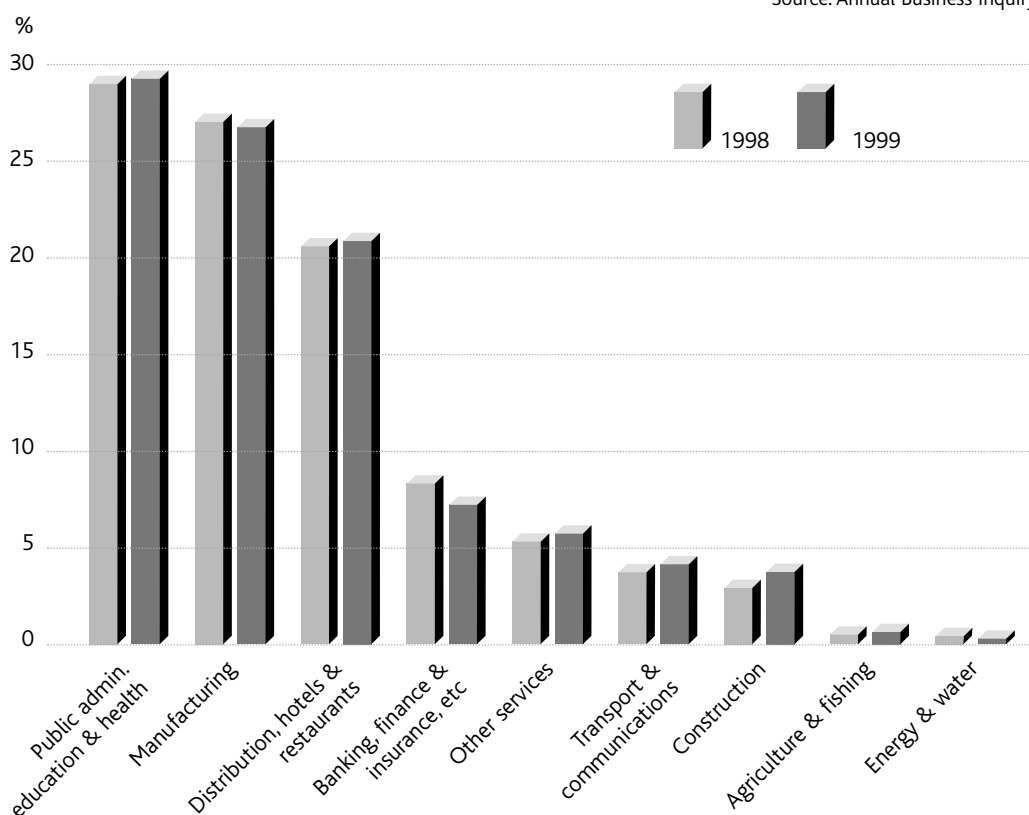
Other Significant Sectors

Public Administration, Education and Health. Employment in this sector within County Durham accounts for 29.1% of all employed jobs in 1999 compared to 27.9% regionally and 23.7% nationally. In total this sector employed 44,000 people within County Durham in 1999 compared to 45,000 in 1998.

⁸ IER Projections of Occupations and Qualifications: 2000/2001 Regional Results
(NB: only regional and national comparisons are available for this data)

Percentage of Employment by Sector in County Durham 1998 and 1999

Source: Annual Business Inquiry



The Voluntary Sector. County Durham has a robust voluntary sector that performs important functions in the areas of welfare, social care and support for young people which makes a significant contribution to health and education services. The Learning and Skills Council regards this sector as an important part of the social and economic fabric of the County and a domain with a major contribution to make to the development of a learning culture through basic skills, learner support, mentoring, training and, above all, personal development.

We have made a firm commitment to involve this sector in our consultation process, to support workforce development and capacity building measures to enable this sector to keep up to date with policy frameworks, meet Learning and Skills Council requirements and play a full and active partnership role.

4.4 Skill Shortages

Given the higher than average unemployment rate in County Durham (4.9% compared to 3.1% for the UK⁹) there is a higher than expected density of skill shortage vacancies (vacancies arising from a low number of applicants with the required skills, lack of relevant work experience or lack of relevant qualifications)¹⁰.

⁹ Claimant Count, ONS, September 2001

¹⁰ IER. Employers Skills Survey. Skills, Local Areas and Unemployment, DfEE, 2001

Only 2.9% of employees are considered by their employers as suffering skill gaps, the lowest finding for any Learning and Skills Council area. Statistics suggest that the local economy is uncompetitive as employers are not critical of their skill base. This finding is further supported by local research¹¹ where half of all employers who planned to recruit between 1999/2000 required applicants with no qualifications and only 11% required applicants with qualifications at degree level and above.

The same research shows County Durham to have significant skill shortages in the areas of clerical and secretarial occupations, personal and protective services and sales. 55.9% of employers reported skill shortage vacancies among these areas and 20.5% reported similar shortages among plant and machine operatives and other lower skilled jobs. Compared to national figures and also to those of other Learning and Skills Council areas in the North East, County Durham has fewer reported skill shortages (16%) in the professional and managerial occupational groups.

The implications of such data need careful consideration and more work is needed in this field. Such data describes facets of the current situation in relation to skill shortages. The time frame of this Strategic Plan requires us to look further ahead. It is vital to try and anticipate the skill requirements of a changed economy as well as what the heightened aspirations of more highly qualified people will be in the future.

4.5 Supply of Skills

The supply of skilled people in the County is governed by a complex range of social, educational and demographic factors. Among these, special attention can be drawn to the following:

(i) Deprivation

According to the Indices of Deprivation 2000¹, 56% of the wards in County Durham are ranked in the top 20% most deprived wards in England, with 30% in the top 10%. Eden Hill is the most deprived ward in the County with a ranking of 21 out of 8414 national wards. It is very hard to nurture the confidence and skills to participate in and benefit from learning, against such a context of deprivation.

10 Most deprived wards in County Durham (Indices of Deprivation 2000)

Ward Name	Index of Multiple Deprivation Score	Rank of Index of Multiple Deprivation (out of 8414 wards nationally)
Eden Hill	76.99	21
Deneside	72.24	53
Woodhouse Close	67.74	119
South Stanley	65.22	160
Dawdon	64.98	162
Shotton	64.88	165
Easington Colliery	64.57	176
St. Helen's	64.18	185
Acre Rigg	62.81	213
Craghead	62.81	214

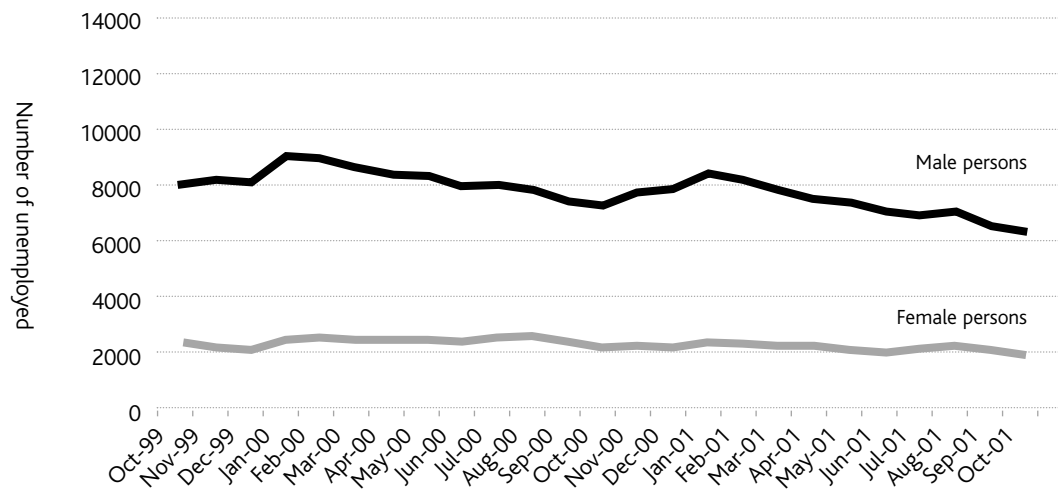
¹ Indices of Deprivation 2000. DETR

(ii) Unemployment

In September 2001, the unemployment rate for County Durham was 4.9%, which is significantly higher than the national rate of 3.1% but lower than the regional rate of 5.2%. Over one third of the total number unemployed in the County were aged under 25 – a considerably higher proportion than either the regional (30.3%) or UK (26.6%) figures. This means that for many young people, occupational horizons are limited. There is a real challenge to work with providers to help the most disadvantaged young people remain engaged in learning.

Numbers unemployed in County Durham October 1999 to October 2001

Source: Claimant Count, ONS



(iii) Exclusion due to gender, race or ethnicity, disability and age

Gender stereotyping is still prevalent in all areas of learning, with girls outperforming boys in most subjects.

The ethnic population of the County is 0.6% but learners from these groups face barriers to learning that are not faced by other learners. In 2002, it is anticipated that a number of refugees and asylum seekers will be supported in the County. The barriers that they face, before they are able to participate in learning, are varied and complex.

According to the Labour Force Survey 1999, there are 373,000 disabled people of working age in the North East, which represents about 24% of the total (regional) working age population. Data from the DSS Information Centre (February 2000), indicated that 42,800 people in County Durham (or 14% of the working age population) were claiming disability benefits, compared to 8% nationally. 73% of young people with special educational needs entered learning after compulsory education at 16 in 2000. This compared with 85% for the whole 16 year old cohort in that year.

The number of 50+ year olds is set to increase over the next 5 years and that increase, along with the lower than average economic activity rate amongst this age group, will create a population of potential learners whose skills and experience risk being wasted.

(iv) Basic Skills

The latest data from the Basic Skills Agency highlights County Durham as having higher percentages of poor literacy (27.3%) and numeracy (28.9%) in comparison to the national average (24%). Examination of the extent of poor basic skills at district level further shows that local areas have a more significant problem than that outlined nationally. Moreover, the data shows that there is variation in these figures across the County itself. In Wear Valley and Easington, over 30% of adults have poor literacy and numeracy skills. This level of poor basic skills acts as a further brake on participation in education and training. They also limit the ability of people in employment to respond to training and development. In addition to this problem, in 1999/2000 only 5.5% of Further Education provision in the County was in the programme area of basic skills, compared to 8.1% nationally.

This is a challenge that affects all aspects of the Learning and Skills Council's strategy. Wide ranging and innovative solutions will be identified to address the deep rooted problems encountered in basic skills in the County.

(v) Current skill levels

Current skill levels in the working population are crucial in setting constraints on the County's economic regeneration strategy, for they limit what can be achieved in the domain of work-based learning. People with good basic skills and vocational qualifications are much more likely to be able to improve on those skills and be motivated to do so.

The proportion of working age people qualified to NVQ level 3 and above in County Durham is slightly lower than that of the region. Comparison with national qualification levels shows that proportions are far lower than the country as a whole.

The Labour Force Survey (Quarter Ended August 2001) identified that the proportion of people of working age who had received some job related training during the previous quarter was 12%, which compares relatively favourably with the regional (12.3%) and national (12.4%) figures. County Durham fits the regional pattern in which most employers offer regular, on-the-job training and most training is available to those already well-qualified.

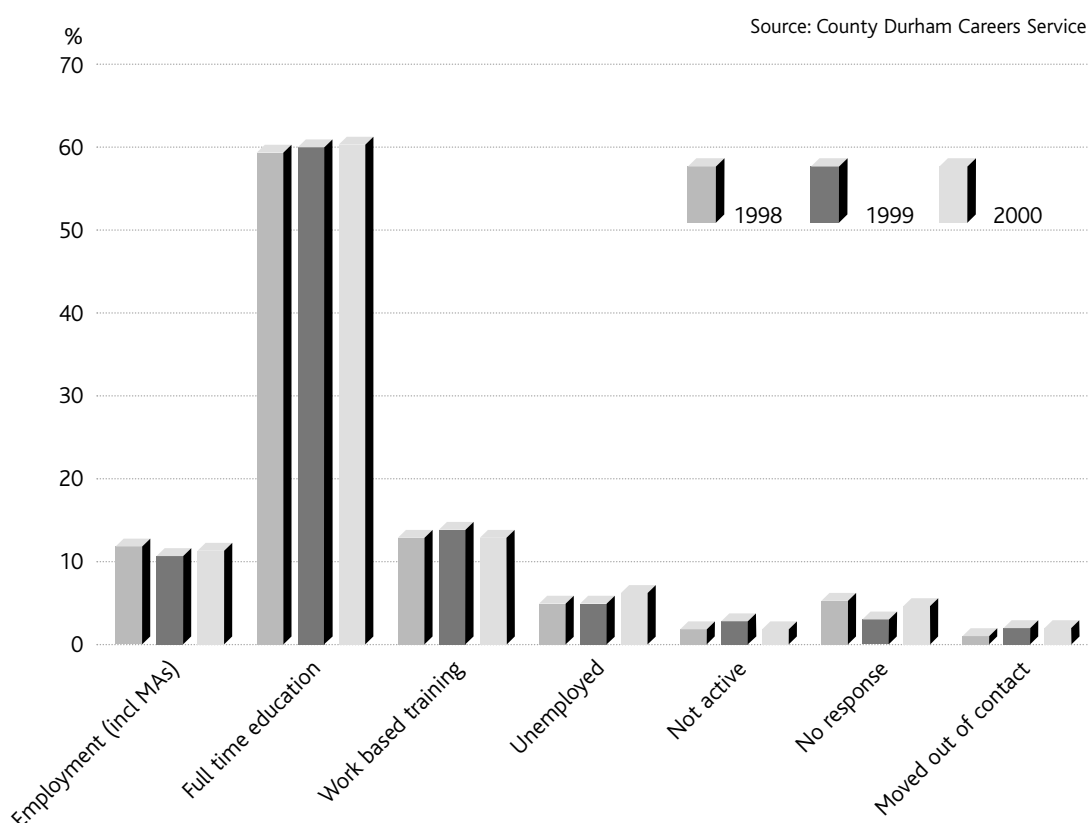
4.6 Profile of Educational Participation

The factors that influence the supply of skilled personnel do change. It is important therefore to consider the changing profile of educational participation in the County.

School Leaver Destinations

There is a smaller proportion of Year 11 leavers moving into full time education in County Durham compared to other regions, and a stronger tradition of young people choosing to begin work-based learning at this age locally¹². It is a major goal of national policy to encourage more young people to stay on in full time education until nineteen years and beyond into Higher Education. It is crucial to the future of County Durham that these goals are met. The Learning and Skills Council will work closely with partners to achieve this. It is important to influence and nurture a culture of learning and improve the opportunities open to young people and their families. Our work with the Connexions service will be crucial in achieving these outcomes. So, too, is our work on quality improvement and our efforts to promote stronger business links.

School leaver destinations in County Durham



Travel to Learn

Almost three quarters of Further Education students identified as studying in the County were actually residents in the County. The majority (30%) of County Durham residents who were studying outside of the County attended City of Sunderland College, with the majority of these coming from Easington and Chester-le-Street districts. The Learning and Skills Council will work with other agencies in the region to secure a better geographical spread of opportunities (vital in a rural county) and to remove any unhelpful competition among providers.

¹¹ DfEE, Moving On, 1999

Adult Participation

Previous local research¹³ shows that the most likely reason for adult non-learners to undertake some training or learning was at their employers' request. This finding confirms the national NIACE survey¹⁴ which found that 47% of those adults who did undertake learning had done so for work-related reasons.

Employers can encourage their staff to engage in learning. They cannot, however, influence those who are not in the labour force. There is considerable research evidence, as well as much innovative community-based educational practice, to show that adults can be helped to return to learn when courses are provided locally, when they are tailored to individual needs and when they are facilitated by skilled providers. The Learning and Skills Council will work with partners in the colleges, the community and the voluntary sector to strengthen educational provision for adults who are not in paid employment.

The Learning and Skills Council faces some unique challenges in this area. Only 1% of adults in the County participate in non-accredited adult education courses, compared to a national variation of between 0-6% among Local Education Authorities (LEA). Findings from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) show that about 16% of those who are working age have received some training during the previous quarter. We need to build on the existing learning culture among adults.

Further Education Retention and Achievement

The latest information from the Individual Student Record (ISR) analysis (1998/99) shows that in terms of local colleges the rates of retention and achievement for adults (19+) are comparable or ahead of England as a whole. Both retention and achievement for 16 – 18 year olds are slightly lower than the English average¹⁵. The Learning and Skills Council will address this issue with the colleges as part of the overall strategy to raise standards and the quality of courses. It is our intention to engage colleges in an evaluation of the ways in which curriculum design, learning support frameworks, working relationships and patterns of engagement of learners in college governance, can secure additional gains to their already commendable achievements.

Higher Education

Recent research in the North East¹⁶ shows that residents from the region who achieve graduate qualifications are likely to remain in the region. The research also found that 42% of County Durham employers who had recruited graduates indicated that they employed them in jobs that did not require graduate level qualifications ("under utilisation").

Although Higher Education is not a funding responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council, there is still a need to work closely with the Higher Education sector if we are to build progression in education and training.

¹² BMG Household Survey (on behalf of County Durham TEC), 1997

¹³ NIACE. *Winners and Losers in an Expanding System*, 2001

¹⁴ ISR - Standard LSC Analysis, Data Collection and Analysis Team (1998/1999 data)

¹⁵ Belt, V; et al. *North East Graduate Labour Markets 1999-2000*, Centre for Urban & Regional Development Studies, University of Newcastle, 2000

There are five (six if the Open University is included) universities in the North East of England. Each in their different ways is committed to a strategy of widening participation. They work together through Universities for the North East to play a role in regional economic regeneration. The strategy of the Regional Development Agency is to place universities and colleges at the heart of the region's economy and to build a learning region.

4.7 Overview of Provision

Work-based Learning

County Durham has a higher percentage of school leavers (13.3%) entering Work-based Learning than in many parts of the country. This figure has decreased considerably during the last ten years but over the last three it appears to have stabilised.

Currently 3,598 young people are in learning, in vocational areas varying from small animal care to construction, at an NVQ level appropriate to their abilities. Employer links support many young people in following Modern Apprenticeship frameworks as employed trainees.

We will work with all Work-based Learning providers including FE colleges to deliver provision across County Durham. The provider network consists of a diverse range of organisations – charities, Local Authorities, local/national learning providers and Sector Skills Councils (formerly National Training Organisations).

Further Education

Four Further Education colleges operate within the County. They offer a wide range of provision, both full and part time, for young people and adults in ranging from basic skills to higher level qualifications, including degree level courses. All four colleges are committed to attracting non-traditional learners and delivering provision at venues such as village halls, community centres and employers' premises.

Sixth Form Provision

From April 2002 we will have responsibility for funding provision in school sixth forms in the County. We are committed to working in partnership with the LEA to ensure that this provision is of the highest standard and contributes to our objectives.

Area Wide Inspection

The Learning and Skills Council will work in partnership with other organisations to prepare for area wide inspection. To this end we are also working with a sub-group of the Lifelong Learning Partnership to investigate data sources and assess current quality standards.

> 5. Local Priorities

5.1 The local priorities of the Learning and Skills Council address three key themes; skills, participation and learning. Each priority has been carefully identified in consultation with partners.

The Learning and Skills Council sees the three key themes as being inter-dependent. We will work to promote a wider understanding of the links between them. The local priorities help define more precisely the Learning and Skills Council's commitment to enable everyone to benefit from their entitlement to learning.

5.2 Skills

The Learning and Skills Council will place a strong emphasis on the development of work related skills in ways that enhance both employability and personal development.

Specifically the local priorities for County Durham in respect of skills are to:

- Encourage employers to recognise the economic benefits of investing in Workforce Development;
- Promote a range of basic and generic skills within the workforce that supports the requirements of a range of occupational areas;
- Build capacity to strengthen the basic skills of people at all levels of employment;
- Nurture and encourage improvement in generic skills, extending these to include better problem solving, communication, team working and ICT skills;
- Support organisations to develop a range of employability skills to prepare people for entry to the labour market;
- Support the development of management skills, including leadership and coaching, of people in all sectors, at all levels of responsibility;
- Increase the number of people qualified to NVQ level 3 and 4 in order to raise skill levels for local and national competitiveness. Baseline figures level 3 – 41.3%, level 4 - 20.6% (Source: Labour Force Survey Aug 2001);
- Support employers and organisations to offer high quality, flexible, work-based learning preferably leading to qualifications or unit accreditation;
- Work with the higher education sector and employers to ensure that the higher level skills needs of the economy are met;

5.3 Participation

As a County we must address the need to bring more young people and adults into learning, especially from groups that are currently under-represented. We also need to develop new ways of working, which put individual learners at the heart of the system and ensure effective support for those new to learning.

Specifically, the local priorities for County Durham in respect of participation are to:

- Create equal access to appropriate learning provision for individuals and groups regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, disability or learning difficulty;
- Increase participation in learning among those currently economically inactive, those who completed their formal education at an early age, older people and those affected by social deprivation. People aged 50 and over currently represent 30% of people of working age but only 20% of the working population and under 10% of people in training;
- Increase the participation of young people in full time education and training. 81% of 16 year olds and 73% of 17 year olds currently participate in education and training. (Source: ONS Statistics of Education, bulletin No 11/00);
- Identify and remove barriers to learning in terms of the geographical location of opportunities, the ways in which those opportunities are delivered and the financial support for learners. We will work continuously with Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Learning Partnerships to clarify the nature of barriers to participation and to explore the best ways of overcoming them;
- Widen participation in Higher Education, working with Further and Higher Education partners to raise expectations in this field. We will engage with the Excellence in Schools programme and endeavour to support providers' outreach initiatives;
- Increase the demand for, and participation in, work-based learning

5.4 Learning

The Learning and Skills Council believes that every individual, organisation and community has an entitlement to high quality, accessible and relevant learning opportunities.

Specifically, the local priorities in respect of learning in County Durham are to:

- Ensure that preparatory provision, including provision for people with special needs, is available for learners not yet ready to progress into recognised programmes of learning or work placement;
- Provide access to high quality basic skills provision;
- Increase the availability and quality of Modern Apprenticeship opportunities;
- Encourage progression through the NVQ route in order to meet the requirements for highly skilled occupations;
- Facilitate and support the development and delivery of a range of high quality provision, particularly in areas where standards are low;
- Develop provision which will widen the entitlement to learning for young people and adults.
- Raise aspirations to increase the number of individuals progressing to higher education;
- Promote the benefits of learning and celebrate learning achievements
- Build on existing local good practice in the development of high quality, informal learning opportunities

> 6. National Key Objectives (NKO's)

6.1 The Learning and Skills Council has considered its national key objectives thoroughly. Council Members and staff have worked together to articulate the actions through which we aim to contribute to the achievements of national key objectives.

The Learning and Skills Council will take a developmental approach to the national key objectives, and measure progress towards their achievement. We will work with such data to build up new programmes and learn from the work carried out. Each objective touches on the work of a range of partners and policy initiatives. The challenge is to build a framework in which all partners can share and interpret information and improve their practice in a co-ordinated way. The Learning and Skills Council will promote inter-agency dialogue and co-operation and, through appropriate research and evaluation, develop ways to disseminate good practice and promote the learning culture. A guiding principle is that we shall seek to add value to the way in which these objectives are being met throughout the County.

6.2 NKO1: Extend Participation in Education, Learning and Training

The heart of this objective is equality and diversity. Durham County Council's measures and central Government's initiatives to combat social exclusion depend on the development of policies, which create equality and opportunity for all learners. The Learning and Skills Council will work with partners to tackle barriers that prevent participation and restrict the opportunities for everyone to become a valued citizen of this County.

The Learning and Skills Council will draw up an equality and diversity strategy and action plan, supported by measures and indicators of under-representation, underachievement and discrimination in respect of gender, age, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status. The aim is to highlight areas of intervention to:

- Eliminate inequality in learner participation and performance in terms of gender, race or ethnicity, disability and age;
- Bring more people into learning by increasing the participation in education, training and lifelong learning of young people, and by supporting the learning activity of adults;
- Work with local and regional partnerships in the fields of learning and regeneration, especially in relation to neighbourhood renewal, to facilitate access to and take up of learning opportunities;
- Improve participation in learning in the rural areas of County Durham to overcome attendant problems of isolation and improve access to a range of learning opportunities and business development services.

Specifically, the local actions in support of NKO1 are to:

- Promote discussion and ownership of our local targets for participation within our network of partners;
- Work with the Connexions Service and the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) network to ensure that people get impartial advice, guidance and support delivered to recognised standards to enable them to make the best choices;
- Work with the LEA and County Durham Lifelong Learning Partnership to follow up 16-19 inspections and secure local breadth and quality of provision and encourage increased collaboration between providers;
- Deliver robust progression routes to degree level, including the further development of Education Business Links and Modern Apprenticeships;
- Build the capacity of basic skills provision in the County through a programme of training for community learning mentors;
- Ensure that the views of adult learners and young people are sought to inform the development of learning provision in County Durham;
- Support learners and potential learners to manage and overcome the personal barriers they face in order to take up or continue with their learning activity;
- Work with the Voluntary Sector as a key partner to engage the socially excluded in learning;
- Work towards the development of an integrated approach to the provision of adult, community, informal, distance and family learning and maximize Information Communication Technology (ICT) based opportunities;
- Establish effective links with local learning, regeneration and strategic partnerships and with regional partnerships to maximise learning opportunities, access funding, improve learner motivation and increase learner participation.

6.3 NKO2: Increase Engagement of Employers in Workforce Development

The latest labour market evidence for the County identifies a low skills base but the supply of skilled personnel at all levels is not out of balance with the current demand for labour.

As previously stated there is evidence that some employers take an uncritical view of their skills base and the training requirements of employees. The proportion of working age people qualified to NVQ level 3+ is 35.9% and is lower than the figure (42.0%) for the country as a whole. Only 12% of those in work had received some job-related training during the survey period June-August 2001. The age profile of the labour force highlights a need to improve the skills of the over 50s, who constitute 30% of the working population. There is evidence that employers are not using graduate employees to their full potential, as 42% are employed in 'non graduate' jobs and 30% of County Durham employers do not employ graduates. There is a challenge to encourage and help employers take a more strategic view of learning and development (Annual Statement of Learning and Skills Needs, County Durham Training and Enterprise Council).

The issues we face are to help meet skill needs in different sectors and raise levels of transferable skills. We need to secure more employer investment in learning, promote Investors in People recognition and enable all providers to engage with employers for their mutual benefit.

Specifically, the local actions in support of NKO2 are to:

- Work in partnership with employers to increase their investment in raising skill levels and ensure that workforce development is an integral element of business strategies;
- Provide high quality labour market information and skills data and opportunities to engage the business community in its interpretation;
- Collaborate with Durham County Council's plans to encourage greater networking and share good practice among employers;
- Foster links between employers and the Higher Education and Further Education sectors to promote graduate business start ups and sustained professional development for highly skilled employees;
- Continue to promote and support Investors in People within organisations;
- Promote through Higher Education and Further Education (and locally through the LSPs) already validated mechanisms to accredit work-based learning, especially in the SME sector;
- Develop, through our key partners, an infrastructure of distance learning opportunities using ICT to promote learning in rural areas;
- Encourage employers to engage with the family learning agenda and encourage the development of work-based learning champions and collaborative work with Business Link, basic skills providers, Trades Union learning initiatives and with Learndirect;
- Help employers to make connections with learning support systems in their local community, including Education Business Links.

6.4 NKO3: Raise Achievement of Young People

Given the legacy of poor educational attainment in the County, this objective is crucial. The Learning and Skills Council has consulted widely on this theme. We are aware of the complex social and cultural obstacles to higher levels of attainment and will build on previous work and on social research in the region and the County to address these issues. We need to bring more young people into learning and maintain the effective partnerships required to contribute to the development of progression routes and support mechanisms for young people to become lifelong learners.

Specifically, the local actions in support of NKO3 are to:

- Ensure that opportunities for young people develop in a planned way in relation to need and that young people are not disadvantaged through unhelpful competition among providers;
- Engage with partners and initiatives such as Education Action Zones, County Durham Sure Start, Community Education, the Youth Service, County Durham Youth Offending Service and special projects to work creatively with disaffected young people. This will build, through the LSPs, a better understanding of good practice in raising the profile of education among young people;
- Work with County Durham Connexions Service in their role to co-ordinate social inclusion issues affecting young people;
- Adopt the national funding system across all sectors of 16–19 education which will better meet individual needs and encourage higher standards;
- Support Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in developing and implementing its reforms of 14-19 learning;
- Address issues of retention and tackle under achievement through use of the Standards Fund;
- Make sustained efforts to improve achievement at all levels, focusing particularly on the numbers of young people achieving qualifications at NVQ levels 2 and 3 and encouraging progression into Higher Education and lifelong learning;
- Enable young people to make connections between their personal goals and the learning opportunities available to help them to achieve, and to improve their own lives;
- Enhance the work of Education Business Links and Connexions to ensure that appropriate awareness, information and guidance is given to young people about the world of work and progression into Work-based Learning, Sixth Form provision and Further and Higher Education;
- Facilitate effective collaboration between Schools, Work-based Learning Providers, Further Education and Higher Education establishments to ensure progression opportunities;
- Support the LEA and schools in responding to the challenges of the White Paper “Schools Achieving Success” in ensuring that young people become engaged in lifelong learning;

6.5 NKO4: Raise Achievement of Adults

The challenge is to build both expectations and opportunities for learning among adults, particularly people living in the rural parts of the County and in those areas of high social deprivation. There is a need to develop productive partnerships to provide progression routes in lifelong learning for personal, work-based and community development.

Specifically, the local actions in support of NKO4 are to:

- Support the development of new and improved adult, community and family learning provision, making effective use of neighbourhood learning centres, Learndirect and e-learning. We will explore with partners, especially in the voluntary sector, ways of developing community learning mentors;
- Encourage the accreditation of learning taking place within community based initiatives (e.g creche workers, classroom helpers);
- Support the development of non accredited learning as a means of widening participation and providing pathways to accredited learning opportunities;
- Facilitate and support individuals to overcome basic skills barriers to learning and employment and take an active part in delivering the national Skills for Life strategy;
- Work with DfES in the development of national support arrangements for adult learners;
- Work with the IAG network to further develop its services to national standards in order to support adults in County Durham;
- Work with the Employment Service (ES) to make learning available to people who are economically inactive and those affected by industrial and economic change.

6.6 NKO5: Raise Quality of Education and Training and User Satisfaction

The rationale of this objective is clear: the recruitment, retention, sustained achievement and satisfaction of learners will improve in line with improvements in the quality learning provision. We will develop quality procedures that enable providers to examine what they do both critically and developmentally. Much information is gathered about courses and students across a range of performance indicators. The challenge is to build on this information to secure real improvements in the quality of provision. The issues we face are to improve inspection grades and promote strategic debate regarding 16-19 education and training.

Specifically, the local actions in support of NKO5 are to:

- Develop with all our providers an agreed Quality Improvement Strategy, systems of self assessment and appropriate targets by which improvement can be measured;
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to enable key stakeholders to comment on the quality of provision, performance of courses and learners and to build a cycle of continuous improvement;
- Review with partners the ways in which data from management information systems and external inspections can best be used to improve the quality of provision and consistency of standards across the County;

- Encourage provider staff to strengthen professional qualifications in teaching and staff development, which we believe is a vital element of quality improvement;
- Explore with Higher Education and Further Education providers, as well as appropriate professional bodies in community and youth work, the most effective ways to strengthen the skills of community educators and work-based trainers;
- Celebrate successful learning achievement through the recognition of awards ceremonies and publicity to bring about change in the learning culture of the region.

6.7 National Key Objectives and Targets for 2004

In its Corporate Plan for 2001-2004, the National Learning and Skills Council has set targets against national key objectives. The targets detailed below represent our local contribution to the achievement of those national targets, however it is recognised that the baseline data from which the targets have been derived will be subject to further refinement. Given the prevailing circumstances within the County, these are very challenging targets, which can only be achieved through collaboration with and ownership by our partners.

National Key Objectives	National Targets to 2004	Local Targets to 2004 (These are our additional volumes as a contribution to the national targets)
1, Extend participation in education, learning and training	80% of 16-18 year olds in structured learning.	1,590
	Set baseline and target for adults in 2003/04	-
2, Increase engagement of employers in workforce development	Develop measure of employer engagement in 2003/04	-
3, Raise achievement of young people	85% at level 2 by age 19	410
	55% at level 3 by age 19	334
4, Raise achievement by adults	Raise literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults.	6,692
	% of adults at level 2: target to be set in the Plan 2003/04	-
	52% of adults at level 3.	16,226
5, Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction	Set baselines and targets in the national plan 2003/04	-

Impact Statement

NKO1

We will attract an additional 1,590 young people to participate in education, learning and training. We will also use promotional, celebratory and financial support methods to encourage greater numbers of adults to take up and benefit from education, learning and training.

NKO2

We will work closely with employers and sector skills councils to match the supply of skilled labour with requirements of employers.

NKO3

We aim to increase by 410 the number of young people gaining a level 2 qualification and by 334 the number of young people gaining a level 3 qualification.

NKO4

We aim to raise the literacy of 6,692 adults and increase by 16,226 the number of adults gaining a level 3 qualification.

NKO5

Improving quality is central to our strategy in raising standards of provision and achieving the increase in participation and attainment of learners.

> 7. Supporting Strategies

7.1 The local priorities and actions set out have been mapped against the national remit of the Learning and Skills Council. There are also a number of supporting strategies that will help us to achieve our objectives. In everything we do we will use an approach that promotes equality and diversity of opportunity, basic skills, workforce development, adequate and appropriate funding and improvements in the quality of provision. These dimensions of our work will be examined, discussed, reported and publicised through a coherent marketing strategy that enables learners, providers and members of the Local Learning and Skills Council to understand the policies and recognise their achievements within them. The supporting strategies are outlined below and included in table format in Annex 2.

7.2 Equality and Diversity

The Learning and Skills Council has been charged with helping "to create a learning society in which everyone has the opportunity to go as far as their talents and efforts will take them." The Learning and Skills Act 2000 sets out this vision of a learning society that is free of discrimination and prejudice and helps learners reach their potential.

The Learning and Skills Council's commitment is for all individuals and groups of people to have equal access to appropriate learning provision, regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, disability or learning difficulty. Appropriate provision should be capable of meeting learners' needs and of leading to a suitable outcome such as employment or further learning.

We fully support these principles. It is the intention of the Learning and Skills Council to become a model of good practice and to promote equality of opportunity in County Durham. We will:

- Develop the Learning and Skills Council as an equal opportunities employer and organisation;
- Become a champion of equality and work with providers to draw up action plans around performance indicators to challenge all forms of discrimination against learners in all domains of learning - at work, in formal education and the community;
- Measure, monitor and evaluate progress towards equal opportunities among providers and tackle under-representation, underachievement and stereotyping in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, disability and place of residence;
- Work to remove barriers to opportunity so that the different needs of learners can be adequately met. (Equality does not demand that everyone must be treated the same way, but requires an acknowledgement of different learning needs that must be met appropriately);
- Recognise the human rights of all learners to be treated with respect and to have a legitimate voice in the decision making that shapes their learning;
- Raise awareness of equal opportunities as a major objective in promoting the further development of a learning culture.

7.3 Basic Skills

The Moser report recommendations which have been taken forward through the 'Skills for Life' strategy, identified approximately 7 million adults in Britain as having inadequate levels of numeracy and/or literacy. The national strategy sets a target of reducing the 7 million by half by 2010.

There are two main linked imperatives informing the national policy. Firstly, the ability of the country to compete in the global marketplace requires that there is a well educated flexible workforce able to respond to changing demands of new working practices and rapidly advancing technologies. The second is recognition that the needs of the individual must be addressed if there is to be any claim to a fair and just society. The lack of basic skills is closely correlated with social exclusion and limited employability and is therefore a key target for us.

We will:

- Identify, supply and meet the basic skills needs of learners in County Durham;
- Fulfill our share of the National target by increasing the basic skills achievement of 6692 learners over the next three years;
- Undertake an audit of adult basic skills provision;
- Monitor performance in achieving the targets for numeracy and literacy provision;
- Seek further development funding to increase the capacity and diversity of provision and to improve quality;
- Establish an employer basic skills forum;
- Develop expertise among our own and provider staff;
- Develop local marketing activities to support national campaigns to motivate adults to acquire literacy and numeracy skills.

7.4 Workforce Development

The success of the Learning and Skills Council must be judged against how far its work has helped promote workforce development throughout County Durham. The challenge is to work closely with the Sector Skills Councils and employers to match the supply of skilled labour with the demand from employers in the region. This work will be developed further through our contacts in the LSPs, education and training providers, Business Link and other partners. We will:

- Convince employers of the business case for investment in learning and development;
- Raise levels of basic skills to improve literacy, numeracy, problem solving, communication and ICT skills within the workforce;

- Enhance the employability of young people and adults;
- Support County Durham Business and Learning Partnerships to enhance the employability of young people through Education Business Links before they enter the workforce;
- Build a platform for continuous skill development and improvement at all levels of employment;
- Improve the capacity and effectiveness of training and development functions among employers;
- Ensure high quality training provision is an essential component of improving retention, strengthening commitment to continuous learning and improved productivity and competitiveness.

Through our work with partners, providers, employers and learners, we will promote a greater, shared understanding of these imperatives. Given the importance of the public sector to the economy of the region and this County, we will engage creatively with developments such as the National Health Service University, the Local Government National Training Organisation and the proposed Academy for Learning within the DfES. Against that background we will work specifically to:

- Match skill development to the needs identified by the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and regional skills groups;
- Develop sector clusters for mutual support and innovation with particular emphasis on SMEs;
- Extend the involvement of employers in the development of their workforces and develop coherent local approaches to skill development at all levels and in all sectors, including the community and voluntary sector;
- Promote good management practices and a wider understanding of management skills and strategic human resource development;
- Articulate shared strategies for skill development and personal development that enable learners to take more responsibility for their own education and training and remove barriers to learning.

7.5 Quality Improvement

Quality is central to our strategy in raising standards of provision and achieving the objectives set out under the Learning and Skills Council's Key Objective 5 (page 21).

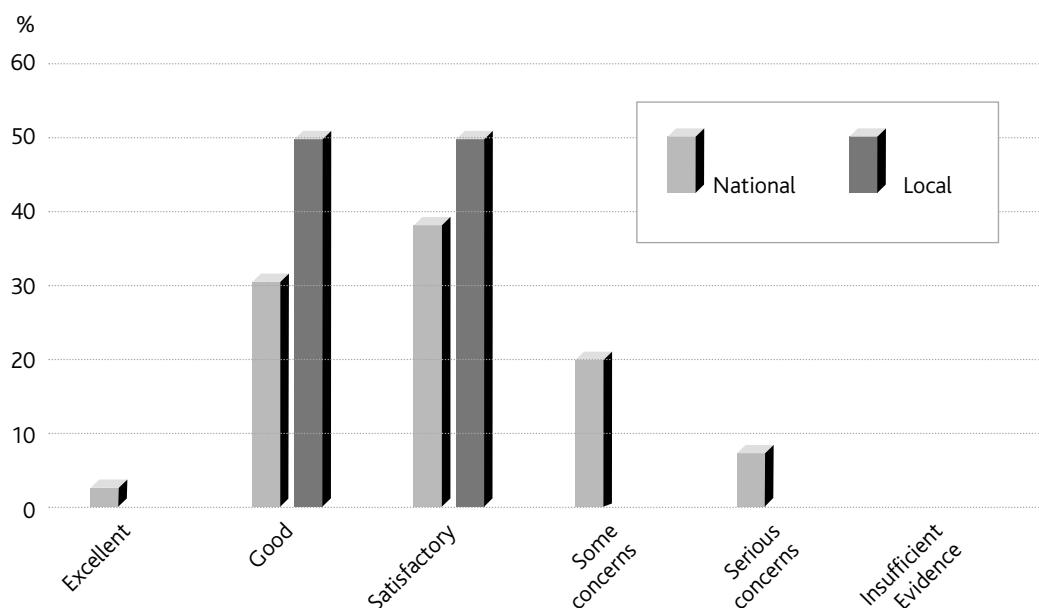
We see quality improvement as a continuous process working with providers to ensure that:

- Programmes are well designed and fit for their purpose to meet the needs of learners and the wider interests of the local community and employers;
- Programmes are rigorously assessed by providers in ways that take into account the views of learners and the standards expected of them within appropriate Inspection Frameworks;
- Self-assessment leads to effective development planning which gives clarity to future action;
- Quality improvement targets are supported by staff development policies and training programmes that enable teaching staff and trainers to develop their professional practice;
- Quality is supported by the provision of up to date resources available in environments that are welcoming, safe and appropriately equipped and furnished;

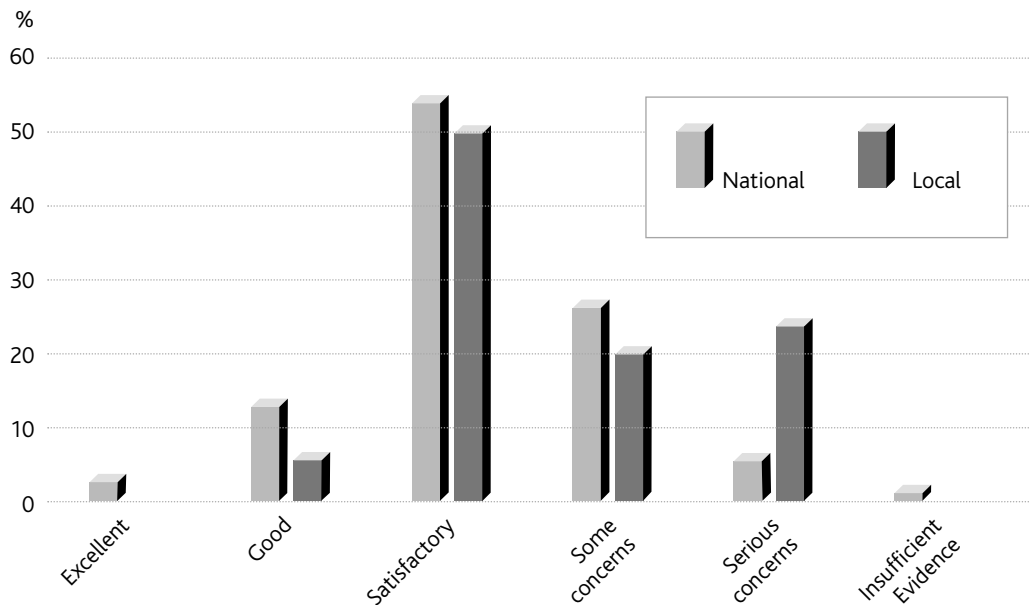
Information is available that enables providers to monitor their achievements against the achievements of others.

At regular intervals during the year we will review the performance of all providers – with emphasis on the performance of individual learners. The outcome will be a categorisation ranging from excellent to serious concerns. The charts below give the outcomes from October 2001 for colleges and work-based learning providers. Other providers will be involved in the process from 2002 onwards. All providers performing less than satisfactorily will be supported in their endeavours to improve practice – by advice, guidance, staff development and additional funding.

Provider Review Results as at October 2001 - Colleges of Further Education



Provider Review Results as at October 2001 - Work-based Learning Providers



7.6 Health and Safety

Our key Health and Safety objectives for County Durham will be to comply with statutory duties under current legislation and to take forward best practice.

A selective, risk-based approach targeted towards the concept of the 'safe learner' will be applied. The concept of 'learner safety' will be a pro-active, influential and integrated part of the growing remit of the Learning and Skills Council.

We will:

- Provide learners with a safe and healthy working environment, where Health and Safety is seen not only as an integral part of high quality provision but also as an area for continuous improvement.
- Promote responsibility and accountability for learner Health and Safety via high quality content in self-assessments and development plans. The influence and effect of this approach will be maximised using appropriate and targeted ways of working with all providers with whom we contract.

7.7 Marketing

The Learning and Skills Council has considered carefully the marketing strategy that informs its work and sees it as a process of building long term effective relationships, networks and interactions with key markets in order to achieve mutually agreed objectives. These markets include learners, providers (including wider support networks in public authorities and the community), accrediting bodies and those responsible for resource allocation.

Within this network of marketing relationships, we will work to develop our own identity and role and, through appropriate means of communication, build up an understanding of that role and of what can be jointly achieved through collaborative working among our partners and providers.

We will:

- Ensure that Learning and Skills Council staff fully understand our marketing strategy;
- Ensure that information about Learning and Skills Council services and support is widely available to all key stakeholders;
- Develop a better understanding of the Learning and Skills Council's remit among our partners and the wider community;
- Work with partners and providers to enable them to develop good direct communications with their own primary markets.

7.8 European Social Fund Co-financing

The Learning and Skills Council aims to deploy its resources in a controlled, cost-effective way to achieve its main objectives. We seek to use these resources strategically in ways that add value to the resources of our main providers. Through appropriate collaboration, we will seek to expand those resources to enable us to realise our goals.

We plan to commence European Social Fund (ESF) Co-financing from January 2002. Significant ESF resources will be utilised to enable and enhance the delivery of national objectives and key local challenges identified within the Corporate Plan.

The Learning and Skills Council County Durham is approved as a Co-financing Organisation and has applied for resources under the priorities and measures outlined in Annex 3.

> 8. Cross Cutting Activities

8.1 In addition to the supporting strategies, we have found it helpful to identify a number of cross cutting activities. In discussions with learning providers, we will try to ensure that these themes are taken into account in assessing particular programmes of learning or initiatives that we support. Our aim is to secure relevance, coherence and progression in all the programmes we support.

The cross cutting activities provide us with an audit tool with which to assess whether learning providers are working within our remit. We will develop these cross cutting activities into a more precise measure for audit and development. This will help providers to develop programmes that are integrated and contribute to the widely supported objectives of the Learning and Skills Council.

The cross cutting activities are:

Adult and Community Learning. We will respond to the needs of adult learners through engagement with learning providers and partners to nurture in people a positive attitude to work and citizenship responsibilities. We will work with County Durham LEA and other key organisations to secure adequate learning provision to meet the identified needs of adult learners.

14 - 19 Provision. All the programmes we support will strengthen the framework of opportunities for this age group, particularly those youngsters likely to disengage from learning. They will cover both academic and vocational study backed up by sound advice and guidance, in order to raise aspirations, promote a work ethic through employer links and open up new routes into Further and Higher Education.

Education Business Links play an important part in a learning culture that supports higher aspirations and skill development for a productive and flexible workforce. In conjunction with County Durham Business and Learning Partnership, we aim to provide young people with a wide range of high quality, relevant, structured experiences of work throughout their school careers. Education Business Links programmes will include opportunities for teachers and lecturers to engage with the workplace as part of their own professional development.

Information, Advice and Guidance. Programmes of learning at all levels in education, employing organisations and the community will be assessed with a view to strengthening the help given to learners in this field. Through the IAG network, we will help providers disseminate information to learners and review their information needs.

E-Learning. The Learning and Skills Council will encourage partners and providers to consider how best to design their provision to enable e-learning delivery and to help learners through e-learning systems. E-learning is an essential skill for learning in all key settings, including work, education and the community.

Voluntary Sector Learning. This is a key activity for us, essential to the development of a learning culture. The Learning and Skills Council will strengthen this dimension of learning in the County through close collaboration with LSPs. We will discuss with colleges and providers (including the Workers' Educational Association) the best ways to extend community outreach activities. Our partnership with the Voluntary Sector is vital to our work with the socially excluded and is key in the support and delivery of our plans. The Learning and Skills Council will work towards becoming part of the County Durham Compact as an agreed framework for partnership with the Voluntary Sector.

Partnerships. Partnerships are key to the Learning and Skills Council's approach to socially inclusive learning and these will develop further. LSPs, Local Learning Partnerships and Neighbourhood Renewal groups are of particular significance. Our guiding principle is to add value to the work of these partnerships, which include Government departments. Our work with Durham County Council is central to all of the development networks in the County. We will work to strengthen communication and dialogue between partners, enabling providers to work within shared objectives.

Rural issues are important in County Durham. The inter-dependent tasks of promoting rural development, reducing isolation and developing new models of learning for people in rural areas are a particular challenge for partnerships in the County. The main transport infrastructure of the County is orientated North/South leaving long and difficult travelling patterns for residents needing to move East/West, particularly through the rural dales in the west of County Durham. The Learning and Skills Council will encourage all providers to consider the best ways in which to meet the needs of rural areas throughout all learning provision.

Coalfield Areas. Former coalfield areas also present particular education and learning patterns that we will endeavour to address via local partners through Local Strategic Partnership Developments.

Entrepreneurship is a key activity. Within County Durham there has been a tradition of employment in heavy industry and the public sector. The County Durham Economic Strategy attaches high importance to new business start-ups as a way of compensating for a lack of past activity in this area. We seek to encourage innovative thinking throughout education and training to equip young people and adults with the skills and confidence to consider starting in business and to think creatively in the workplace and in the community. County Durham Business and Learning Partnership has a vital role to play through the delivery of Education Business Links. The Learning and Skills Council will facilitate a 'joined up' approach to fostering entrepreneurial attitudes. This will mean developing clear policies with One NorthEast and Business Link in developing this change.

Further Education is our key sector. We will encourage colleges to further enhance relationships with employers and other learning providers and to take a strategic view of their provision. Further Education colleges have a pivotal role to play in building capacity for local regeneration and workforce development. We will engage in collaborative approaches with colleges, schools, employers, work-based learning providers and higher education to support the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence (COVEs). We will also support collaborative ways of working between schools, colleges and training providers in conjunction with the LEA.

Higher Education has a vital role to play in raising participation in learning and regeneration. The Learning and Skills Council has good links with the Higher Education sector and will build on these. We will also link to the work done by Universities in the community who have support from the active communities fund. Through a robust and productive relationship with this sector, we will work to widen access for both young people and adults, consider how best to provide flexible, university level (foundation, graduate and postgraduate) modes of study for a wider range of learners and strengthen links with employers and community-based agencies.

The matrix at Annex 4 sets out our supporting strategies and cross cutting activities in a way that enables initiatives to be mapped against them and ensure that local, regional and national priorities are met.

> 9. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

As part of our monitoring, review and evaluation activities, we will:

- Engage with partners to evaluate how far we are being successful in contributing to social inclusion and building up a culture of participation;
- Achieve greater clarity in setting realistic and achievable targets aligned to learner needs and our own overall objectives at local, regional and national levels;
- Evaluate learning programmes to consolidate and share good practice;
- Develop measures with providers, including those in the voluntary and community sectors, to assess how far objectives in learning are being met;
- Publish reviews of performance and results of evaluation as part of the process of raising awareness of the learning achievements of people in the County;
- Engage partners in regular evaluation of our own performance as a Learning and Skills Council;
- Discuss with the research community in the region the relevance of appropriate research to our practice and consider how best we can initiate research relevant to the achievement of our objectives.

> 10. Capacity to Deliver

The Learning and Skills Council is confident that it can achieve its objectives within its mission. The basis of that confidence is:

- A sound and shared understanding of the learning needs of people in County Durham. The work done in consulting and working closely with partners has nurtured a vision of change that we are confident will significantly shape the work of providers and the motivation of learners;
- We have a management structure fit for its purpose, and policies in respect of ICT and human resource development to support it;
- The track record of the predecessor body, County Durham Training and Enterprise Council, in paving the way for the Learning and Skills Council;
- The knowledge, skill and commitment of the staff of the Learning and Skills Council and our commitment to develop as a learning organisation;
- The high degree of partnership working that we are engaged in throughout County Durham and the region as a whole.

Action

We will:

- Be constantly guided by the national remit of the Learning and Skills Council;
- Engage actively and creatively with partners and providers to promote good practice;
- Note, measure and publicise the innovations we encourage;
- Carefully monitor our own progress and learn from experience;
- Build incrementally on success to change the learning culture of the County.

> 11. Consultation Process

In developing this Strategic Plan, the Learning and Skills Council County Durham undertook an extensive consultation exercise in order to reflect shared priorities. This was carried out with key partners to relate learning and skills to wider employment, regeneration and social policies, both nationally and regionally. Consequently the outcome of the consultation has shaped the framework and content of the local Strategic Plan to date.

The consultation process was conducted as outlined below:

August / September 2001

A consultation document "Meeting the Needs for Learning and Skills in County Durham" was produced in-house. This document highlighted the challenges for the Learning and Skills Council in meeting the key tasks required. The consultation document was based on the three strategic themes of skills, participation and learning.

October 2001

Two consultation events were held in order to ensure that the views of key partners and the wider community were taken into account. The two events were held at different locations within the County on 15 and 18 October 2001 and attended by representatives from key partner organisations (see Annex 5). The events provided a background to the Learning and Skills Council's progress and an overview of the strategic planning consultation process in context. Partners took part in workshops based around the three strategic themes, providing feedback on the challenges and identifying further challenges to be included in the Strategic Plan.

The consultation document was widely circulated to ensure feedback and contributions from all sectors in relation to the challenges outlined.

February 2002

Further consultation on this local Strategic Plan took place in January 2002. The draft Strategic Plan was forwarded to all key partners consulted during the first phase of the consultation process for further comment.

The Further consultation took the form of one to one consultation meetings with key strategic partners. Written feedback on the Strategic Plan was sought from all key strategic partners. Following the consultation during January 2002, five common themes emerged which we have now reflected in the plan;

- Promotion of Learning
- Role of the voluntary sector
- Increased emphasis on partnerships
- Incorporation of quantitative data
- Additional quality measures

> ANNEX 1 – Regional and County Links

The following table emphasises the close correlation between our strategic priorities and those of the Regional Economic Strategy for the North East – “Unlocking Our Potential”.

Learning and Skills Council Strategic Priorities	Regional Economic Strategy – Priorities
Extend participation in education, learning and training	Increase demand for learning and for higher and broader skill levels
Increase engagement of employers in workforce development	Develop a world class workforce
Raise achievement of young people	Engage all young people in the world of work
Raise achievement of adults	Reduce social and economic exclusion

The rationale behind both lists is the same: to work to improve the level of skills in the regional economy to develop a more highly skilled workforce able to respond to the opportunities of new technologies and business clusters that enhance the competitive advantages of individual companies. This shift depends upon a better understanding of the future needs of employers and the development of a knowledge based economy through better co-operation among employers and Higher Education institutions.

We will continue to work closely with Government Office for the North East (GO-NE) to play a key sub-regional role in supporting the overall strategy for the region. An essential component of this work is to take into account the skill requirements of local regeneration policies. We will work with the North East Assembly, the Regional Skills Observatory and the Regional Education Forum within the framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action. We expect to play a lead role in matching skill requirements to the needs of individuals for guidance, education, training and learning support.

We will work with the North East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to support and add value to the work of the Learning and Skills Council. For many adults, libraries and museums play a crucial role as a preferred place to learn where support is offered in a non-threatening environment. Many libraries are based in rural areas, which address some of the barriers to learning in terms of geographical location and already attract a strong local audience.

The County Durham Economic Strategy developed by Durham County Council has at its heart the need to reduce social inequalities and overcome the problems of disadvantaged communities (County Durham Economic Strategy 2001-2006: Consultation Draft October 2001). The economic assessment behind the strategy identifies a County with a stable population still dependent on manufacturing, poorly represented in terms of self-employment with pockets of very high unemployment. 31% of the County’s population live in wards that are among the 10% of the most deprived in the country. In both educational attainment and workforce qualifications, the County lags behind the rest of the country. A key point to be made is that these problems are connected. Innovative approaches are therefore needed to compensate for and overcome the disadvantages to which many people in this County are subjected.

The County Durham Economic Strategy has as one of its key objectives that of developing a highly skilled workforce. The Learning and Skills Council embraces similar strategies to those identified by Durham County Council. The following table maps some of the key parallels in these approaches.

County Durham Economic Strategy		Learning and Skills Council Plans
Aims	Actions	
Encourage a culture of learning	Celebrate learning and raise awareness of lifelong learning	Celebrate achievement and create a learning culture
Provide high quality information on local learning and needs	Share information among partners	Formulate skills strategy through multi-agency approach; work with Connexions Service
Increase and widen participation in learning	Tackle poverty, and rural problems; Innovative learning, family learning and advice	Equal opportunities strategy; development of innovative learning opportunities in rural areas
Raise level of basic skills	Training for providers	Drive forward collaboration on basic skills
Develop appropriate skills for employment and business competitiveness	Accreditation of Work-based Learning, Education Business Links	Education Business Links, promotion of Modern Apprenticeships
Raise standards in post-16 provision	Staff development and training of local learning leaders	Improve inspection grades and qualifications of delivery staff
Encourage greater collaboration and co-ordination	Promote lifelong learning and focus on under-represented groups	Engage with Voluntary, Adult and Community Sectors; promote family learning and basic skills strategy

There is a high level of agreement about the needs that must be addressed and the best means to do so. More importantly, however, there is a framework now in place to enable these related strategies to develop together and to be continuously refined as they translate from policy into practice. This framework is constituted by the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) through which County Durham plans to co-ordinate all regeneration plans.

The economic and social development strategy of County Durham will be taken forward through partnership approaches and specifically through LSPs and Local Learning Partnerships. The LSPs are based on the County's seven local government administrative districts. The Learning and Skills Council will work with these LSPs to help identify more precisely local learning needs and co-ordinate responses to them. This will enable the Council to develop approaches to learners and employers that accurately reflect local needs and circumstances.

The Learning and Skills Council will bring to the LSPs both skills and information about local labour markets and patterns of education and training. Through its close links with training providers, local information will be fed back in ways that enable providers to link their courses more closely to the specific requirements of different groups of learners. The Learning and Skills Council is particularly keen to work with partners in rural regeneration to extend learning opportunities to isolated communities. This will require innovative and flexible course provision using the methods both of e-learning and those that strengthen and acknowledge the informal learning that takes place in the community.

> ANNEX 2 – Supporting Strategies

Equality and Diversity

Local Activity	Links to NKOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop the Learning and Skills Council as an equal opportunities employer and organisation; ● Become a champion of equality and work with providers to draw up action plans around performance indicators to challenge all forms of discrimination against learners in all domains of learning - at work, in formal education and the community; ● Measure, monitor and evaluate progress towards equal opportunities among providers and tackle under-representation, under-achievement and stereotyping in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, disability and place of residence; ● Work to remove barriers to opportunity so that the different needs of learners can be adequately met; ● Raise the awareness of the importance of equal opportunities as a major objective in promoting the further development of a learning culture. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend participation in education, learning and training 2. Increase engagement of employers in workforce development 3. Raise achievement of young people 4. Raise achievement of adults 5. Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction

Basic Skills

Local Activity	Links to NKOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify, supply and meet the basic skills needs of learners in County Durham; ● Set challenging targets to measure increases in basic skills achievement over the next three years; ● Undertake an audit of adult basic skills provision; ● Monitor performance in achieving the targets for numeracy and literacy provision; ● Seek further development funding to increase the capacity and diversity of provision and to improve quality; ● Establish an employer basic skills forum; ● Develop expertise among our own and provider staff; ● Develop local marketing activities to support national campaigns to motivate adults to acquire literacy and numeracy skills. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend participation in education, learning and training 2. Increase engagement of employers in workforce development 3. Raise achievement of young people 4. Raise achievement of adults 5. Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction

Workforce Development

Local Activity	Links to NKO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Convince employers of the business case for investment in learning and development; ● Improve basic skills (literacy and numeracy) problem solving, communication and ICT skills within the workforce; ● Enhance the employability of young people and adults; ● Build a platform for continuous skill development and improvement at all levels of employment; ● Improve the capacity and effectiveness of training and development functions among employers; ● Ensure high quality training provision is an essential component of improving retention, strengthening commitment to continuous learning and improved productivity and competitiveness; ● Match skill development to the needs identified by the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and Regional Skills groups; ● Develop sector clusters for mutual support and innovation with particular emphasis on SMEs; ● Extend the involvement of employers in the development of their workforces and develop coherent local approaches to skill development at all levels in employment and in all sectors, including that of the Community and Voluntary Sector; ● Promote good management practices and a wider understanding of management skills and of strategic human resource development; ● Articulate shared strategies for skill development and personal development that enable learners to take more responsibility for their own education and training and which remove barriers to learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend participation in education, learning and training 2. Increase engagement of employers in workforce development 3. Raise achievement of young people 4. Raise achievement of adults 5. Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction

Quality Improvement

Local Activity	Links to NKOs
<p>Ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Programmes are well designed and fit for their purpose of meeting the needs of learners and the wider interests of the local community and employers; ● Programmes are rigorously assessed, in ways that take into account the views of learners and the standards expected of them within appropriate Inspection Frameworks, by providers themselves; ● Self-assessment leads to effective Development Planning which gives clarity to future action ● Quality improvement targets are supported by staff development policies and training programmes that enable teaching staff and trainers to develop their professional skills; ● Quality is supported by the provision of up to date materials available in environments that are welcoming, safe and appropriately equipped and furnished; ● Information is available that enables providers to monitor their achievements against those of others. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend participation in education, learning and training 2. Increase engagement of employers in workforce development 3. Raise achievement of young people 4. Raise achievement of adults 5. Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction

Health and Safety

Local Activity	Links to NKOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide learners with a safe and healthy working environment, with Health and Safety seen not only as an integral part of high quality provision but also as an area for continuous improvement; ● Promote responsibility and accountability for learner Health and Safety via high quality content in self-assessment documentation and development plans; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction

Marketing

Local Activity	Links to NKO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ensure that Learning and Skills Council staff fully understand our marketing strategy;● Ensure that information about Learning and Skills Council services and support is widely available to all key stakeholders;● Develop a better understanding of the Learning and Skills Council's remit among our partners and the wider community;● Work with partners and providers to enable them to develop good direct communications with their own primary markets.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Extend participation in education, learning and training2. Increase engagement of employers in workforce development

> ANNEX 3 - European Social Fund and Co-financing

Priority 1 - Active Labour Market Policies

Measure 1: To provide advice, guidance and support to enable people to develop active and continuous job search strategies and prevent them from moving into long term unemployment.

Activities under this measure will focus on enhancing the Information, Advice and Guidance services provided by the IAG partnerships that operate across County Durham.

This will include a more targeted focus on disadvantaged sections of the community to improve access to IAG as a means of securing their participation in learning and employment. In addition, we will also seek to complement existing IAG services and share good practice by facilitating collaborative work across County Durham. This will include a focus on developing links between schools and businesses as a means of enhancing the future employability of young people.

Measure 2: To improve the employability of the long term unemployed, returners and young people of working age through targeted intervention to enhance vocational and other key skills and removing external barriers to entering the labour market.

Activities under this measure will concentrate on removing external barriers to the labour market in order to enhance the employability of individuals. Key to this will be the provision of appropriate and targeted training as a means of facilitating successful entry to and participation in the labour market.

Activities will include:

- Supporting the provision of a range of basic skills, from short to longer courses including intensive support
- Engaging employers in Education Business Links activities
- Encouraging employers to provide Work Experience opportunities
- Increasing the number of 19 year olds with Level 2 NVQ
- Focusing on vocational skills in Learning and Skills Council priority sectors
- Enhancing the delivery and attainment of key skills for young people

Priority 2 - Promoting Equal Opportunities for All and Social Inclusion

Measure 1: To widen access to basic skills provision: through the development of innovative and effective ways of promoting and providing basic skills, directed at those groups disadvantaged, excluded from or under-represented in the workplace.

Co-financing will add value to mainstream and basic skills provision by encouraging the development of best practice and collaborative networks across County Durham and encouraging the innovative delivery of basic skills training in the home, the community and the workplace.

Activity will be focused on those with limited or no experience of post-16 education and will include:

- Family Learning activities
- Basic skills provision
- Training of basic skills teachers/trainers
- Community based learning
- Activities focused on those with no/limited experience of post-16 learning

Measure 2: To provide help to improve the employability and remove barriers to labour market entry for those groups disadvantaged in the labour market, such as people with disabilities; ethnic minorities; 13 to 17 year olds who have opted out of the educational system; lone parents; older workers; ex-offenders; the homeless; refugees; and people recovering from addiction.

Activities will include:

- Addressing gender issues and other stereotypes within the labour market
- Focusing on individuals with no/low NVQs to develop individual action plans/ work experience/basic skills
- Supporting employee development within the voluntary and community sector
- Enhancing vocational training within the Learning and Skills Council priority sectors

Measure 3: To combat discrimination in the labour market, in particular, to combat race, disability and age discrimination and improve the employability of these groups.

This measure will support activities, including research, designed to understand how best to combat employment discrimination and improve the employability of those groups who are excluded or marginalised in the labour market.

Activities will include:

- Supporting research into discrimination in the labour market
- Identifying best practice in relation to equal opportunities in the labour market.

Priority 3 - Lifelong Learning

Measure 1: Promoting wider access and participation in lifelong learning (especially for those groups least likely to take part in lifelong learning activities and lacking basic and key skills).

Through basic skills work, community-based learning and improvements in the quality of locally-based provision, co-financing will add value to mainstream provision by ensuring that more people, particularly those from disadvantaged groups/communities, are able to access and participate in it.

Measure 2: Improving employability through directing and supporting lifelong learning provision, so that it is responsive to the changing needs of employers in the fields of ICT, management and the environment.

Co-financing activity will add value to existing provision and enable a focus on the skill needs of those employed people who are often more excluded or marginalised from mainstream activity and who consequently require more assistance to improve their long-term employability.

Priority 4 - Adaptability & Entrepreneurship

Measure 1: To update and upgrade employees' vocational skills, including basic and key skills.

Activities under this measure (including IAG, employee development in Learning and Skills Councils priority sectors, management and business training and training needs in SMEs) add value to existing provision by ensuring that larger numbers of employed people are supported in learning and development activities. It will primarily focus on those sectors and geographical areas that are not covered by Objective 2 to ensure full complementarity.

Measure 2: To identify and meet emerging skills shortages, including higher levels.

Activities under this measure will focus on identifying and addressing higher level skill shortages across County Durham. This will necessitate a holistic approach and will include graduate placement within SMEs, helping to strengthen training and development of staff and encouraging links with schools.

This measure will add value to other employee and workforce development activity by ensuring that greater numbers of people are encouraged to develop higher level skills.

Measure 3: To encourage entrepreneurship of individuals and competitiveness of businesses, particularly SMEs.

Activity under this measure will focus on support for entrepreneurship and new business through the provision of targeted training.

This will add value to mainstream activity by focusing support on disadvantaged sections of the workforce.

> ANNEX 4 – Matrix (page 39 refers)

Supporting Strategies ►	Equality & Diversity	Basic Skills	Workforce Development	Quality Improvement	Marketing	European Social Fund Co-financing
Cross Cutting Activities ▼						
Adult and Community Learning	●	●		●	●	
14 – 19 Provision	●	●	●	●	●	●
Education Business Links	●	●	●	●	●	●
Information, Advice & Guidance	●	●	●		●	●
E-Learning	●	●	●		●	
Voluntary Sector Learning	●	●	●		●	●
Partnerships	●	●	●		●	
Rural	●	●	●			●
Entrepreneurship	●		●			●
Further Education	●	●	●	●	●	●
Higher Education	●		●			

> ANNEX 5 - Partners Consulted

Association of Colleges

Business Link

Connexions

County Durham Business and Learning Partnership

County Durham Careers Service

County Durham Constabulary

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue

County Durham Health Authority

County Durham Lifelong Learning Partnership

County Durham Youth Offending Service

Darlington and Durham Racial Equality Council

Disability North

Durham Association of Secondary Heads

Durham County Council:-

- *Arts, Libraries and Museums*

- *Social Services*

- *Economic Development and Planning*

- *Environment and Technical Services*

- *Education Department*

Durham County Council Local Education Authority

Durham Rural Community Council

Employment Service

Employers in the following sectors:

- *Manufacturing*

- *Health and Personal Care Services*

- *Plastic Processing*

- *Business Advisory Services*

- *Electrical and electronics*

- *Distribution*

- *Food processing*

- *Hairdressing*

- *Engineering*

- *Construction*

- *Voluntary Sector*

Further Education Colleges:

- *Derwentside College*

- *East Durham and Houghall College*

- *New College Durham*

- *Bishop Auckland College*

Government Office for the North East

Learning and Skills Development Agency

Local Learning Partnerships

Local Authorities:

- *Easington District Council*

- *Durham City Council*

- *Sedgefield Borough Council*

- *Derwentside District Council*

- *Chester-le-Street District Council*

- *Wear Valley District Council*

- *Teesdale District Council*

North East Assembly

North east Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

Regional Development Agency (One NorthEast)

Schools – Primary and Secondary

The Countryside Agency

The Regional Skills Observatory

Trade Unions and the Regional TUC

Training Providers

Universities:

- *Durham*

- *Newcastle*

University for Industry

> ANNEX 6 - Key Documents

Learning & Skills Council Business Plan 2001/02 – County Durham

Learning & Skills Council Business Plan 2001/02 – National

Learning & Skills Council Strategic Framework to 2004 Corporate Plan

Moser, Claus, (1999) A Fresh Start Improving Literacy and Numeracy - A report of the working group chaired by Sir Claus Moser

Regional Economic Strategy, Unlocking Our Potential, One NorthEast, The Development Agency for the North East of England

Schools Achieving Success, (White Paper), Department for Education and Skills (2001)

Skills for Life, The National Strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy skills, 2001

The Learning and Skills Council's Remit Letter from The Secretary of State for Education and Employment, Department for Education and Employment (2000)

Modern Apprenticeships: the Way to Work, Learning and Skills Council September 2001

DETR. Indices of Deprivation 2000

Durham County Council, 1999 Based Population Projections

ACOP/COE Regional Accounts

Small Business Service (Regional Competitiveness Indicators, DTI)

Labour Force Survey

New Earnings Survey

Annual Business Inquiry

IER Projections of Occupations and Qualifications: 2000/2001 Regional Results

Claimant Count, ONS, September 2001

IER Employers Skills Survey. Skills, Local Areas and Unemployment, DfEE, 2001

Moving On – 2000, Pathways Taken by People Beyond 16, The Careers Service Activity Survey 2000, published by Connexions

BMG Household Survey (on behalf of County Durham Training and Enterprise Council), 1997

NIACE. Winners and Losers in an Expanding System, 2001

ISR – Standard Learning and Skills Council Analysis, Data Collection and Analysis Team (1998/1999 data)

Belt, V; et al. North East Graduate Labour Markets 1999-2000, Centre for Urban & Regional Development Studies, University of Newcastle, 2000

Learning and Skills Council Annual Statement, (County Durham) 2001

County Durham Economic Development Strategy

Skills in England 2001 – The Research Report November 2001

State of the Region Profile Report – North East Assembly/One NorthEast

A North East Regional Skills Strategy and Action Plan, Building an Adaptable and Highly Skilled Workforce, One NorthEast, The Development Agency for the North East of England

Government Office for the North East, North East of England Objective 3 Regional Development Plan (2000-6)

County Durham Lifelong Learning Partnership, Putting Learning at the Heart of Our Communities (2001)

School Sixth Forms, New Funding Arrangements, Learning and Skills Council (2001)

Local Strategic Partnership Documents

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (including amendments by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001)

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Race Relations Act, The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Act 2000

The Learning and Skills Act

County Durham Training and Enterprise Council Economic Assessment, 2000-2001

Government Office North East - Local Strategic Partnerships

Government Office North East - Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

Colleges of Further Education Strategic Plans

> LSC Council Members

Olivia Grant OBE (Chair – Learning and Skills Council County Durham)

Austin McNamara (Executive Director – Learning and Skills Council County Durham)

Alex Worrall (Finance Director & Company Secretary – Tallent Engineering)

Brian Walker (Councillor – Durham County Council)

Hugh Becker (Director – Norman Richardson House and Micro Business Consultant)

Jill Baker (Assistant Director - Include)

John Anstee (Pro Vice Chancellor and Subwarden – University of Durham)

John Poland (Managing Director – Metromail Ltd)

Keith Hodgson (Regional Education Officer – Unison)

Kingsley Smith (Chief Executive – Durham County Council)

Len Davies (Personnel & Systems Manager – Filtronic Compound Semiconductors Ltd)

Mitch O'Reilly (Head Teacher – Wolsingham School and Community College)

Paul Unger (Business Owner – ISD Floral Architecture)

Phil Hughes (Manager – Citizens Advice Bureau)

Ruth Lowbridge (Managing Director – RH Associates, Total Business Solutions Ltd)

Steve Dickinson (Managing Director – Bison Bede)