



Learning+Skills Council

# **Birmingham and Solihull LSC Strategic Plan 2002–2005**

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# Section 1

## Introduction

# Section 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL

The creation of the Learning and Skills Council represents a comprehensive reform of post-16 learning. It combines, for the first time in a single organisation, the planning and funding of post-compulsory learning below higher education with the responsibility to match learning provision to the current and future skill needs of individuals, employers and the wider economy.

As a unitary organisation, set up under the Learning and Skills Act, it operates through a National Council and 47 local Councils, like Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council. Each is responsible for delivering the Council's remit in its local area. This enables the Council to provide effective coordination and strategic planning at national, regional, sectoral and local levels. Its overall strategy is set out in its first three-year corporate Plan published in July 2001 and summarised below.

### 2. LSC CORPORATE PLAN

#### (a) Mission

Our mission is to raise participation and attainment through high-quality education and training which puts learners first.

#### (a) Vision

Our vision is that, by 2010, young people and adults in England will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.

#### (b) Key Objectives and Targets

Key objectives	Targets for 2004
1. Extend participation in education, learning and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80% of 16-18 year olds in structured learning (2000:75%)</li> <li>Set baseline and target for adults in 2002 Plan</li> </ul>
2. Increase engagement of employers in workforce development	Develop measure of employer engagement in 2002 Plan
3. Raise achievement of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>85% at level 2 by age 19 (2000: 75%)</li> <li>55% at level 3 by age 19 (2000:51%)</li> </ul>
4. Raise achievement of adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults</li> <li>% of adults at Level 2: target to be set in 2002 Plan</li> <li>52% of adults at level 3 (2000: 47%)</li> </ul>
5. Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction	Set baselines and targets in 2002 Plan

### 3. BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL LOCAL STRATEGIC PLAN

This plan is based on the key principles and priorities set out in our 2001-2002 Development Plan published in May 2001 and the wide-ranging reviews and public consultations which flowed from the Plan. Separate consultations have been held with sector groupings of employers, education and training providers, voluntary and community organisations and public sector interests across all parts of the LSC area with over 700 individual organisations represented at public events. In addition, separate consultative meetings have been held with a wide range of individual partner organisations.

The plan is intended to be a working document. As such each of its main building blocks – the skills strategy, participation strategy and learning strategy – is in turn segmented to reflect, for instance, the needs of particular industry sectors, client groups or phases of learning. These individual components will each be linked to an action plan setting out the available resources together with milestones and targets for the relevant area of work. Through this approach we will move progressively towards an integrated strategic and business plan.

### 4. PARTNERSHIP

Locally, we cannot work in isolation. Much of what we do will best be achieved through partnership. In fact, much of our first, transitional year has been taken up in establishing strong partnerships and robust inter-agency planning processes which are reflected in all aspects of this Plan.

This partnership approach is also central to our work with schools, colleges and providers. It is based on a commitment to collective review and shared planning, as demonstrated in our 16-19 Review and the area-wide sector reviews, and backed by strong support for collaboration across the institutional and provider network.

### 5. A DECADE OF CHANGE

The creation of the Learning and Skills Council could not be more timely. In the new, knowledge-based economy learning and skills are rapidly becoming recognised as the central issues in building competitive and successful economies. Nowhere could this apply more than in our own local context. The potential for economic development and employment growth over the next ten years is on a scale not seen for more than 30 years. The key to fulfilling that potential will be a step change in the skill base of the local workforce and in the collective output of our education and training system.

The next decade will be a period of huge change for Birmingham and Solihull; change in the structure of the economy; change in the nature of jobs and the skills they require and, most significantly, change in the composition of the workforce, reflecting more fundamental changes in the wider community.

#### **The Economy**

For the first time in a generation there is a real prospect that there will be sufficient, available jobs for the vast majority of people seeking work. According to current forecasts, there will be a net increase of more than 40,000 new jobs in Birmingham and Solihull by 2010. This job growth will be accompanied by, a substantial shift in the occupational balance of the workforce with, an increase of 50,000 employees with managerial, professional and specialist technical skills. The local geography of employment is also changing dramatically. Over two-thirds of the growth in jobs will be in Solihull, where the local labour market is already tight.

One in five of the new jobs created will be in the retail, hospitality and tourism and leisure sector where there is an increasing demand for part-time, seasonal and temporary employees. In a tightening labour market, this will further exacerbate existing skill shortages, unless new ways can be found to “pool” temporary jobs to offer continuous employment and career development for new entrants.

### **The Workforce**

The next ten years will see a transformation in the composition of the working age population. Those groups – older people and ethnic minority groups – currently experiencing high unemployment and lower learning attainment rates, will make up an increasing proportion of the available workforce. Transforming participation and attainment in learning by these groups will be an economic imperative, if the local economy is to fulfil its potential.

### **Learning and Skills**

Much has been achieved over the last decade in raising the skill base of the workforce and the learning achievement rates of our young people. However, these improvements mask a growing polarisation between individual groups, neighbourhoods and communities. Closing these gaps must be central not just to the Learning and Skills Council's strategy, but to concerted action across all key public agencies through neighbourhood renewal and regeneration.

# Section 2

## Socio-Economic Context



## Section 2

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

#### 1. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

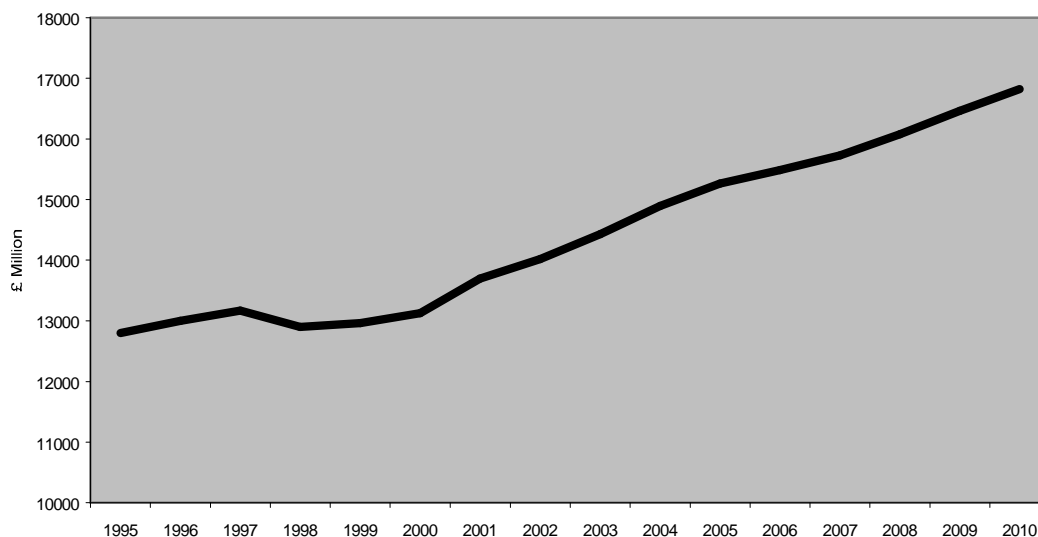
Between 1998 and 2001 the UK economy has been affected by the high value of sterling, which has impacted particularly on manufacturers' ability to compete in export markets and with low cost imports. However, the impact of these developments on overall economic activity has been offset by continued growth in service industries, which have benefited from continuing high levels of consumer confidence and spending.

In the West Midlands region the manufacturing sector has been hard hit by these trends. Service industries, however, remain buoyant as they begin to benefit from major investment in new office, retail and leisure developments. This is set to continue over the next few years.

#### 2. THE BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL ECONOMY

The sub-region's manufacturing sector, which is particularly dependent on the automotive and engineering industries, has been significantly affected by the strength of sterling with a sharp downturn in export activity and employment<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, a high proportion of the new investment in office, retail and leisure facilities across the region is taking place in Birmingham and Solihull and is driving growth in a range of key service sectors.

Birmingham and Solihull Output Forecast to 2010



Source: BEIC/Birmingham and Solihull LSC Local Economy Forecasting Model

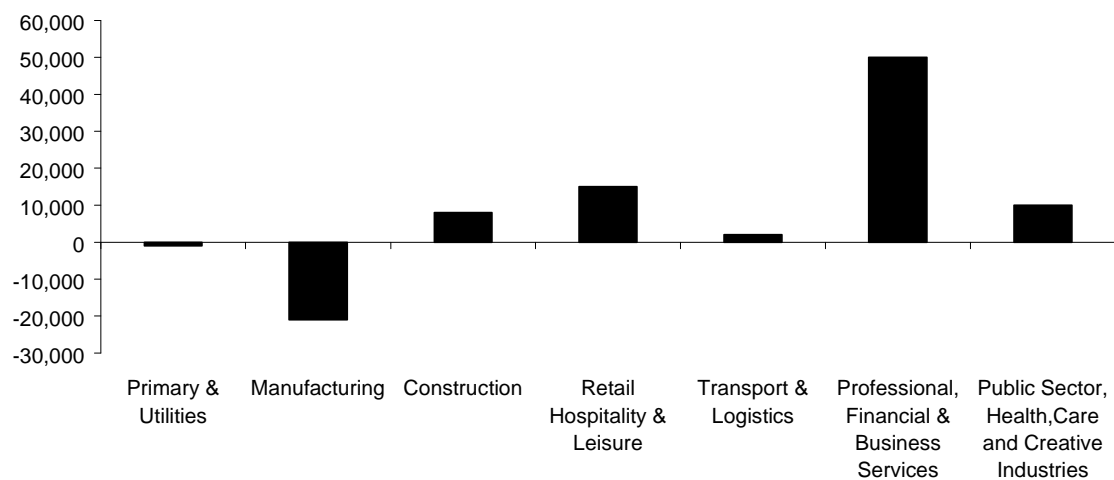
#### Sector Trends

<sup>1</sup> EEF 2001

**There will be a net increase of more than 50,000 new jobs between now and 2010, with two thirds of these opportunities likely to be created in Solihull. Growth is being underpinned by:**

- The expansion of the professional and financial services sector. The sub-region's role as a 'regional capital' for this activity will be further enhanced by the Paradise Circus and Colmore Square developments in Birmingham. The exponential growth in activity that has taken place in Solihull is set to continue, underpinned by further substantial development of high quality business park accommodation adjacent to the NEC and Birmingham International Airport as well as at Blythe Valley and Ravenswood.
- Significant investment in new retail, hospitality and leisure developments. In Birmingham these include the recently completed developments at Star City, Five ways, the Mailbox and Martineau Galleries.
- The new Bull Ring, which is due to open in 2003, will be home to more than 100 retailers. It will add 1.2 million square feet to the city's retail floorspace and some 8,000 jobs could potentially be created. The project is part of the 10 year Eastside Development Programme which also includes Millennium point, which includes the Discovery Centre, Science Museum, Technology Innovation Centre and the University of the First Age, the removal of the inner ring road 'concrete collar' on city development at Queensway and Masshouse Circus and the development of new office, residential, hotel and leisure facilities and the Learning Quarter, incorporating existing facilities of Aston University, Aston Business School and the University of Central England in a high quality campus environment.
- Key developments in Solihull include the Touchwood retail development that opened in Autumn 2001 and the planned expansion of the NEC.
- A marked increase in the numbers of older people in the sub-region's population, which is leading to a marked increase in the demand for health and care services. This combined with new legislation and plans for significant investment by the Government and the private sector in the health service means that a major expansion in facilities and recruitment of staff will be required over the next decade.
- Furthermore, a significant proportion of older people are retiring with considerable leisure time and income at their disposal and are providing an added impetus to the growth of the sub-region's retail and hospitality sectors.

## Employment Forecasts to 2010 - by Sector



Source: BEIC/Birmingham and Solihull LSC Local Economy Forecasting Model

### 3. OCCUPATIONAL ISSUES AND CHANGING SKILL NEEDS

A sea change in the skill needs of UK businesses is taking place. While in general the 'skill intensity' of jobs is increasing<sup>2</sup>, a whole range of new skills are also required:

- The shift to a service-orientated and customer-facing economy has underpinned a growing need for generic skills such as communication, negotiation and team working<sup>3</sup>.
- Dynamic service sectors of the economy are requiring specific skills relating to creativity and design and the ability to translate ideas into a saleable product.
- New technology and global competition are creating a greater demand for workers who can solve problems, interpret information and understand how systems work and fit together.
- Meanwhile, although the overall numbers in skilled trade jobs have declined, skill requirements have increased. The emphasis on multi-skilling, cellular and team working means that craft workers need to develop a range of generic skills to complement job specific technical skills.
- Job opportunities for those with minimal levels of skill are disappearing. Although there are still opportunities at lower levels, especially in jobs with fast labour turnover, these now demand a whole range of generic skills, notably relating to communication and customer handling.

A similar transformation has taken place within the sub-regional economy with a shift in the occupational structure of the workforce and significant changes in businesses' specific skill needs<sup>4</sup>. Over the next decade:

- There is likely to be a significant increase in numbers of managerial and professional staff as well as significant numbers of associate professional and technical staff, especially in the professional and business services sector.
- Customer-facing sectors such as retail, hospitality and leisure will be recruiting significant numbers of additional workers in sales and personal services occupations. While the need for better developed generic/core skills cuts across all occupations this group of workers, in particular, will require improved communication, negotiation and team working skills.
- Meanwhile, although the overall numbers in craft and skilled manual jobs in the manufacturing and construction sectors are expected to decline, there will be a need for significant recruitment to compensate for the retirement of older workers.

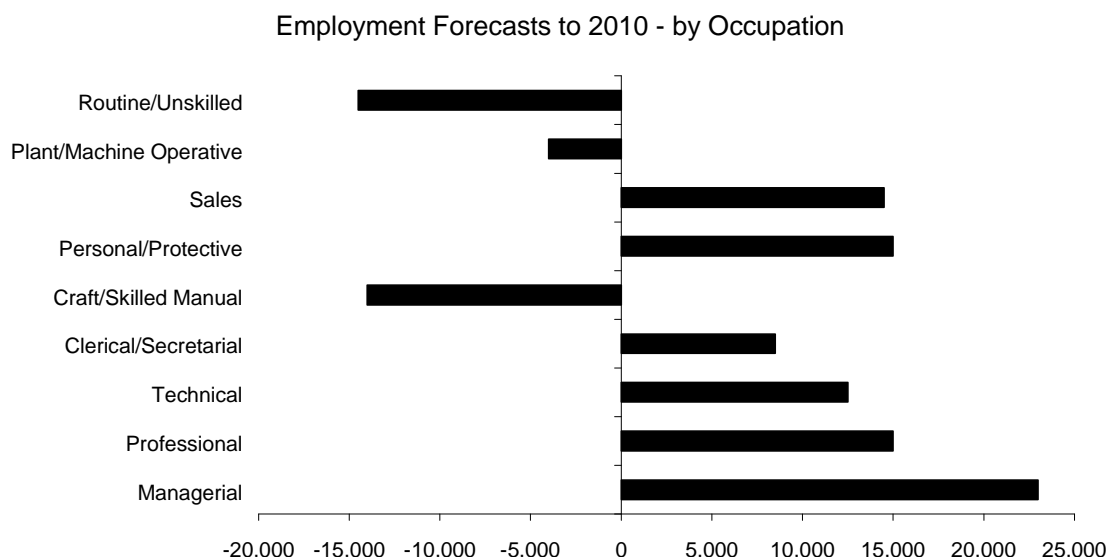
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<sup>2</sup> DfES: 'Skills In England' 2001

<sup>3</sup> National Skills Task Force, 2000

<sup>4</sup> This analysis is drawn from a more detailed assessment of learning and skill needs in the sub-region which will be published in Spring 2002

- At the same time, skill requirements in these occupations are increasing. Businesses are increasingly investing in new technology (for example, computer aided design, manufacturing and production equipment in engineering<sup>5</sup>) and introducing new working practices (eg an increase in cellular and team working in manufacturing and changes to accommodate the increasing use of prefabricated building techniques in construction<sup>6</sup>).
- In an increasingly 365 day 24 hour economy many jobs, particularly those in sales and personal services occupations in the retail and hospitality sectors, are often part time, seasonal or temporary. They also tend to be characterised by low pay levels, a lack of security and career structure as well as limited opportunities to undertake training and personal development. As a result, employers are facing significant recruitment difficulties. Moreover, skill deficiencies within their existing workforces, are affecting their ability to provide a high quality and timely service to customers.



Source: BEIC/Birmingham and Solihull LSC Local Economy Forecasting Model

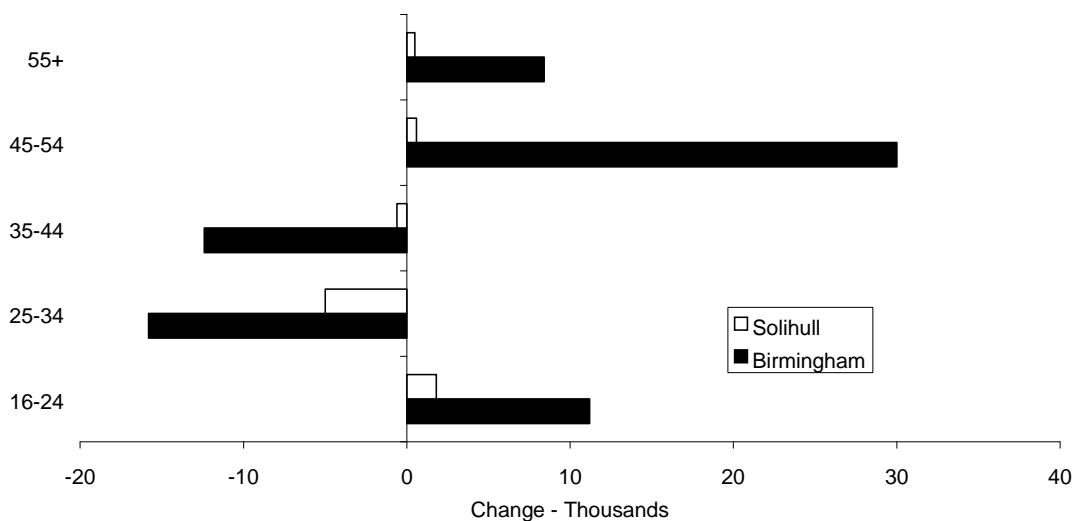
#### 4. DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES

While businesses' skill needs are increasing, their traditional recruitment target area, 25-44 year olds which are generally more skilled and better qualified than their older counterparts and have the breadth of experience not yet acquired by their younger counterparts, is shrinking. There are expected to be 35,000 fewer 25-44 year olds in the sub-region's resident population by 2010. As a result the serious skill gaps, skill shortages and recruitment difficulties that are already apparent in the sub-region are likely to worsen in the future.

<sup>5</sup> Birmingham and Solihull LSC/EEF West Midlands – West Midlands Engineering Skills Register, 2001

<sup>6</sup> Business Strategies Ltd – Construction Skills Dialogue Report, 2000

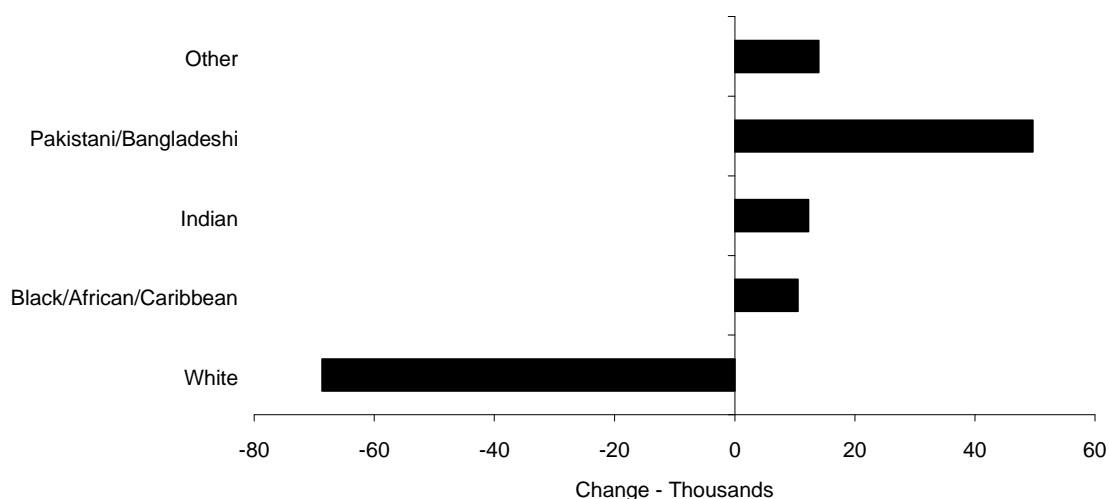
Population Forecasts to 2010 by Age Group



Source: ONS/Birmingham and Solihull LSC

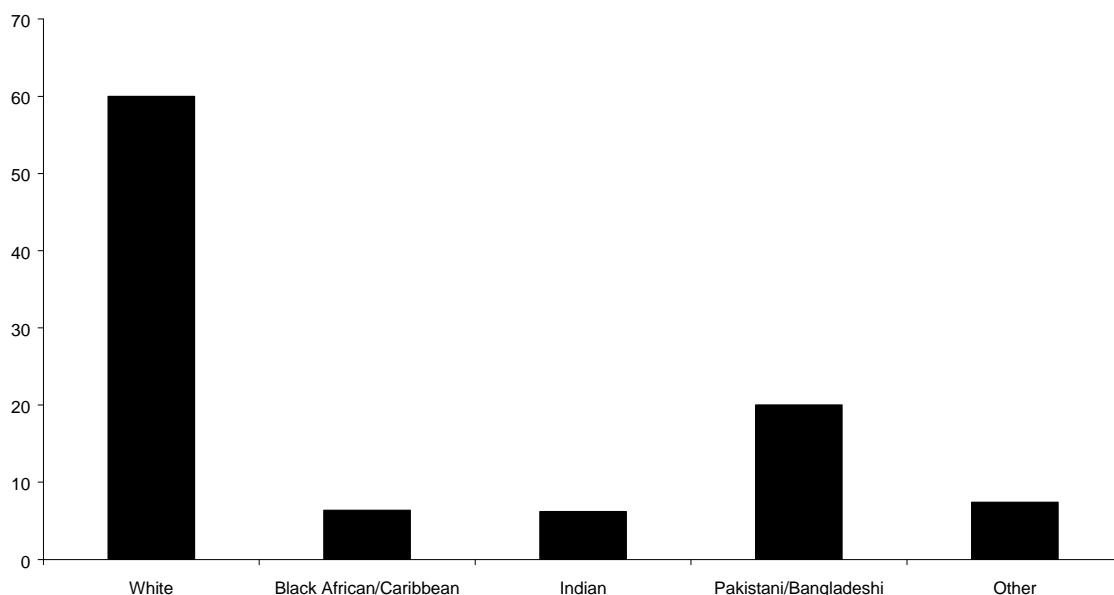
At the same time, there is expected to be a significant increase in the numbers of people aged 45 and over in the available labour force. In Birmingham there will also be a much higher proportion of the working age population from ethnic minority communities by 2010. Ethnic minority groups are particularly strongly represented in younger age groups who will be moving into the labour market over the next decade. While non-white groups as a whole account for 40% of Birmingham's school age population, young people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities account for some 20% of the total.

Population Forecasts to 2010 by Ethnicity



Source: ONS/Birmingham and Solihull LSC

Birmingham's School Age Population in 2000



Source: Birmingham LEA

## 5. AGE, ETHNICITY AND LABOUR MARKET DISADVANTAGE

However, both older people and individuals from many ethnic minority groups, notably the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African/Caribbean communities, are disadvantaged in the labour market and are significantly under-represented in the sub-region's workforce:

- Individuals from these disadvantaged ethnic minority groups are more likely to be outside the paid workforce but actively seeking work
- Those aged over 45 are more likely to be 'economically inactive' and have disengaged from the labour market

### Economic Activity Rates in 2000

	Aged 45 or over	Disadvantaged Ethnic Minority Groups	Total Labour Force
Economically Active	31%	57%	86%
Of which:			
In Paid Employment	29%	42%	79%
Not in Employment but Actively Seeking Work	2%	15%	7%
Economically Inactive	69%	43%	14%

Source: 2000 Household Survey

While this is partly a product of the narrow focus of many businesses' recruitment policies, it also reflects the barriers to accessing employment many of these individuals face. These include a lack of qualifications, work-related skills and experience and personal circumstances such as care responsibilities and a lack of mobility. The issues faced by these groups and others such as the long term unemployed, lone parents and labour market returners are further explored in detail later in the section on labour market disadvantage.

# Section 3

## Goals and Targets



## Section 3

### GOALS AND TARGETS

#### 1. STRATEGIC GOALS FOR 2010

The long-term goals set out here will form a planning framework against which to measure the success of Birmingham and Solihull LSC over the next decade.

- Harnessing the collective commitment of employers through sector partnerships to eliminate skill shortages and to manage the growing diversity of the labour market.
- Reducing by half the proportion of working age people without a Level 2 qualification.
- Closing the “equalities gap” in employment and learning attainment of individual ethnic groups.
- Ensuring that the workforce in public services, especially in education and training, reflects the diversity of the community.
- Supporting a massive expansion in workplace learning facilities and opportunities, especially through the promotion of employee development schemes and on-line learning.
- Building a world-class learning system with the best possible facilities, accommodation and equipment accessible to all learners 365 days and 24 hours a day (and based on a strong ethos of partnership between institutions, providers, employers and communities across all ages and phases of learning).
- Raising achievement levels across post-16 learning in Birmingham and Solihull so that they equal or exceed national benchmarks.

#### 2. TARGETS FOR 2004

National Target	Birmingham and Solihull LSC				
	Baseline 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
80% 16-18 year olds in structured learning	36,727 71.7%	37,939 72.7%	39,190 75.1%	40,484 77.6%	41,729 80%
85% at Level 2 by age 19	10,857 75.9%	11,183 78.2%	11,518 80.5%	11,864 82.9%	12,157 85%
55% at Level 3 by age 19	6,197 46.9%	6,444 48.8%	6,703 51.2%	6,970 52.8%	7,255 55%
52% adults at Level 3	230,000 44.6%	241,040 46.8%	252,610 49.1%	264,735 51.4%	277,041 52%
Raise literacy and numeracy of 750,000 adults	-	5,049	10,099	15,418	20,198

## Local Priorities

### Adults Qualified to Level 2

Baseline 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
310,545 60.3%	317,545 61.6%	326,000 63.2%	338,100 65.6%	350,200 68%

N.B. This target uses the Year 2000 West Midlands Household Survey as the baseline, in the absence of any national baseline data.

### Adults Qualified to Level 4

Baseline 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
133,750 28.4%	135,087 28.6%	136,438 28.9%	137,802 29.3%	139,180 29.6%

## 3. IMPACT MEASURES

As our strategic goals indicate, the key measure of our success will be our contribution to the wider social and economic well-being of our area.

Over the first year of this plan we will develop a series of impact measures which will be used to benchmark progress against key economic and social indicators.

### Sector Skills Registers

We will publish annually a skills register for each major sector of the economy. This will be based on the model developed for the manufacturing sector in partnership with the Engineering Employers Federation. It will be in the form of an occupational profile for each sector quantifying skills gaps and shortages.

### Workforce Profiles

Alongside the occupational profile set out above we will publish a demographic profile of the workforce in each sector. This will chart progress towards closing the equalities gap in employment as well as providing a valuable benchmark for employers to use in their own human resource planning.

### Local Inclusion Plans

Working with a range of partner agencies, including the two local authorities, the Connexions Service and the Employment Service, we are developing Local Inclusion Plans. These will benchmark the relative participation and achievement rates of individual neighbourhoods and communities in learning and employment. They will be used both to target our own and partner funds on communities of greatest need and to provide a measure of the effectiveness of our work in promoting social inclusion and regeneration.

The approach is set out in greater detail in the subsequent section of this plan.

# Section 4

## Strategic and Operational Framework

## Section 4

### STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

#### 1. AN INTEGRATED LEARNING AND SKILLS STRATEGY

This plan comprises three linked strategies for assessing the needs of employers, assessing the needs of learners and for meeting those needs through the right provision. One of our key challenges is to deliver “joined-up” solutions to matching learning supply to skill demand in an increasingly complex labour market. To do this we have developed a range of new processes and techniques which will not only shape our own funding and planning decisions but support wider economic development and regeneration strategies. Most importantly they will help employers to improve their own HR and recruitment practices.

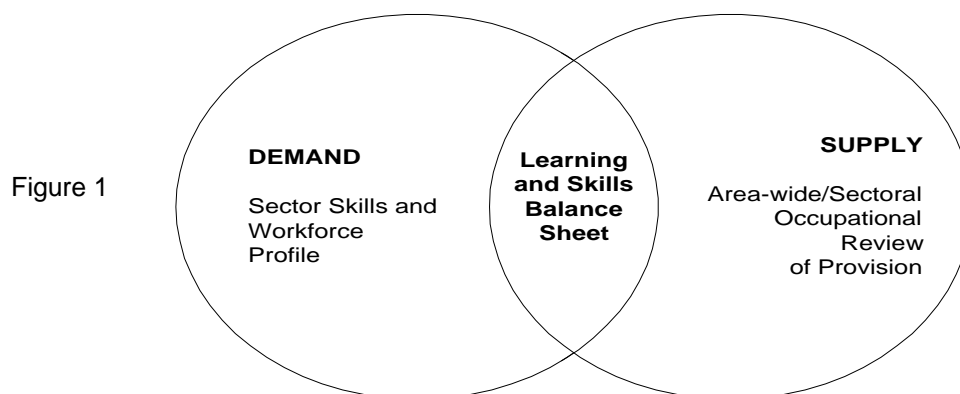
##### Skills and Workforce Profiles

In each major sector of the economy we will systematically collect data on the occupational, skills and demographic profiles of the workforce. This work will be carried out by business advisers in the Business Link as a core element of the workforce development support we provide to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This data will be published annually in the form of a skills register providing an occupational map of the sector, highlighting critical skill shortages and gaps as well as profiling the workforce in terms of age, ethnicity and gender. (See Section 2 below – Skills and Workforce Development Strategy).

The skills register will provide a template for employers against which to develop their own HR and training strategies. To assist them in the process we have also developed a new tool, the HR Planner, to benchmark their own workforce against the sector as a whole.

##### Learning and Skills Balance Sheet

In parallel with the development of skill registers we are undertaking comprehensive, area-wide reviews of learning provision in each major sector. The key to these reviews is a detailed map of all provision in terms of the learner profile, the breakdown of individual vocational areas by scale and level and the range and quality of facilities. By combining this map with the sector skills register we are able, for the first time, to produce a “learning and skills balance sheet” highlighting in detail any mismatch in the scale and range of provision against the sector’s needs. (See Figure 1). In addition, the capacity to compare the demographic profile of the workforce with that of learners will be invaluable in helping providers and employers identify and target underrepresented groups.



The learning and skills balance sheet will sit at the heart of our planning processes increasingly shaping college and provider plans and funding agreements and determining our priorities for growth and capital investment. The outcomes of our first area-wide review of construction illustrate the strength of this approach. The balance sheet showed a substantial shortfall in the scale, breadth and level of construction provision, especially given the significant growth anticipated in the sector. This has led to an agreement to establish a new construction centre of excellence to be built and operated on a joint basis by the four colleges most involved in construction. It will also provide a practical, off-the-job training facility for work-based learning providers and a focal point for partnership working with employers and the Construction Industry Training Board.

### Local Inclusion Plans

We face similar challenges in closing the gap in skills and participation in learning and employment among many disadvantaged groups and communities across Birmingham and Solihull. To address this we believe we must focus our efforts at an area and neighbourhood level working closely with other public agencies and through local partnerships of schools, colleges, providers and the voluntary sector.

To ensure the effective targeting of our efforts and resources we will benchmark participation in learning and employment by individual local area as the basis for Local Inclusion Plans. (See Table 2). We will publish annually a comparative analysis of local areas against this common set of benchmarks and impact measures. This will in turn determine our priorities for growth and especially development funding (eg ESF). We envisage local partnerships will also adopt the same approach in their own plans by differentiating the needs of particular disadvantaged groups and communities within their own area.

LSC-wide Participation/Achievement Rates	Local Area Participation/Achievement Rates	Partners
<b>Young People</b> – % GCSE achievement rates – % 16-19 participation rates – % Level 2 and 3 National Targets	Local benchmarks and targets	Connexions Partnership/schools/colleges and training providers
<b>Adult Working Age Population</b>  <b>(a) Learning and Skills</b> – % participation rate – % reduction in basic skills needs – % Level 2 and 3 National Targets  <b>(b) Employment</b> – % unemployment rates – % representation in public service employment	Local benchmarks and targets	Local area partnerships [colleges, voluntary sector, Adult Education Service] Local regeneration partners Business Link/LSC  Inter-agency Employment Strategy Group; Regeneration Partnerships; local area partnerships

## 2. SKILLS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### (a) Sector Skills Task Forces

To ensure the long-term structured engagement of employers in its work, Birmingham and Solihull LSC is developing a Skills Task Force in each key sector. Based on the successful model of the West Midlands Automotive Skills Task Force, they will engage a representative group of leading employers drawn from the sector. They will have strong links with other employer bodies and networks (eg Birmingham Forward).

Their main tasks will be:-

- To advise and support the LSC executive in developing sector skills and workforce development strategies.
- To shape and influence LSC and provider planning and delivery, including the setting of priorities for improving provision, staff and infrastructure, especially the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence.
- To promote and champion publicly the work of the LSC as well as good practice in organisation and workforce development through regular Skills Forums.
- To promote collaboration between employers in the sector including:-
  - Sharing facilities and resources
  - Joint approaches to upskilling, recruitment and training
  - Developing Ufl hubs to support on-line learning across the sector (eg Automotive Hub)
  - Developing provider partnerships with colleges, universities and other providers.

**(b) Integration and Coherence**

**(i) Business Support**

The LSC's skills and workforce development strategy is fully integrated into the wider business support strategy which has been jointly developed with the Chamber of Commerce through its Business Link operation. This work is underpinned by a protocol setting out the joint planning and management arrangements. Some 75% of the LSC's workforce development budget is dedicated to supporting small and medium enterprises through its contract with the Business Link.

**(ii) Integration of College/Provider Programmes into Business Support**

The LSC will seek progressively to integrate relevant programmes and support available through colleges and other providers into the wider portfolio of business support. In particular, with agreed lead vocational specialisms in the college network, there is an opportunity for a much more coordinated strategy between the LSC, Business Link and colleges in addressing the skill needs of individual businesses and sectors. Joint workforce development strategy groups are therefore being established for each sector to coordinate this work and to complement the work of the Skills Task Forces.

**(iii) Economic Development**

With its partners in the Chamber of Commerce and the two local authorities the LSC is a member of the respective local economic development partnerships, Birmingham Economic Development Partnership and Solihull Business Partnership. These key bodies provide a focus for strategic coordination across all aspects of economic development and regeneration under the umbrella of the two Local Strategic Partnerships.

Their key roles are:-

- Coordination of economic and social research and analysis, including the publication of an annual Economic Review and a range of other regular and/or “one-off” surveys
- Development of an economic strategy for public consultation and dissemination
- Liaison with Advantage West Midlands on local economic development strategies
- Strategic coordination of all programmes/funds across individual economic development functions (eg. employment; inward investment; business support).

(iv) **Regional Economic Strategy**

All the West Midlands’ local LSCs, in tandem with their Business Link partners, are working in partnership with Advantage West Midlands to ensure effective coordination of skills and business support priorities within the overall framework of the regional economic strategy. This will also provide an ideal framework for the development of partnership arrangements with the new Sector Skills Councils.

The West Midlands’ local LSCs and Advantage West Midlands are in the process of finalising a joint framework for strategic planning and implementation based on the national Memorandum of Understanding between the LSC and the Regional Development Agencies. The key principles set out in the framework are:

- To integrate learning and skills into all relevant aspects of the regional economic strategy
- To align planning processes and targets between AWM and local LSCs
- To integrate skills and workforce development strategies into wider business support strategies sub-regionally and regionally in partnership with the Business Link network
- To pool research and analysis effort and investment across areas of mutual interest
- To develop complementary funding strategies in support of agreed plans and priorities
- To establish robust joint management arrangements to ensure the effective implementation of strategies.

Under this agreement

**West Midlands' LSCs will:**

- reflect the priorities outlined in the West Midlands Economic Strategy, Agenda for Action and AWM's Corporate Plan in their individual local plans
- co-ordinate their activities across the region including through lead LSC arrangements
- work with and through the Business Link network to ensure substantial engagement with businesses (large as well as SMEs) in the development of sector and cluster business support strategies
- seek to prioritise any jointly agreed activities in relation to possible LSC growth funding
- be responsible for managing, leading and coordinating the implementation of all learning and skills initiatives on behalf of AWM.

**Advantage West Midlands will:**

- reflect local/sub-regional learning and skills priorities in the regional economic strategy
- be actively engaged with individual LSCs as they develop their local strategic and delivery plans
- ensure the direct and active involvement of the LSC network in relevant regional forums, regeneration zone partnerships and working groups (eg Business Growth Task Groups)
- devolve to individual LSCs and/or the LSC network the responsibility for the implementation of all learning and skills initiatives through a service level agreement

**(c) Skills and Workforce Profiling**

As described above, a core element of our contract with the Business Link, will be the systematic collection of data on the occupational, skills and demographic profiles of the workforce on a sectoral basis. With regular annual contact with over 5,000 businesses, complemented by our own targeted survey work, this will enable us to produce an occupational profile of each sector together with a skills and workforce profile. The systematic collection of data will enable us to map current and, more importantly, future skills shortages and gaps much more effectively.

This data will be published annually in the form of sector skills registers, summarising the key skills and workforce trends and changes (eg recently published West Midlands Engineering Skills Register). Apart from the important role they will play in our own strategic planning and that of providers and other public agencies they should provide a valuable tool for employers in supporting better HR and training planning. This will be of increasing importance, given the far-reaching demographic changes taking place locally in the working age population, in assisting employers to manage diversity in the labour market.



(d) **Supporting Ethnic Minority Owned Businesses**

The growing ethnic diversity of the local community is reflected in a substantial growth in the proportion of ethnic minority owned businesses, currently estimated at 15% of all Birmingham and Solihull businesses. The vast majority of these businesses are inevitably new or relatively new businesses and therefore preponderantly micro-businesses. Like most micro-businesses in their early stages they experience many practical barriers to further development and growth. However, there is clear evidence that, for ethnic minority businesses they have also experienced difficulties in accessing help, reflected in particular, in a low take-up of business support services, including support for training and workforce development.

Improving access and take-up of business support is therefore a joint priority for the Business Link and LSC. This will be reflected in the clear targeting of the LSC workforce development budget on the needs of ethnic minority owned business. In addition, the LSC together with the Business Link/Chamber of Commerce and Birmingham City Council is providing strong support for the Asian and African Caribbean Business Forums. The two Forums act as the main focus for consultation and monitoring the take-up of services as well as supporting specific initiatives targeting individual ethnic minority business networks (eg the development of the Black Business Association).

(e) **Matching Supply and Demand : “ Learning and Skills Balance Sheet”**

As described above, we will link the development of sector skills and workforce profiles to our area-wide vocational reviews. By combining the separate analysis of skills demand and the supply of learning provision we will produce a learning and skills “balance sheet” highlighting key gaps and shortfalls in learning programmes.

(f) **Inter-Agency Employment and Skills Strategy**

To develop an effective overall strategy and in particular to close the gap in employment, skills and learning attainment for ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups, there is a need for concerted, inter-agency action integrating:-

- Sector strategies
- Inward investment/major development sites
- Workforce development and HR planning
- Planning/delivery of education, training and employment programmes
- Area and community regeneration
- Community capacity building
- Outreach and support for individuals

In line with the Government's proposals for the creation of regional Employment and Skills Action Plan a single strategy group is being created involving all the key agencies (ie Birmingham City Council, Economic Development Department, Birmingham and Solihull LSC, Birmingham and Solihull Business Link, Connexions/ Education Business Consortium, Voluntary Sector Forum, Employment Service, Pertemps as the Employment Zone contractor). This work will take place under the umbrella of the Birmingham City Strategy Partnership. Similar, parallel arrangements will be put in place for Solihull through the Solihull Business Partnership.

(g) **Impact Measures**

A key element of this work will be the establishment of jointly agreed impact measures. In particular, they will focus on the partners' collective efforts to close the equalities gap in employment in the most deprived neighbourhoods and among the most disadvantaged communities.

**3. PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

(a) **Inter-Agency Planning and Coordinated Action**

In this area, more than any other, it will be essential to work on an inter-agency basis to align the Learning and Skills Council's planning and delivery of learning provision with a range of other public agencies and the voluntary sector. In particular, the strategy will be based on a segmented approach reflecting the wide variety of separate needs within individual neighbourhoods, communities and client groups.

The Learning and Skills Council is committed to playing a full and active part both in the City and Borough-wide Local Strategic Partnerships as well as in targeted regeneration initiatives. The Chair and Executive Director of the LSC are both members of the Birmingham City Strategic Partnership. It is also expected that the Executive Director will be a member of the Local Strategic Partnership for Solihull.

(b) **Connexions Service**

Close partnership working with the Connexions Service will be central to improving participation and achievement rates of young people. In preparation for the operational launch of the Birmingham and Solihull Connexions Partnership in April 2002 we are already working closely with the embryo service with the Connexions Chief Executive (designate) leading the sub-group on participation of the LSC's 16-19 Review. By April we will have finalised a joint strategy and operational protocol covering all areas of mutual responsibility. At the heart of the strategy will be the concept of Local Inclusion Plans and the development of inter-institutional and inter-agency partnerships, aligned, wherever possible, with wider area regeneration and neighbourhood renewal initiatives.

In the Birmingham and Solihull context, partners decided at the outset to integrate the overall management, planning and development functions of the Education Business Consortium into the new Connexions Partnership. This will not only simplify relationships with schools through a single interface, but will also enhance the work of the local partnerships of schools, colleges and training providers in developing a broader and more flexible 14-16 curriculum.

(c) **Area/Neighbourhood Planning and Delivery**

Within our own planning we will seek systematically to benchmark participation in learning and employment (by occupation) by individual disadvantaged client group. This approach will sit at the heart of our Equal Opportunities Action Plan and drive the priorities for development.

However, as the analysis below indicates (see Section 6 – Labour Market Disadvantage), there is a strong correlation between individual disadvantaged communities and client groups and disadvantaged neighbourhoods/areas. For practical purposes in implementing our participation strategy, we will therefore manage planning and delivery on an area basis.

This will enable us to work within a common area/neighbourhood-based planning framework with other partner agencies as well as colleges and providers.

(d) **Area Regeneration**

Birmingham and Solihull LSC is closely involved in all the area regeneration initiatives across the sub-region as well as working closely with colleagues in the Black Country LSC in the development of the cross-boundary NW Birmingham South Black Country Regeneration Zone. Increasingly, this involves our taking the lead planning and coordination responsibility for learning and skills within the regeneration areas. In our own planning we are targeting the Local Initiative Fund and ESF cofinancing to support the priorities within the individual areas. More importantly, we are in the process of agreeing lead responsibilities for individual colleges which will ensure much better coordination between colleges and the LSC in targeting local needs and supporting the wider regeneration objectives. We would expect that the individual colleges' contribution to regeneration would form an explicit part of their strategic plans for 2002-2003 and the identified needs of individual regeneration areas would be a priority for any LSC growth funding.

(e) **Adult and Community Learning**

With the ending of the artificial divide between accredited and non-accredited learning there is now scope for developing a coherent, overall strategy for adult and community learning across colleges, the Adult Education Service and the voluntary/community sector. The future strategy will be determined by the Review of Adult and Community Learning currently being undertaken. However, the key principles underpinning the Review will be central to the future planning and delivery arrangements:-

- Local and community-based provision should offer the opportunities for clear progression into further structured and, where appropriate, accredited learning.
- Adult and community learning should be planned and organised on an area basis across colleges, the Adult Education Service and the voluntary sector. Where possible, area partnerships should be aligned with wider area regeneration and neighbourhood renewal initiatives (see above).
- Area partnerships should develop a clear strategy for targeting disadvantaged groups, including a range of outreach and support services to remove barriers to participation (see below – Local Inclusion Plans).

(f) **Adult Information, Advice and Guidance**

The provision of better information, advice and guidance is key to increasing participation, especially among groups and communities who are currently not participating in learning. Through the work of the Birmingham and Solihull Information, Advice and Guidance Consortium we will ensure that there is comprehensive and systematic collection of information on all available learning opportunities. This will support a broad-based public service through a wide range of public outlets, especially the two local authority library services, and progressively through on-line information and advice services. This service will be complemented by a much more targeted set of services co-ordinated and delivered by local area/neighbourhood partnerships (see above) aimed especially at disadvantaged groups and communities currently not participating in learning and/or employment.

(g) **Other Support Services**

Apart from the need for better information, advice and guidance many groups experience a variety of barriers to accessing opportunities (eg childcare; need for additional language support; physical/practical barriers for people with disabilities). As part of their plans we will expect local partnerships to review existing support services against the needs of local people and set out a strategy for improving the integration of provision and support services.

(h) **Local Inclusion Plans**

The establishment of local area/neighbourhood partnerships, as set out above, should lead to the development of Local Inclusion Plans. They should further strengthen local inter-institutional and inter-agency partnership as well as creating a clear framework for prioritising and targeting LSC resources.

(i) **Register of Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods and Communities**

To support this approach we will publish annually a register of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and communities. This will be in the form of a comparative analysis of local areas against the common set of benchmarks and impact measures. It will be complemented by the publication of sector skills and workforce profiles (see Skills Strategy) highlighting the relative participation rates of individual ethnic groups within individual sectors.

(j) **Community Capacity Building**

The voluntary and community sector has a critical role to play in providing both a conduit for disadvantaged groups into education, training and employment and, with the increasing diversification in the delivery of public services, as an employer. Following an extensive consultation with a wide range of voluntary and community organisations, we are now developing a long-term strategy for capacity building which will be supported by pooling a variety of funds (eg SRB; ESF co-financing, LSC Local Initiative Fund). Working through the Voluntary Sector Forum, a broad-based partnership involving all relevant interest groups, a network of Service Development Groups will be established in each major area of public service delivery (eg health and care; housing; education and training, environment etc). Each Service Development Group will develop its own skills strategy with resources to support organisational/ management development and accredited skills training.

To complement this a similar package of support will be developed to assist community-based organisations, in terms of management development and training, in fulfilling their key role in improving access to education, training and employment.

As with business support, there is an opportunity to integrate the support available through colleges with the LSC's own direct support for capacity building.

(k) **Equal Opportunities Action Plan**

In line with the framework set out above, our Equal Opportunities Action Plan is based on a differentiated approach

- To target effectively the needs of individual communities, client groups and neighbourhoods/areas through Local Inclusion Plans;
- To generate a reliable demographic profile in each key sector of the local economy to assist businesses with their own HR planning in managing diversity as well as shaping the LSC's overall strategy on skills and workforce development;
- To ensure that equal opportunities action planning forms an integral part of the LSC's provider performance review process with benchmarking of individual client groups' participation, retention and achievement at its heart.

The full Equal Opportunities Action Plan, will be separately published and be the subject of a separate public consultation.

#### 4. **LEARNING STRATEGY**

##### **(a) Integrated Planning and Development**

The framework for local strategic planning set by the LSC National Council provides a unique opportunity to place the Learning and Skills Council's own planning responsibilities into a process of shared planning with colleges, schools and other providers.

Over the first year of its operation the LSC has worked closely with all providers to integrate provider planning and self-assessment and its own provider performance review role into a broader collective, area-wide planning and development framework. Its main components are:-

##### **(i) Thematic Review**

Reviewing a major strand of learning provision (eg 16-19 Review) involving large groups of learners and complex delivery arrangements with a view to

- promoting much close collaboration between schools, colleges, providers and other key stakeholders (eg the voluntary sector; employers) in planning and delivery
- establishing clearer roles for individual institutions and providers in delivering more effective and efficient provision
- giving providers, especially institutional leaders, a critical stake in any process of rationalisation or organisational change
- determining development priorities in support of the change process
- developing new long-term joint planning mechanisms between providers and the LSC

##### **(ii) Vocational/Sectoral Review**

Reviewing the planning and delivery of provision in a major vocational area or sector (eg Construction), primarily with colleges and other training providers

- to inform provider planning and the LSC's own planning and funding role in reviewing the match/mismatch of learning provision to the demand from businesses and the wider economy
- to determine lead vocational specialisms for individual colleges within a federal structure for FE linked to a development programme leading to the achievement of centre of vocational excellence status
- to establish joint staff and curriculum development priorities linked increasingly to the co-ordinating role of centres of vocational excellence
- to support new forms of collaboration between training providers and between colleges and providers in:-
  - improving progression from full-time education into employment with training

- raising achievement and retention in Modern Apprenticeship through new forms of joint delivery
- to ensure effective co-ordination of support to schools in the development of the new 14-16/14-19 curriculum
- to develop a single, coherent interface with the City's universities in the joint development of Foundation degrees and the validation/ accreditation of FE programmes
- to establish effective mechanisms for the integration of FE and work-based learning provision into a wider package of business support.

### **(iii) Assets/Infrastructure Review**

Complementing the thematic and vocational reviews described above with a parallel review of physical assets and infrastructure with a view to

- producing a long-term infrastructure plan for the development of world-class accommodation and facilities
- supporting vocational specialisation/centres of vocational excellence in colleges through the development of relevant, state of the art facilities either in individual institutions or on a collaborative basis (eg proposed construction centre of excellence)
- assisting new forms of collaboration between schools and colleges through the development of joint facilities (eg new 16-19 centres; specialist workshops/laboratories)

## **(b) Raising Quality and Standards**

### **(i) Provider Performance Review**

To be effective provider performance review must be firmly placed within the planning processes of individual colleges/providers and the LSC's wider review framework set out above. In particular, whilst it clearly must address critical weaknesses in provision, its role in continuous improvement is equally important. To achieve this we have placed the provider's own self-assessment and development planning at the centre of the process with the LSC.

To ensure consistency and clear links to the wider collective review process we have worked with parallel networks of senior college representatives and work-based learning providers. Through these groups we have agreed an evidence-based approach which we have applied to the whole performance review framework. This provides a local benchmarking process of mutual benefit to the LSC and the provider in improving performance and quality.

### **(ii) Quality Improvement Strategy**

The quality improvement strategy must bring together all the strategic development issues from the area-wide reviews together with the key issues arising out of individual provider plans and performance review. With the anticipated simplification of the FE Standards Fund and the introduction of the Work-based Learning Standards Fund, the LSC will seek to embed the

funding and support for quality improvement firmly within college/provider planning processes. In practice, rather than funding individual strands of activity, we will seek to agree a quality improvement strategy/action plan which clearly sets out development priorities for the institution or provider. This will be complemented by the LSC's own quality improvement strategy, which will reflect the critical issues from this bottom-up process as well as the wider strategic issues.

This is an area where there is considerable scope for collaboration and pooling of resources, especially in joint staff, curriculum and materials development and the transfer of good practice. The co-ordination of this work, especially the commissioning and purchasing of development programmes and consultancy, will be a key task for the planned Quality Improvement Forum, which will be chaired by Dr Terry Melia.

**(c) Partnership**

The development of partnerships between providers as part of a more coherent and planned local education and training system is a Government priority for the LSC. We believe that, in an urban environment like ours and with the local legacy of duplication and fragmentation, this should be central to our strategy. Imposition of collaborative models is by definition a contradiction in terms. Working closely with the two local education authorities and other partners we will use the review processes set out above to develop new structures and partnerships with the full engagement of all key stakeholders. We also recognise that in its development, "collaboration costs". We will therefore give priority for LSC support to joint development and partnership working.

**(d) Integration**

The establishment of the Learning and Skills Council, as a single funding and planning body for post –16 learning, creates an opportunity for integrating the work of providers, and, in particular, colleges, more effectively into economic regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and business support. As indicated elsewhere in this plan, this is a key priority for the LSC, as part of its wider inter-agency planning arrangements. It will also need to be reflected in our own budget/planning priorities so that we can target strategic priorities much more effectively.



# Section 5

## Skills and Workforce Development Strategy

## Section 5

### SKILLS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

#### STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES AND REMIT

To maximise the contribution of education and training to economic performance:-

- Addressing the skill needs of individual employment sectors
- Raising the skills of the working population to meet the needs of business and support a prosperous economy
- Increasing employee demand for learning, especially through workplace learning and employee development schemes.
- Strengthening the commitment of employers to the development of the workforce, in particular through Investors in People
- Active involvement in local economic development and regeneration

#### National Target : 52% Adults at Birmingham and Solihull Level 3 by 2004

Baseline 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
230,000 44.6%	241,040 46.8%	252,610 49.1%	264,735 51.4%	277,041 52%

#### Local Priorities

#### 68% Adults in Birmingham and Solihull at Level 2 by 2004

Baseline 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
310,545 60.3%	317,545 61.6%	326,000 63.2%	338,100 65.6%	350,000 68%

N.B. This target uses the Year 2000 West Midlands Household Survey as the baseline, in the absence of any national baseline data.

#### 29.6% Adults in Birmingham and Solihull at Level 4 by 2004

Baseline 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
133,750 28.4%	135,087 28.6%	134,438 28.9%	137,802 29.3%	139,180 29.6%

## Investors in People Recognitions

### Cumulative Number of Organisations recognised employing more than 50 people

April 2001	December 2002	December 2003	December 2004
326	417	467	507

### Cumulative Number of Organisations Recognised Employing 10-49 Employees

April 2001	December 2002	December 2003	December 2004
169	226	256	290

## 1. SECTOR SKILLS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

### (a) MANUFACTURING

#### KEY ISSUES

- The sector is forecast to lose up to 21,000 workers by 2010. Yet, at the same time there are critical shortages of professional, technical, craft and skilled manual workers in the sub-region's labour market with the required qualifications, skills and experience. Ageing workforce, with more than 30% of employees aged over 45, and young people applying for positions often lacking critical skills and attributes.
- Major shift towards higher value added, more skill intensive products, is leading to a demand for increased skill levels of employees to program and maintain new computer assisted manufacturing processes.
- Flexible multi-skilled workforce is becoming increasingly important as companies continue the move towards team working, cell working and flatter management structures. There is an increasing need for employees to possess a greater range of generic "key skills" including basic IT, communication, problem solving and to strengthen formal vocational skills up to and including level 3.
- Recruitment difficulties in the sector are likely to be compounded by demographic trends over the next decade as the white working age population, which accounts for 83% of the manufacturing workforce in Birmingham and Solihull, declines significantly. Meanwhile, the proportion of the available labour force from ethnic minority communities is set to rise markedly. Although some manufacturing companies in the sub-region employ significantly more workers from ethnic minority groups than those in many other sectors, the remaining companies in the manufacturing sector will need to increase the focus of recruitment activity on these communities in the future.
- Significant under representation of women and ethnic groups, at all levels, in the industry.

#### AUTOMOTIVE MANUFACTURE

- The Automotive sector is forecast to lose up to 4,000 jobs in the 'core sector' of assemblers and first tier suppliers and up to 8000 jobs in lower tiers of the supply chain, in the next 10 years. At the same time, the sector continues to

report chronic skill gaps and shortages in a number of key areas, which impact on competitiveness and sustainability. Companies report that three quarters of professional/technical vacancies and two thirds of craft/skilled vacancies remain unfilled.

## **BALANCE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

- Whilst there is generally a significant recruitment demand in the sector, the companies operating in the higher value added market are experiencing acute recruitment difficulties and skills shortages. Of the 60% of companies that have advertised vacancies in the last 12 months, three quarters of the professional/technical vacancies and two thirds of the craft/skilled manual vacancies remain unfilled.
- Development of the skills and knowledge of the current workforce remains a priority. There is concern regarding the proportion of workers who have no formal vocational qualifications, over 30% in the engineering sector, rising to 45% in the remainder of the general manufacturing sector. Only a limited number of workers have achieved NVQ level 3 or above.
- Attracting sufficient new entrants to the industry, particularly young people, with appropriate skills, is a concern. The sector has an ageing workforce with a particularly high proportion of older workers.
- Urgent need for a comprehensive review of current provision, especially in the FE sector. The review should consider the needs of the sector in terms of relevance of current provision, its scale and whether it is responding to the diversification and focus on niche markets which are occurring in the sector.

## **AUTOMOTIVE MANUFACTURE**

- Initiatives, such as Accelerate, have sought to support the drive for world-class manufacturing by assisting supply chain companies to implement improvements to manufacturing techniques. However, Accelerate is by necessity focused on business development. Companies have found it difficult to fully implement these new techniques because their workforce does not have the full range of skills.

**Reference:** LSC/EEF West Midlands – West Midlands Engineering Skills Register, 2001  
 Skills Task Force Report – Engineering Skills Formation, 1999  
 DFEE – Skills Dialogue Report, 2000  
 Birmingham and Solihull LSC – Sector Skills Research Programme, 2001  
 West Midlands Household Survey, 2000

**LEARNING AND SKILLS BALANCE SHEET**

<b>Market Requirements</b>	<b>Provider Position</b>
Higher skilled, more flexible workforce	Decline of provision at levels 3 and 4, restricting progression opportunities. Inadequate short course provision
New high level skills for professional, technical, and management staff	Reported difficulties of recruitment to HE programmes. Inadequate short course provision
Shortages of craft level and skilled manual workers – 30% of recruitment difficulties in the sector reflect shortages of workers with the required skills, qualifications and experience.	Inadequate facilities to meet demands for training
Ageing workforce with 30% of the workforce over 45. Large numbers retiring. Influx of new blood needed	Perceived unpopularity of manufacturing as a career. Difficulties in recruitment into FE and HE programmes
Market traditionally concentrates on white male recruits, accounting for 83% of the workforce, thus excluding large numbers of potential recruits	Initiatives to widen recruitment base are still in the early stages of development therefore evidence of widening participation is still not widely available
New technologies and ways of working require high skill levels i.e. CAM and Lean Manufacturing	Capacity to produce highly skilled workforce is limited due to infra-structural weaknesses
Employers do not use established providers for in-career training – less than 20% of firms use FE colleges and more than half prefer to provide in-house/on the job training	Reflects inflexibility of provision and lack of links between providers and employers

## 2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### (i) **To address current and forecast skill shortages in skilled manual, craft, technical and management occupations by:**

- Increasing scale of delivery, particularly key skills and levels 1 and 2 National Vocational Qualifications targeting specific recruitment problem areas.
- Establishing a major management and skills development programme targeting companies at risk from structural economic change.
- Developing flexible apprenticeship provision, from entry to NVQ level 4, for current employees in the sector.
- Creating a Skills Forum to disseminate best practice and to share knowledge on current HR and other manufacturing practices.

### (ii) **To support business development and improvement in the Automotive sector by:**

- Co-ordinating the implementation of a region wide skills strategy within the automotive sector
- Developing a region wide programme for the recruitment and pre-employment training of manufacturing operators.
- Establishing a (not for profit) company, led by representatives of the industry, to develop innovative programmes and facilities to raise the quality and standard of skills supply to the Automotive and related component manufacturing/assembly sectors.
- Further developing the online learning strategy for the sector through the Automotive hub which will become part of a new learning company.
- Developing mature apprenticeship programmes around Accelerate supplier clusters.
- Funding a major development programme, with Accelerate, to accredit the business improvement skills of current employees at NVQ levels 2, 3 and 4.
- Developing managers in the supply chain who are trying to introduce new manufacturing techniques.

### (iii) **To promote closer relationships between employers and schools, FE, HE sectors by:**

- Formally reviewing the supply of engineering training provision in Birmingham and Solihull.
- Developing learning centres led by major manufacturers and their supply chains working with college centres of vocational excellence.

**(iv) To improve the perception and attitudes of young people, parents and teachers to the industry by:**

- Supporting the continued development of the Imagineering Foundation to stimulate the interest of young people in the sector.
- Further developing the Partnership Centres at major vehicle manufacturers in partnership with Connexions Service.
- Working with EEF West Midlands to promote an Engineering Mentoring programme.
- Supporting the Future Skills project to develop and accredit Key Skills for young people.
- Promoting student apprenticeships to schools, FE and employers in the automotive sector.

**(v) To improve recruitment practice in manufacturing by:**

- Developing HR planning and workforce profiling tools to identify issues in individual companies.
- Designing, in partnership with leading employers, Automotive Skills Task Force, EEF, SMMT Industry Forum, a major campaign to promote workforce diversity as a critical business issue

**(vi) To support the Motorsport Industry in the area by:**

- Piloting the introduction of NVQ programmes in motorsport mechanics
- Creating a network of Formula Schools to promote engineering excellence in education

**(b) PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES****KEY ISSUES**

- The sector employs 140,000 people (24% of total employment). It is expected to create up to 50,000 new jobs in the next 10 years. The jobs created will require more flexible and broad based skills due to increasing diversification within the sector.
- Critical skill shortages already evident, particularly at associate professional level.
- Employers in the sector constantly competing in recruitment for new staff. This occurs within the sector and in competition with businesses from other sectors. Organisations poach from one another by offering increasingly competitive pay packages. This is not sustainable in the long run. Amongst smaller employers a lack of a structured approach to providing people with the skills they need to do the job long term including satisfying employee career and professional aspirations. This is a major contributor to staff turnover.
- Many potential candidates lack the relevant skills, experience and personal attributes for the jobs on offer.
- Over 80% of the workforce is white with under-representation from ethnic minorities. In contrast, there are some exemplar employers whose excellent practice in this area needs wider dissemination. The age profile shows a workforce with over a third of all employees being over the age of 40. Employers in the sector are still not actively managing these issues and need to understand the implications of demographic changes in order to tap into new groups of potential employees.
- Within the sector, 87% of employers provide staff training, but development activities tend to focus on higher levels of qualifications with people already highly qualified. Fewer employers provide training at the basic skills level and at associate professional level.

**Balance of Supply and Demand**

- Recruitment demand in the sector unlikely to be met with sufficient candidates with the necessary skills, qualifications and experience. (currently, less than 30% of existing employees have an NVQ at level 3 or above). The major skills gaps are around Level 2 and 3. Need for those qualified at level 5 to see the need for a broad based skills profile
- Acute recruitment and retention problems, with the sector being perceived as attracting individuals with already developed skills and high career aspirations.
- Core business skills requirements are high for these sectors, where significant numbers of employers require enhanced communication and customer service skills. 30% of employees lack any formal qualifications.
- The sector reports critical skill deficiencies in managers, relating to people management, marketing and job specific technical skills, and support staff, relating to core skills such as communication, IT, literacy and numeracy. The sector has skill requirements relating to customer care, people management, team working and problem solving skills.



- Urgent need for a comprehensive review of current provision, especially in the FE sector. The review should consider the needs of the sector in terms of relevance of current provision, its scale and whether it is responding to the diversification and focus on niche markets which are occurring in the sector.

**Reference:** Skills Task Force Report – Employment Prospects and Skill Needs in the banking, Finance and Insurance Sector, 1999, Birmingham and Solihull TEC and Birmingham Forward – The New Industrial Revolution: the People Factor, 2000, Birmingham and Solihull LSC – Sector Skills Research Programme, 2001

### WM Household Survey, 2000

## LEARNING AND SKILLS BALANCE SHEET

MARKET REQUIREMENTS	PROVIDER PROVISION
Requirement for more skills in communication/customer service.	Provision currently being assessed.
More development required at managerial levels to enhance people management and business focused skills.	Need for more focused provision on a range of qualifications at Foundation Degree Level, and at Levels 2 and 3 NVQ equivalents to encourage junior staff to start on the route to professional qualifications
Employers in the sector need engaging in the solutions to the labour market challenges to work in partnership with all stakeholders to deliver the employees and skills required.	Initial research indicates that partnerships are not well developed to satisfy the sector demands but that a limited number of areas of good practice provide benchmarks for the future
Workforce is predominately over 35 years old.	Initiatives needed to widen recruitment base and place a greater emphasis on skills development and entry for younger workers from traditionally disadvantaged areas.
High incidence of ongoing recruitment activity to cope with high staff turnover in the sector.	Poorly developed links with employers
Service sector is often perceived as requiring high levels of skills in order to enter. This is reflected by only small numbers of employers using FE colleges to deliver staff development activities because of issues around quality.	Reflects a perceived inflexibility of provision and limited links between employers and providers.
Requirement to introduce more IT skills into the sector in preparation for the expanding web-based market and particularly the impact this has upon financial provision.	Provision being assessed

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### (i) To address current and forecast skills issues within the sector by

- Implementing the key actions of the Skills Taskforce regarding workforce diversity, upskilling the existing workforce and attracting new entrants to the sector.
- Integrating Investors in People, workforce development and basic skills into flexible packages of support.
- Undertaking a major initiative, with Birmingham Forward, to embed HR planning and management development, with members firms and the wider sector.

- Significantly expanding the E-Skills national pilot programme, in partnership with Birmingham Forward, to develop and upgrade ICT skills
- Developing a Learndirect hub for the sector, using larger firms clustered with SMEs.
- Establishing, with Birmingham Forward, major projects to increase the skills and supply of associate professional staff including a programme to develop and promote Foundation degrees.

**(ii) To improve the level of basic and core business skills within the sector by**

- Matching the content of entry level qualifications to employer needs.
- Increasing the number of employees with NVQ qualifications at Level 2 in communications and customer services by 10%.
- Developing the HR planner to help companies identify their basic skills training needs.

**(iii) Improving the match between the supply of potential employees from the FE sector and the demand from employers by**

- Reviewing current provision. The review should consider the needs of the sector, the relevance of current provision, its scale and whether it is responding to the diversification and focus on niche markets issues.
- Building preferred supplier relationships between FE colleges and sector employers to ensure that learning provision addresses needs in individual sub-sectors and occupational areas
- Developing major programmes to support employers introducing Foundation Degrees in areas such as Insurance, Finance and Accounting, Legal and Business Administration

**(iv) To anticipate fundamental changes in the demographic profile of the available workforce by :**

- Developing a programme to improve awareness of the implications of demographic change.
- Researching the reasons for ethnic minorities not seeking employment in the sector
- Using benchmarking tools and HR profiling activities, to help employers plan effectively to anticipate the growing diversity of the potential workforce
- Using managers from ethnic minority owned businesses to promote the sector in schools and colleges.
- Undertaking a major project promoting workforce diversity, with Birmingham Forward, driven by the Diversity Project Manager.
- Creating a Diversity Project Board comprising leading figures in the sector to champion diversity

**(c) CONSTRUCTION****KEY ISSUES**

- Sector employment in Birmingham and Solihull is expected to grow by up to 8000 by 2010. This figure includes over 1000 baseline jobs, approximately 1000 local residents estimated to be employed in the projected housing refurbishment programmes and up to 6000 job opportunities generated by large scale developments. From a regional perspective the recent Bridging the Gap survey projects the need for 6300 additional labour in the West Midlands by 2005
- Critical shortages of craft and skilled manual workers in the sub-region's labour market with the required qualifications, skills and experience, notably electricians, carpenters, plumbers and bricklayers. This partly reflects the age profile of the sector and the fact that, although companies from outside the sub-region are predominantly working on the major construction projects taking place in Birmingham and Solihull, they are recruiting from the local labour market and this is creating additional difficulties for local companies looking to recruit skilled workers.
- Craft and skilled manual workers need to attain higher levels of skills and qualifications and, as prefabrication becomes a key element of the construction process, to become more flexible and multi skilled.
- New skills required in managerial and technical occupations, as new business practices to improve quality and productivity are introduced.
- Recruitment difficulties in the sector likely to be compounded by demographic trends over the next decade as the white working age population, which accounts for 80% of the construction workforce in Birmingham and Solihull, declines significantly. Meanwhile, the proportion of the available labour force from ethnic minority communities is set to rise markedly. Although construction companies in the sub-region employ slightly more workers from ethnic minority groups than those in many other sectors, they will need to increase the focus of recruitment activity on these communities in the future. Similarly, levels of recruitment of females into the industry are low.
- Assuming Birmingham City Council and Solihull MBC complete their plans for transfer of housing stock to social landlords, (88,000 houses in Birmingham and 12,000 in Solihull with released investment of £1.25 billion in Birmingham and £0.5 billion in Solihull), ensuring a supply of appropriately skilled and qualified local workers will be critical to meeting the enhanced repair and maintenance requirements during and after transfer.

**BALANCE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

- An ageing workforce and the poor image of the sector, discouraging young new entrants, exacerbate the serious deficiencies in the supply of workers with the required qualifications, skills and experience.
- These issues mean that investment in the training and development of the existing workforce is crucial. Nearly two thirds of construction companies have provided some form of training for their employees over the last 12 months and nearly half the sub-region's construction workforce have received training.

- However, there is concern that a significant proportion of workers still lack the skills required to support the growth and development of the sector. While only 20% have achieved NVQ 3 or above, which is the level of attainment increasingly required by employers, 25% have no qualifications.
- The LSC's construction sector review highlighted a serious mismatch between the needs of local companies and both the available provision and capacity and the supply of learners with necessary skills. This is in part due to the need for better and more modern training facilities which expand both the scale and breadth of provision available

**REFERENCE: CITB/AWM BRIDGING THE GAP REPORT**

DfEE Skills Dialogue report, An Assessment of Skills Needs in Construction and Related Industries 2000

Birmingham and Solihull LSC, Sector Skills Research Programme 2001

WM Household Survey 2000

**LEARNING AND SKILLS BALANCE SHEET**

<b>Market Requirements</b>	<b>Provider Position</b>
Higher skilled, more flexible workforce	Decline of provision at levels 3 and 4, restricting progression opportunities. Inadequate short course provision
New high level skills for professional, technical, and management staff	Reported difficulties of recruitment to HE programmes. Inadequate short course provision
Shortages of craft level and skilled manual workers – a third of recruitment difficulties in the sector reflect shortages of workers with the required skills, qualifications and experience.	Inadequate facilities to meet demands for training.
Ageing workforce with 30% of the workforce over 45. Large numbers retiring. Influx of new blood needed	Perceived unpopularity of construction as a career. Difficulties in recruitment in to FE and HE programmes
Market traditionally concentrates on white male recruits, accounting for 80% of the workforce. As a result, excluding large numbers of potential recruits	Initiatives to widen recruitment base need to be integrated with improved HR and recruitment practices in companies
Large numbers of workers involved in major construction projects in Birmingham and Solihull projects being run by national companies. There is also a knock on effect for local firms not working on major projects with 20% reporting skill shortages.	Local training provision unconnected to major building projects
New specialisms used on major construction projects	New specialisms such as steel erection, and scaffolding not offered by local providers
Local companies having difficulties recruiting new staff at craft, skilled and management levels – 20% of management vacancies and 32% of craft/skilled vacancies are reported as hard to fill.	Lack of structured contacts between employers and providers to recruit students and trainees and plan training
Employers don't use established providers for in-career training – less than 20% of firms use FE colleges and more than half prefer to provide in-house/on the job training	Reflects inflexibility of provision and lack of links between providers and employers

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**(i) To address current and forecast skill shortages in craft, technical and management occupations by:**

- Establishing a Skills Task Force to promote expansion of modern apprenticeships and workforce development
- Developing Investors in People, workforce development, and basic skills support packages focused on developing career progression for craft and technician occupations
- Developing management development programmes within supply chains and business clusters
- Developing in-company assessors to support On-Site Assessment and Training (OSAT) and workforce development
- Develop level 4 (Foundation Degree) provision which meets the specific needs of managers and technical occupations.

**(ii) To train local people to benefit from planned developments such as Eastside, the regeneration zones and from opportunities which may arise from housing stock transfer by Birmingham City Council and Solihull MBC by:**

- Piloting ways in which local people can get on-site experience and training to enter the industry
- Working with Birmingham City Council to embed training and employment opportunities into refurbishment and maintenance contracts

**(iii) To develop preferred supplier relationships between large employers, contractors and the FE sector by:**

- Developing individual upskilling programmes for each large employer and their contractors

**(iv) Changing company recruitment practices to reflect the challenges of the demographic change by:**

- Developing integrated HR planning and workforce profiling tools to identify issues in individual companies
- Developing positive action programmes to widen recruitment among ethnic minority communities and women

**(v) To develop a new centre of vocational excellence to expand learning provision to better meet employer demand by:**

- Developing a new purpose built centre, which matches the best modern facilities

**(d) HEALTH AND CARE****KEY ISSUES**

- The sector is forecast to increase number of employees by over 4000 by 2010 yet at the same time recruitment difficulties and staff retention problems are becoming acute in the care sector. These notably relating to nursing, residential and domiciliary care staff. These posts are characterised by low pay, low status and limited training opportunities, despite the growing breadth and depth of skills required. Staff and skill shortages will be further exacerbated by the continuing externalisation of local authority services
- In the health sector there are national shortages of specialist skilled staff, notably doctors, nurses and key support workers such as allied health professionals, radiographers and dental auxiliaries. Poor pay and conditions relative to other sectors are leading to high levels of staff turnover and recruitment difficulties.
- An ageing population, combined with a growing demand for higher quality health care with increasing public investment, is leading to pressure on both health and care services
- Impact of major NHS reforms in 2002 and the development of Primary Care Trusts – currently, there is inadequate intelligence on the workforce and occupational profiles of the sector, especially within the NHS
- Growing need for childcare services as numbers of women participating in the labour market increase and lone parents are encouraged to move into employment
- Significant short to medium term difficulties as a result of the introduction of National Care Standards on social care, including increasingly stringent requirements in relation to trained and qualified staff.
- Expanding role of the voluntary sector in the provision of direct care services.

**BALANCE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

- An ageing workforce exacerbates skills problems with significant numbers of highly skilled staff retiring. This is particularly the case with regard to GPs, half of whom are over 50 years of age, and nursing staff, of which half are over 40.
- The delivery of 'culturally competent' health care that provides an equitable health service to the community it serves requires improved recruitment from black and minority ethnic communities. Overall, the sector's workforce is predominantly white with only 14% from ethnic minority groups. Although ethnic minority groups are more strongly represented in certain occupations (for example, nearly 20% of doctors, consultants and dentists are from Asian communities), in many others representation is very limited.
- Birmingham and Solihull's ethnic minority communities, many of which are characterised by low levels of participation in employment, are forecast to grow considerably over the next decade and will account for a growing share of the available labour force. It is vital that health and care organisations focus their recruitment efforts more effectively on these groups, both to address their acute labour and skill shortages and provide employment opportunities and progression routes between the for disadvantaged communities.

- The high proportion of workers in professional and associate professional occupations with specialist skills and qualifications is reflected in the fact a higher proportion of staff are qualified to NVQ level 4 or above than in the sub-regional workforce as a whole. However investment in the training and development of staff on lower rungs of the skills ladder, notably those in support and ancillary roles, is more limited. There are a lower proportion of workers in the sector qualified to NVQ levels 1 and 2, with only 15% of care workers having obtained L2 NVQ.
- Urgent need for a comprehensive review of current provision, especially in the FE sector. The review should consider the needs of the sector in terms of relevance of current provision, its scale and whether it is responding to the diversification and focus on niche markets which are occurring in the sector.
- There is an need to analyse the communities around the Trusts and recruitment strategies developed so that, over time, their workforces better reflect the communities which they serve
- There has been a shift from volunteer to employed worker status, with a 29% growth in employment over the past 5 years. There is a need for the introduction of HR frameworks to manage organisational growth and structural change.
- IT is a key skill shortage across all sub-sectors and occupational groups. The demand for IT solutions and information across the services is increasing, in order to meet the needs of the modernising agenda.

**Reference:** Birmingham Health Authority – Birmingham's Healthcare Future? 1999, ONS – Health and Community Care Statistics, 2000, Institute for Employment Studies – Supporting Skills for Care Workers, 2000, Birmingham and Solihull LSC – Sector Skills Research Programme, 2001, West Midlands Household Survey, 2000

## LEARNING AND SKILLS BALANCE SHEET

**This balance sheet is the result of initial analysis of student recruitment and retention and will be supplemented and developed by a major sector review in 2002/03**

Market Requirements	Provider Position
Higher skilled more flexible workforce.	Decline of provision at levels 3 and 4, restricting progression opportunities. Majority of provision is at level 1 and level 2
New flexible models of training delivery.	Lack of collaboration between a diverse range of providers. Limited use of technology.
Multi-skilling to meet the challenges of new job roles and occupational groupings.	Emphasis on vocational training.
Shortages of Associate professional and technical staff, notably nursing staff, and technical and scientific workers	Recruitment is weak, for example, to nursing (133 students in 1999/2000)
The sector's workforce is predominantly white with only 14% from ethnic minority groups	Students are traditionally female and white
Difficulties recruiting new staff at skilled and management levels	Lack of structured contacts between employers and providers to recruit students and trainees and plan training

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### (i) **To develop upskilling programmes, which allow organisations to respond to their changing environment and provide high quality, care delivery.**

- Delivering the critical objectives of the Health and Care Skills Taskforce, namely, improving recruitment and retention in the sector, addressing under representation of ethnic minorities and promoting investment in the skills of the existing workforce.
- Developing workforce profiling systems to identify opportunities for local people to gain employment in the healthcare sector.
- Establishing extended career pathways, such that staff can be recruited and retained from all parts of the sector.
- Promoting new career pathways so that people can be recruited to the health sector from local communities.
- Developing centres of vocational excellence and preferred supplier relationships.
- Creating clear progression routes to level 3 and 4 qualifications.
- Developing level 4 (Foundation Degree) provision, which meets the specific needs of managers and technical occupations.

### (ii) **To respond to critical business and skill needs in the Care sector by**

- Providing integrated packages of support for care homes to meet the demands of the National Care Standards.
- Delivering IIP and Workforce Development packages to support critical HR needs.
- Create upskilling programmes focused on the need for large numbers of staff to improve basic skills and vocational skills to NVQ level 2
- Working with partners such as the Black care Organisations to develop capacity building programmes which address the growing and increasingly complex role of the Voluntary sector in delivering community services

### (iii) **To support the development of a workforce, which reflects the diversity of the community it serves by**

- Developing marketing and information programmes to explain the implications of demographic change
- Producing HR planning and workforce profiling tools to complement the work of the NHS Confederation and Primary Care Trusts
- Working with partners such as the Royal College of Nursing to introduce positive action strategies for training, recruitment and retention.
- Producing a coherent LSC response to the 'Positively Diverse' initiative.



**(e) HOSPITALITY, TOURISM, LEISURE AND RETAIL****KEY ISSUES**

These sectors share similar issues since they predominately concentrate upon offering services for consumers, and tend to employ individuals with similar skills. This impacts upon recruitment, retention and skills requirements for the future.

- The tourism and hospitality sub sectors have been highlighted by Advantage West Midlands as being drivers of employment growth in the region. In this sector, which includes retail, over 15000 extra jobs are expected by 2010. The Bull Ring development alone is expected to create up to 8000 new jobs in the next 2-3 years. The jobs created are expected to be in customer facing roles, requiring 'soft' skills to better satisfy customer requirements. Employers in this sector in Solihull will need to focus recruitment activity on the regeneration areas such as East Birmingham and North Solihull, if they are to satisfy their future labour requirements.
- Employers in these sectors are continually recruiting new staff. In the last 12 months it is estimated that half of the retailers in the sub-region and an even higher proportion of hospitality and leisure companies had to recruit new staff. High staff turnover has been attributed to pay and inferior terms and conditions (compared to other sectors), creating ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties. Sector employers report that many potential candidates lack the relevant skills, experience and personal attributes for the jobs on offer. In the hospitality sector there will be a need to engage communities with high levels of unemployment and low educational attainment. Employers face the challenges of changing the perceptions of potential employees, who view the sector as offering low pay and poor development prospects.
- Demographic changes will have a significant impact upon these sectors. In hospitality and leisure over 70% of the workforce is white, although the proportion of workers from ethnic minority backgrounds does reflect the ethnicity trends in the working population. In retail, over 80% of the workforce is white with under-representation from ethnic groups (just 15% compared to labour force trends of 23%). The age profile in hospitality shows a predominately 'young' workforce with over half of all employees being under the age of 24. In retail the workforce tends to be older (aged 25-44). Employers in these sectors need to understand the implications of demographic changes in order to tap into new groups of potential employees.
- In Food and Drink Manufacturing and in the Restaurant trade there is a significant ethnic minority business presence. There are 200 specialty food and drinks companies employing approximately 1,700 people with a total gross turnover of around £90 million in the West Midlands Area alone. Many of the areas where the SME's are located (Balti Triangle etc) are among the most deprived areas in the City/Region. The development of this sub sector will give the opportunity for employment and enterprise growth in these target areas.
- Within the hospitality, tourism and leisure sector, 87% of employers provide staff training, but development activities tend to focus on lower level craft skills (usually learnt on the job). In the retail sector, fewer employers (66%) provide training and there is evidence that smaller companies need more encouragement to undertake development activities. For the service sector, varying shift patterns and seasonal working practices can make the release

of staff (to undertake learning activities) very difficult. However innovative methods of best utilising such a flexible labour force can be developed, for example Touchwood Court in Solihull and JobJunction at Birmingham Airport and NEC. (At JobJunction, the more fragmented nature of employment opportunities in this sector is specifically addressed by 'packaging' part time and seasonal opportunities for individuals and employers to provide employment approaching a more 'full time' structure. Individuals benefit by having a more consistent and longer term 'work offer' and critically, they get training when they are between contracts. Employers benefit by 'retaining' experienced staff even when, individually, they cannot offer long term opportunities). Employers need to develop more new approaches, such as these, to employee development that will not only to retain existing employees, but also encourage the necessary number of new entrants to ensure that growth is not inhibited.

### BALANCE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND

- The hospitality, tourism and leisure sector has acute recruitment and retention problems, with the sector being perceived as only attracting individuals with limited skills and low career aspirations. (Currently, only 30% of employees have NVQs at level 3 and above). A specific skills gap is the insufficient number of newly qualified chefs entering the industry and the subsequent poor retention rate.
- Core skills requirements are high for these sectors, where significant numbers of employers require enhanced communication and customer service skills. Many of the current recruitment issues directly relate to candidates having low skill levels which can hamper training activity and career progression.
- The retail sector reports critical skill deficiencies in managers (relating to people management, marketing and job specific technical skills) and sales staff (relating to core skills such as communication, IT, literacy and numeracy). In the West Midlands some 86% of companies have recruited new staff over the last 12 months. Two thirds of new recruits have been in personal/protective services occupations, notably chefs/cooks, waiters/waitresses and bar staff. The hospitality and leisure sector also has soft skill requirements relating to customer care, people management, team working and problem solving skills. This highlights the low levels of skills and qualifications within the sector, 32% of retail employees and 37% of hospitality and leisure employees lack any formal qualifications.
- Urgent need for a comprehensive review of current provision, especially in the FE sector.

**Reference :** Birmingham and Solihull LSC, Birmingham City Council – Mind the Gap, a Survey of Skill Needs in Birmingham's Hospitality Sector, 2000  
 Skillset NTO – Employment Census, 2000  
 Cultural Heritage NTO Skills Foresight Report, 2000  
 Birmingham and Solihull LSC – Sector Skills Research Programme, 2001  
 West Midlands Household Survey, 2000

## LEARNING AND SKILLS BALANCE SHEET

MARKET REQUIREMENTS	PROVIDER PROVISION
Requirement for more skills in communication/customer service.	Provision needs assessment.
More development required at managerial levels to enhance people management and business focused skills.	Need for flexible provision to fit into shift or seasonal patterns of work.
Employers in the retail sector need some reassurance that there will sufficient individuals in the labour market (with suitable skills and experience) to apply for the vacancies in the Bull Ring.	Initiatives needed, to develop retail provision to upskill unemployed/returners to the labour market etc.
Workforce in hospitality is predominately under 24 years old, whereas in retail it tends to be aged 25-44. Both sectors under-represent older workers.	Initiatives needed to widen recruitment base and place a greater emphasis on skills development and entry for older workers.
High incidence of ongoing recruitment activity to cope with high staff turnover in both sectors.	Better links with employers need to be establishes
Service sector is often perceived as not offering career progression – leading to talented individuals leaving for other sectors. This is reflected by only small numbers of employers using FE colleges to deliver staff development activities.	May reflect perceived inflexibility of provision and limited links between employers and providers.
Requirement to introduce more IT skills into retail, hospitality, tourism and leisure businesses, in preparation for the expanding web-based market.	Better linkages needed to Learndirect provision.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### (i) To address skills issues within the service sector by

- Establishing a sector Skills Task Force to guide upskilling strategies in the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure sectors.
- Working with AWM Business Growth Task Group to develop upskilling programmes to respond to the adverse effects in the sector in 2001.
- Addressing HR practices in the sector (which are traditionally weak and lead to large staff turnover), by developing HR planning, management development and IIP products focused specifically on improving staff retention
- Establishing, with the College of Food Industrial Liaison Group, in the Bull Ring Retail Development, a learning and recruitment shop modelled on Touchwood in Solihull and adopting the best practice learnt from the JobJunction project on packaging seasonal, temporary and part-time employment opportunities.
- Training managers in the Tourism sector in key HR skills to demonstrate the benefits of investing in the skills of their staff to directly reduce staff turnover
- Conducting quarterly workshops with employer groups to identify sector skills gaps and shape customised training activities

- Raising the profile of the industry by the delivery promotional events through ESF Tourism Steering Group and Springboard UK.
- Setting up a Springboard Working Group that will address barriers to entry to the Sector Workforce and will act as a sub group to the Skills Taskforce
- Setting up Project Steering Group for Food and Drink sub-sector in Partnership with the College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

**(ii) To qualify the workforce in core skills by:**

- Undertaking Core Skills Training Needs Analyses with employers
- Increasing the numbers of employees with NVQ qualifications in customer services using Core Skills funds and support from ESF Tourism bid.
- Completing development of a diagnostic tool, "Hospitality Skillscan" to identify core skills gaps and job-specific curriculum development.

**(iii) To improve working relationships between employers and the FE sector by:**

- Undertaking a review of learning provision for the Bull Ring/Eastside development and the Regeneration Zones
- Building relationships with Centres of Vocational Excellence such as the College of Food to develop a more innovative and flexible curriculum.
- Developing provision at higher NVQ levels (or Foundation Degrees as appropriate), to focus on management development and career progression within hospitality and retail businesses.

**(iv) To promote the business benefits of a diverse workforce by:**

- Working with employers, using results of Investors In People diagnostic activities, to plan effectively for recruitment of a more diverse workforce and to review equal opportunities in their organisations.
- Providing information on demographic change, and how this impacts upon businesses in the service sector through the employer/provider networks
- Developing specific programmes to ensure access to career opportunities for local people from deprived communities at Touchwood and the Bullring Retail Developments

**(f) PUBLIC SERVICES****KEY ISSUES**

- Overall employment in the sector is expected to rise by between only 0.1% and 0.2% per annum over the next decade. However, while numbers employed in activities such as local government administration will continue to decrease as local authorities look to trim costs and improve efficiency to comply with Best Value, there will be an increase in others, notably the education sector and the police service, which are currently experiencing a recruitment crisis.
- In local government, pressures are increasing as a result of a raft of central government legislation, not least of which are the requirements of E-Government, which requires communication and the provision of services by electronic means, to be introduced by 2005. However E-Government cannot be achieved through electronic means alone, it requires cultural change within local authorities.
- The introduction of E-Government will require an even greater drive for efficiency and the take up of new technology and new ways of working, for example, the development of customer call centres and multi functional teams. This will generate an increased demand for basic and higher level skills and a much wider range of management skills, areas which are already highlighted as a problem area within the sector.
- The proposal, currently under consideration, for Birmingham City Council to create 11 Constituency Councils, by December 2002, would also have a major impact on the sector.

**BALANCE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

- A widening of the differential between the earnings of public and private sector staff in recent years, particularly in the area of IT where the recruitment of specialists is already a widespread problem. In addition many staff have a deficit of IT skills within their own jobs.
- Management Skills are also an issue across the sector, particularly in the areas of performance management, project/contract management, Innovative Thinking and at the very top, a need for Strategic Leadership.
- In the education sector, more than 50% of teaching posts in the West Midlands are in the 'difficult to fill' category, particularly for mathematics, physics and other science subjects. There is a need to develop opportunities for classroom/learning assistants and other non-teaching staff to support the work of teachers.
- Birmingham and Solihull's ethnic minority communities, many of which are characterised by low levels of participation in employment, are forecast to grow considerable over the next decade and will account for a growing share of the available workforce. It is vital that those sub sectors experiencing recruitment problems focus their recruitment efforts more effectively on these groups, to both address their acute labour shortage and to develop a workforce which reflects the diversity of the communities which they serve. The government has already made this a requirement for the funding of additional posts within the police force.

- Urgent need for a comprehensive review of current provision, especially in the FE sector. The review should consider the needs of the sector in terms of relevance of current provision, its scale and whether it is responding to changing skill demands occurring in the sector.

### **LEARNING AND SKILLS BALANCE SHEET**

This balance sheet will be drawn up as soon as a comprehensive review of the provision education and training is undertaken.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

**(i) To develop upskilling programmes, which allow public sector organisations to respond to their changing environment by :**

- Setting up a Public Sector Skills Task Force.
- Undertaking a comprehensive review of the sector
- Developing workforce profiling systems to identify opportunities for local people to gain employment in the public sector.
- Establishing and promoting new and more flexible career pathways, particularly in the police, fire, ambulance and prison services so that people can be recruited to the sector from local communities.
- Developing preferred supplier relationships between the FE sector and key employers.
- Developing level 4 (Foundation Degree) provision for classroom/learning assistants.

**(ii) To respond to critical business and skill needs in the Public sector by :**

- Delivering IIP and Workforce Development packages which better support critical HR needs.
- Developing IT and Management Development Programmes which address the changing role of the public sector in delivering services to the community.

**(iii) To work with institutions, providers and other public agencies towards a workforce in public and community services which reflects the diversity of the wider community by:-**

- Supporting coordinated recruitment campaigns across the college network which target disadvantaged communities – building on the pioneering work of South Birmingham College.
- Providing professional development programmes to build career progression routes from voluntary service employment into “mainstream” public service employment (see above).
- Developing “extended career pathways” across a range of public services (through para-professional to full professional status (eg classroom assistant to teacher).
- Establishing a range of public service “mature apprenticeships” with possible progression to foundation Degrees.

**(g) CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, MEDIA AND THE ARTS****KEY ISSUES**

**The Creative Industries sector in Birmingham and Solihull is highly diverse and includes the following sub sectors:**

Arts and Crafts  
Media  
New Media

The sector is of emerging importance and has expanded its employment by some 10% over the last 12 months representing the creation of more than 1,500 net new jobs. A third of organisations expect to their workforces to grow over the next 12 months and a quarter expect to expand employment by 10% or more.

Small companies in the Creative Industries Sector face a future of high growth and rapid technological change. At the same time, automation of the industry is leading to a shift away from traditional craft trades and a need for the workforce to broaden and upgrade IT skills.

While only 13% of the sector's workforce is from Black, Asian or other ethnic minority communities, these groups currently account for a quarter of the sub-region's working age population and will account for a third of the total by 2010.

**Arts and Crafts**

- In 1998, over 7000 people were employed in and around the Jewellery Quarter - almost 40% of the national total.
- The Furniture Production sub sector, which employs 8500 people, has seen 46% growth in jobs between 1993 and 1998. The main skill gaps in the existing workforce relate to management/supervisory skills, sales, IT and problem solving.
- Among museums, galleries and other visitor attractions, there is a growing need for strategic management and business development skills reflecting increasing and changing demands from user groups, and a range of technical skills, notably ICT and language skills
- Within the Arts, there is a lack of research, training and self-management skills amongst micro-businesses and freelancers / commissioned artists

**Media**

- There are more than 70000 people in the region working to some degree in this sub sector (exact numbers are difficult to estimate due to the large percentage of freelance workers (up to 60% in some areas))
- Due to the increased growth in media, revenue is expected to double to £11.3 bn by 2010.
- Key skill gaps and shortages relate to:
  - Programme making – producers and directors
  - Technical/craft skills – set craftspeople, lighting operators, camera operators, on-line editors
  - Business skills – marketing, linguists/translators, telesales
  - IT skills technicians, multimedia, graphics

- Constant upgrading, development and technology convergence means that it is increasingly difficult to keep up to date with the appropriate skills to ensure companies remain innovative.

## NEW MEDIA

- The New or Digital Media is highly fragmented and in an environment of rapid technological change.
- 11,300 people in the Birmingham and Solihull sub-region work in this sub sector, over 23% of the national total, and is set for GDP growth of a third by 2010.
- As many of the SME's and their freelance individuals work between this sector and the more traditional Media sector, they face similar skill needs. Although, the New Media sector's reliance in new technology means that skills needs are more urgent and are more subject to rapid change.

## BALANCE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The industry has significant training and development needs. This reflects the emergence of new professions such as multimedia designers, the need for new skills in areas such the production and editing of on-line and multimedia content and the need for multi-skilling in the workplace.

However, education and training institutions are poorly adapted to meeting these needs because there is little or no partnership between the industry and training providers. There is a serious mismatch between the skill sets needed by the industry and those provided by formal education

SME's are typically unable to diagnose their own learning needs effectively, SME's also find it difficult to identify and evaluate appropriate provision as many feel information provided by the providers is produced from an education perspective.

**There is a significant pace of recruitment in this sector and some 80% of organisations are investing in some form of training and staff development activity. However, if the sector's skill needs are to be fully addressed, it is vital that investment is targeted more effectively at those occupations where skill needs are increasing most rapidly. Although some 70% of organisations are investing in training for managers, less than half are providing training for professional staff and less than 40% are providing training for technical staff.**

Core Skill development, Training Needs Analyses (TNA's) and appropriate skills training for employees of SME's in the creative industries sector are needed urgently.

The new media industry is highly fragmented and therefore does not experience the benefits of network learning and opportunities. .

### Reference:

- Creative Industries Mapping Document, 1998
- Cultural Heritage NTO Skills Foresight Report, 2000
- Skillset Employment Census in 2000 (NTO for video and interactive media)
- Skills Task Force Research Paper 7: Skills Requirements in the Creative Industries, York Consulting Ltd, 1999
- Digital Media Alliance: recommendations for Growth, 1998
- Creative Report (Learndirect / Ufi, 2001)



## LEARNING AND SKILLS BALANCE SHEET

MARKET REQUIREMENTS	PROVIDER PROVISION
Link learning and qualifications to business objectives through the use of frameworks such as Investors In People	Initiative needed to implement IIP in this Sector
Link employers to exchange learning best practice and recruitment and workforce planning	Employer networks and links with providers are weak
Recruit ethnic minority, disabled people and women into senior management and technical fields	Better information needs to be disseminated about career paths in the industry.
Improve learning supply	Learning provision needs to be mapped Colleges need to understand the needs of the sector.
Need for more people management and supervisory skills	Foundation degrees and multi disciplinary and vocational qualifications such as higher NVQs needed.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### (i) To support current and forecast skill needs in high growth, complex sectors by :

- Establishing employer networks to better understand skills needs
- Developing, with Business Link, skills programmes for the needs of specific sub-sectors
- Undertaking a major IIP programme focused on growth companies in the sector

### (ii) To improve the uptake of basic and core business skills by

- Undertaking a major review of the core business skills of employees in creative industries
- Training IIP advisers to assist companies identify and address basic skills needs of their employees

### (iii) To develop networks between employers and the FE sector by :

- Further developing the ESF Steering Group made up of employers and colleges to review the suitability of existing provision
- Mapping the training needs analyses completed by November 2002 and developing programmes of upskilling support between employers and providers

### (iv) To increase the proportion of staff recruited from ethnic minorities, disabled people and women by :

- Improve opportunities for non-graduate entry into the sector by providing more flexible delivery of sector NVQs.
- Delivering a Conference in December 2002 to inform employers of the demographic change and the subsequent business advantages of a diverse workforce.

#### 4. **CROSS-SECTOR SKILLS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

##### **KEY ISSUES IN MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT**

The need for management skills and expertise has increased significantly as businesses have looked to become more competitive by restructuring their operations and introducing new working methods. These issues are affecting businesses in a wide range of sectors, with significant numbers of retailing, hospitality & leisure, professional & financial and creative industries businesses requiring staff with higher level people and project management skills over the next five years.

As new skill needs have emerged, however, many businesses have begun to encounter significant deficiencies in the management skills possessed by their workforce. In particular, a significant proportion of hospitality & leisure and creative industries firms feel that staff lack adequate people management and business planning skills and large numbers of professional & financial services firms cite deficiencies in business planning skills.

Whilst more than 50% of retail and hospitality & leisure firms are investing in management development less than half of professional & financial services and creative industries companies, which are particularly likely to have deficiencies in the management skills of their staff, had made this investment. Only a very limited number of manufacturing and construction firms, moreover, provide management training for their staff.

##### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

To assist businesses in improving their HR planning and in developing their capacity to manage their workforce more effectively as part of an integrated package of business support including :

- Training needs analysis
- Company skills audits
- Management development
- Developing in-house training expertise through support for NVQ assessor training and designated trainers
- Advice and support for the development and implementation of Investors in People

##### **KEY ISSUES IN BASIC SKILLS**

A significant proportion of adults in the UK have poor basic skills. This is creating problems for employers who increasingly require workers with the ability to read and write at a good level. Almost every job, even in lower occupational categories, now requires some competence in basic skills and 50% of jobs are closed to people who have only entry-level basic skills.

Companies in the hospitality & leisure, retailing and engineering sectors are those most likely to require workers with improved basic skills over the next five years. It is these firms, moreover, which are most likely to be currently faced with deficiencies in the basic skills of their staff.

Despite these problems, however, levels of investment in appropriate training are low. Although a higher proportion of firms in the hospitality & leisure, retailing and engineering sectors, which are particularly likely to have deficiencies in the basic skills of their staff have made this investment, this is still very limited.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**To provide specific support for upskilling low-skilled and unqualified employees through**

- 50% subsidy (up to £5,000) for basic IT skills training leading to a recognised qualification (eg European Computer Driving Licence; CLAIT)
- Free audit of basic skills needs against the new basic skills standard
- Free advice and training to address identified basic skills needs
- Support for training unqualified employees to accredited standards, especially through better access to FE programmes
- Advice and assistance in the development of company learning centres and employee development schemes, especially in the introduction of Ufl/Learndirect on-learning programmes

## KEY ISSUES IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

New technology and greater global competition are driving up the demand for ICT skills, especially for workers in key associate professional and technical occupations who can solve problems, interpret information and understand how systems work and fit together. The introduction and exploitation of ICT is a key driver of skills change for a significant proportion of local businesses and certain sectors in particular:

- Creative industries, where businesses are increasingly embracing digital technology and multimedia
- Engineering, where a shift towards higher value added, more skill intensive products is leading to a demand for new skills to programme and maintain new technology, notably computer aided design (CAD), computer controlled machines (CNC) and computer aided manufacturing (CAM)
- Professional and financial services, where much routine activity is being automated and there is an increasing need for workers to develop higher level technical skills in the analysis, assessment and interpretation of data.

However, while a high proportion of businesses in these sectors expect their ICT skill needs to increase over the next five years, many feel that deficiencies in the ICT skills of their workforces may inhibit their growth and development. ICT skill gaps are also a significant issue, moreover, for many retail and hospitality companies in the sub-region.

## BALANCE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND

ICT training activity is quite limited in a number of sectors:

- More than a third of creative industries firms do not provide their workers with basic ICT training and nearly half do not provide advanced ICT training
- Less than half of professional and financial services firms provide either basic or advanced ICT training
- The situation is particularly critical in the sub-region's engineering sector. Only 30% of firms provide basic ICT training and less than 40% provide advanced ICT training

- Delivery of ICT skills by FE and work based learning providers is focused on introductory and intermediate ICT skills and needs to offer more advanced task and sector specific competence

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

### **To develop major upskilling programmes in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills which address current and forecast needs by**

- Establishing a bi-annual IT Directors forum to debate IT skills issues and identify strategies to increase the supply of skilled personnel
- Developing sector specific packages of support including management development, in-company assessors and Individual and Small Business Learning Accounts
- Increasing scale of delivery in more advanced ICT qualifications
- Expanding the E-Skills pilot, which seeks to integrate NVQ and Vendor qualifications into a single framework which is more cost effective and attractive to SMEs and their employees
- Working with HE/FE to develop level 4 (Foundation Degree) provision which meets the specific needs of managers and technical occupations.

### **To promote the business benefits of comprehensive upskilling of the workforce in ICT skills by**

- Offering flexible, on-line learning and accreditation systems using LearnDirect
- Building relationships between providers and large companies to create networks of support which SMEs can use to access learning in ICT skills

### **To integrate college and provider programmes into the wider package of business support and workforce development by:-**

- Establishing joint Business Link/LSC/provider development groups in each major sector with lead designated colleges
- Supporting the development of new brokerage and advisory functions as integral part of the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence and the New technology Institute.
- Exploring with colleges the scope for collaborative marketing of the collective expertise of the FE network, in partnership with Business Link.
- Piloting the development of a dedicated workforce development adviser role within colleges to support networks of small firms within a common location or geographical area.

# Section 6

# Participation Strategy

## Section 6

### PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

#### STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES AND REMIT

- To promote equality between people from different racial groups, between men and women and between people with a disability and those without – delivered through an Equal Opportunities Action Plan.
- Duty to encourage individuals into learning, especially people unused to learning and the economically inactive, through:-
  - Better information, advice and guidance
  - “First rung” provision
  - Tackling basic skills needs
- Important contribution to local regeneration and neighbourhood renewal, including building capacity in deprived neighbourhoods.
- Partnership with voluntary/community sector

LSC-wide Participation/ Achievement Rates	Local Area Participation/ Achievement Rates	Partners
<b>Young People</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– % GCSE achievement rates</li> <li>– % 16-19 participation rates</li> <li>– % Level 2 and 3 National Targets</li> </ul>	Local benchmarks and targets	Connexions Partnership/ schools/colleges and training providers
<b>Adult Working Age Population</b> <p>(a) <b>Learning and Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– % participation rate</li> <li>– % reduction in basic skills needs</li> <li>– % Level 2 and 3 National Targets</li> </ul> <p>(b) <b>Employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– % unemployment rates</li> <li>– % representation in public service employment</li> </ul>	Local benchmarks and targets	Local area partnerships [colleges, voluntary sector, Adult Education Service] Local regeneration partners Business Link/LSC  Inter-agency Employment Strategy Group; Regeneration Partnerships; local area partnerships

**Local Impact Measures** : to be based on Local Inclusion Plans (see above) using a “register of disadvantaged communities.

## 1. **CONTEXT - DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES AND CLIENT GROUPS**

### **LABOUR MARKET DISADVANTAGE**

#### **Employability Issues**

While there is potential for considerable expansion within the sub-regional economy and significant new job creation, there is a concern that disadvantaged individuals and communities are not sharing fully in the benefits of growth. At the same time, the supply of skilled and experienced workers from employers' 'traditional' recruitment target areas is becoming more limited. As a result, action to overcome the barriers to accessing employment and learning faced by disadvantaged communities is vital.

The key factors that assist individuals in seeking employment and learning opportunities include:

- A good basic education
- A range of vocational skills
- A set of key skills applicable in an employment situation
- Positive outlook and motivation
- Personal circumstances such as care responsibilities and mobility

### **KEY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS**

Many Birmingham and Solihull residents lack these key attributes, notably those from certain groups which have been prioritised for assistance via the European Social Fund at local, regional and national level:

- Ethnic minorities, notably Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African/Caribbean communities
- Women, notably labour market returners and lone parents
- Disaffected young people
- People with disabilities
- The long term unemployed

These groups are not mutually exclusive and are overlapping with individuals suffering from multiple disadvantage. For example, an individual may be from an ethnic minority community, be long term unemployed and be a parent with child care responsibilities.

Nevertheless, each grouping has particular characteristics and faces a range of specific barriers to accessing employment and learning. Many are concentrated in particular areas of the sub-region, on which assistance can be targeted. Our recent research programme, which has included a household survey and targeted research in Regeneration Zones and priority areas, explores these issues further.

## ETHNIC MINORITIES

Certain ethnic minority groups are less likely to be participating in employment and attaining skills and qualifications in Birmingham and Solihull:

- Only 36% of individuals from Bangladeshi communities are in paid employment and the figure is just 40% for those from the Pakistani community. This compares with nearly 80% of the white working age population.
- Nearly half of those unemployed from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities have no previous work experience.
- Individuals from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are most likely to have no formal qualifications.
- A lower proportion of individuals from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black/African Caribbean communities are likely to achieved NVQ level 3 or above, which is increasingly required by employers for a whole range of occupations.
- Individuals from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are most likely to have family or other caring responsibilities which may impact on their ability to access employment and training. Individuals from Black/African Caribbean communities are most likely to be lone parents.

### Key Characteristics of the Sub-region's Ethnic Minority Communities

	White	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Black African/ Caribbean	Other
In Paid Employment	78%	57%	39%	36%	54%	60%
Out of Work with no Previous Work Experience	14%	21%	47%	47%	17%	6%
No Qualifications	27%	23%	49%	28%	23%	29%
Achieved NVQ Level 3 or Above	42%	42%	24%	37%	37%	40%
In Lone Parent Households	5%	1%	2%	0%	17%	11%
With Dependents	41%	67%	63%	57%	41%	36%

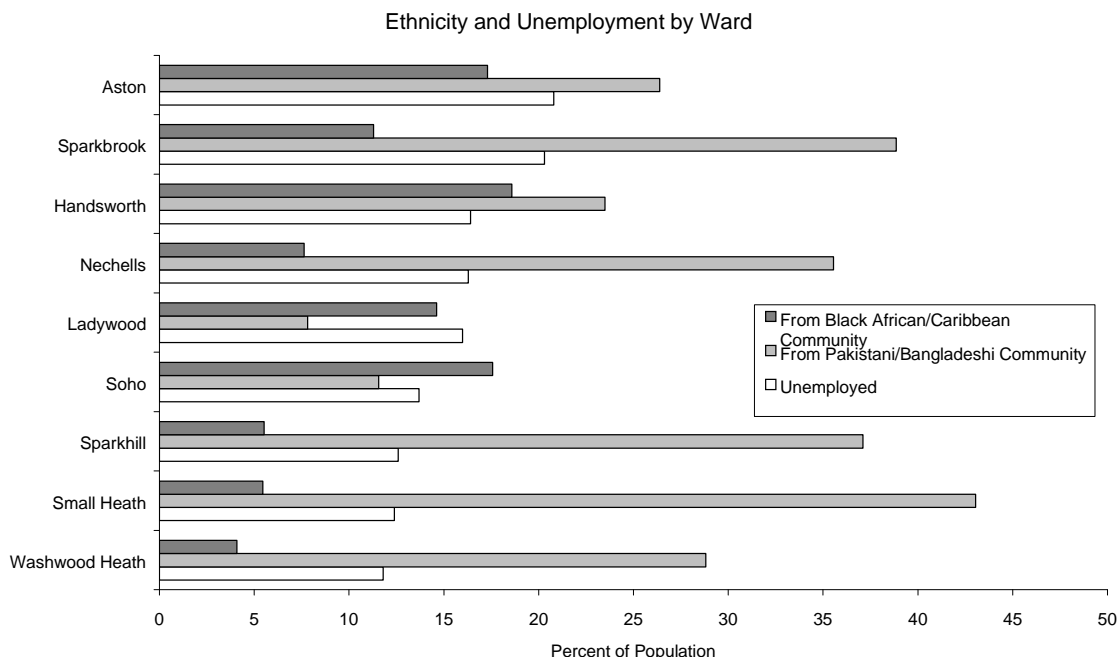
**Source: Birmingham and Solihull Household Survey, 2000**

## ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES AND UNEMPLOYMENT

As a result, many areas where there are concentrations of individuals from disadvantaged ethnic minority communities have unemployment rates far in excess of other parts of the sub-region:

- Unemployment rates are more than 20% in Aston, more than 16% in Handsworth and Ladywood and nearly 14% in Soho ward where Black African and Caribbean communities make up a particularly high proportion of the population.
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are concentrated in Sparkbrook where the unemployment rate is over 20%, Nechells where the rate is more than 16% and Sparkhill, Washwood Heath and Small Heath wards where the rate is in excess of 10%.





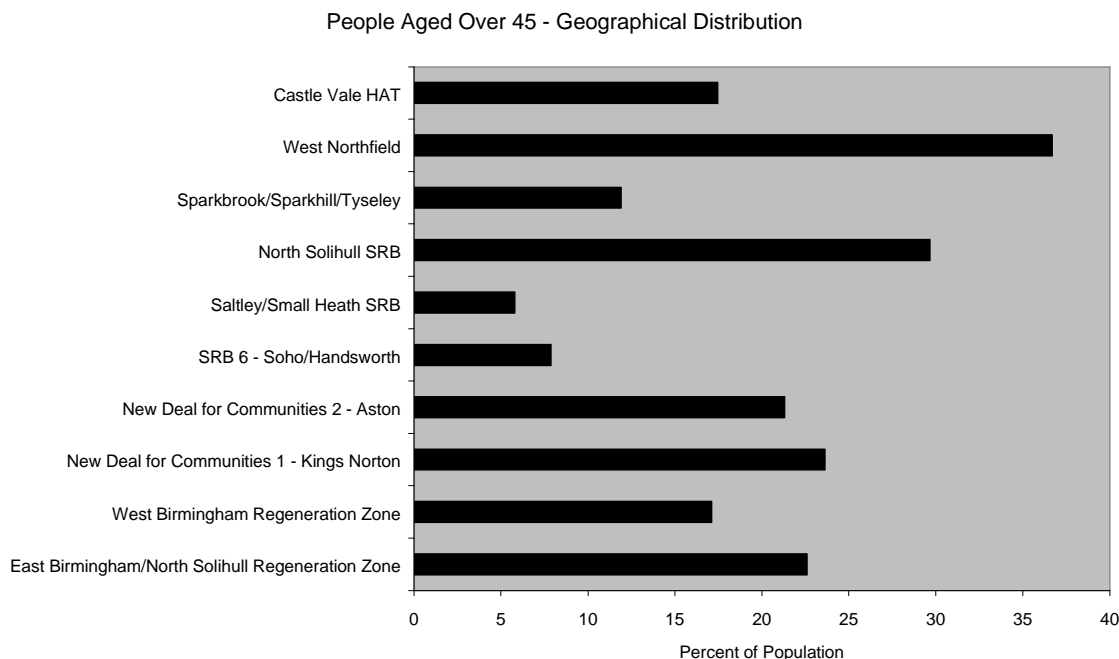
Source: ONS/Birmingham and Solihull LSC

### THE LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED

Many of the long term unemployed have been detached from the world of work for a considerable number of years. While many face discrimination in the labour market on the grounds of age, individuals often over-estimate the extent to which their skills and experience may be relevant to employers. In particular, many over-estimate the extent to which their communication, team working and other core skills match the needs of the labour market. In many cases, this acts as a barrier to participation in learning.

### THE OVER 45s

A significant proportion of the long term unemployed are aged over 45. These individuals are far more likely to be unemployed for 5 years or more and lack familiarity with today's employment market. A significant number are 'economically inactive' and making no efforts to actively seek employment.



Source: ONS/Birmingham and Solihull LSC

The long term unemployed and over 45s' are concentrated in certain parts of the sub-region, notably outer suburbs and 'edge of city' locations. These include the West Northfield regeneration area and the Kings Norton New Deal for Communities area on the south western edge of the city, and areas on the eastern side including the North Solihull SRB area and Castle Vale. These are often a significant distance from major employment centres and isolated by limited public transport links. At the same time, local job opportunities tend to be limited.

### LABOUR MARKET RETURNERS AND LONE PARENTS

Women labour market returners are likely to be better qualified than many other disadvantaged groups. However, many may lack certain core skills required in the workplace notably manual skills. Their childcare responsibilities often make it difficult to work shifts or unsociable hours, which are often a feature of 'entry level' jobs open to disadvantaged groups. In addition many lack mobility, with a reliance on public transport restricting them to employment and learning opportunities close to their homes.

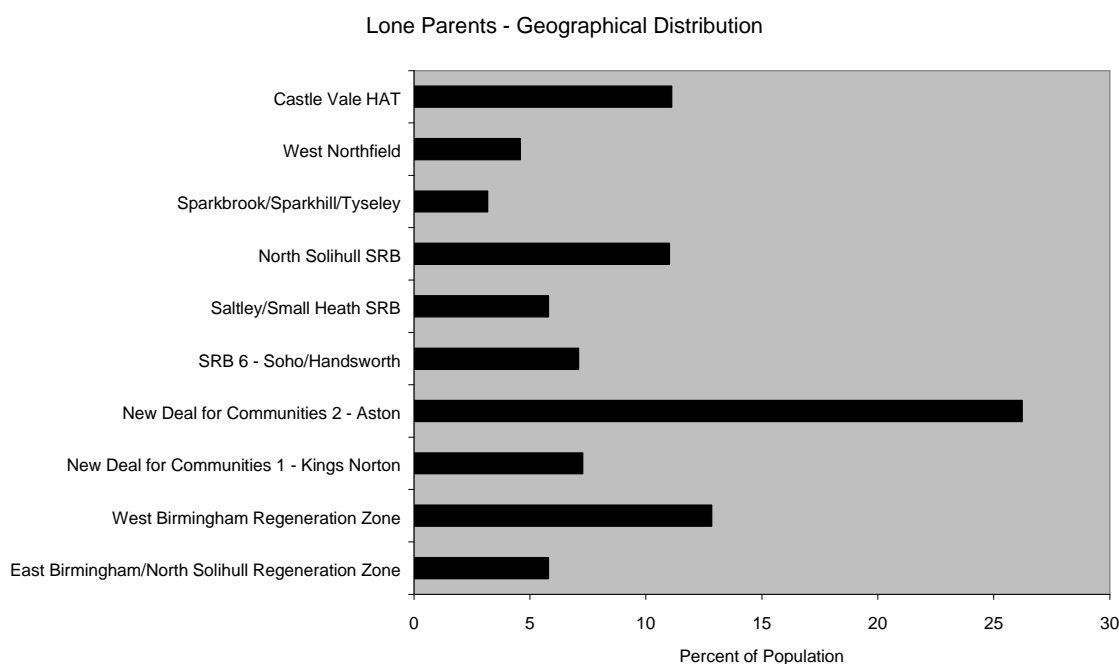
### Characteristics of Disadvantaged Communities in the East Birmingham/North Solihull Regeneration Zone

	No qualifications	Achieved NVQ Level 3 or above	Access to IT
Labour Market Returners	56%	14%	49%
Lone Parents	71%	8%	47%
Disaffected Young people	73%	0%	50%
People with Disabilities	80%	4%	56%
Long Term Unemployed	65%	10%	48%

Source: Regeneration Zone Skills Research Project, 2000

In contrast, a high proportion of lone parents are restricted in their ability to participate in employment and learning due to a lack formal of any formal qualifications. Few have achieved NVQ level 3 or above. Like labour market returners, lone parents also face significant barriers associated with childcare and mobility issues.

There are significant concentrations of lone parents in isolated 'edge of city' locations such as the North Solihull SRB area and Castle Vale. As already mentioned, there are significant numbers of lone parents within Black/African Caribbean communities. As a result, there are also concentrations of lone parents in parts of the inner city, notably in locations such as the Aston New Deal for Communities area.



**Source: 2000 West Midlands Household Survey**

## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

National research suggests that people with disabilities are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. In particular, only 13% of people with mental health problems and 5% of people with moderate or severe learning difficulties are in employment<sup>7</sup>. There are also significant numbers of individuals who have acquired their impairment during the course of their working life and have since experienced a lengthy period of time detached from the labour market and in receipt of benefits. These are typically older workers who face significant problems finding jobs because of ill health and redundant skills<sup>8</sup>.

The evidence, from the Household Survey 2000 for Birmingham and Solihull, suggests that people with disabilities and limiting illness are particularly likely to be disengaged from the education and training system and have no formal qualifications and lack core skills required in the workplace such as manual skills as well as written and oral communication skills. People with disabilities are also likely to lack appropriate work experience and job related

<sup>7</sup> Employers' Forum on Disability

<sup>8</sup> Employment in Europe – Employment and Social Affairs Commission 1997

skills and face barriers associated with a lack of mobility in the labour market and discrimination on the grounds of health.

Those individuals with disabilities who do engage in learning, moreover, tend to have limited aspirations. A review of students in Birmingham and Solihull colleges, showed that in the year to August 2000 10.5% of FE students had a disability or learning difficulty. Many (53%) were aiming for qualifications at basic, entry or NVQ level 1. However the retention rate for these students at 80% is better than that for students as a whole in local colleges.

### **Disaffected Young People**

Young people who have left school with no or low qualifications also tend to lack appropriate work experience and job related skills. They are unlikely to be car owners and lack mobility in the labour market. Significant numbers of young people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, in particular, are in this position and there are significant concentrations of disaffected young people in Sparkbrook, Nechells, Sparkhill, Washwood Heath and Small Heath wards.

#### 4. PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

##### (a) INTER-AGENCY PLANNING AND COORDINATION

To develop a common framework of area/neighbourhood-based planning and delivery to systematically raise participation and achievement and, in particular, to close the gap in learning and employment amongst disadvantaged groups and communities by:-

- Developing strong local partnerships between institutions, training providers and voluntary/community organisations as well as other key local agencies across the whole of the LSC's remit.
- Supporting, through local partnerships, the development of Local Inclusion Plans providing a "bottom-up" framework for coordinated, local action and for prioritising and targeting LSC resources.
- Aligning/integrating, wherever possible, LSC planning and funding and the development of local partnerships with designated regeneration areas and priority areas under the neighbourhood renewal strategy. (This will include agreeing lead responsibilities for colleges for individual regeneration areas).
- Establishing strong inter-agency planning and coordination mechanisms, within the arrangements agreed through the Local Strategic Partnerships (eg Employment Strategy Group).
- Developing, with partners and, in particular, the two local authorities, a register of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and communities in the form of a comparative analysis against a common set of benchmarks and impact measures. (See Local Inclusion Plans). This will be used to ensure the effective targeting of LSC and other partner resources on areas and communities of greatest need.

*(NB: This will form an integral part of the Birmingham Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy).*

##### (b) ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

To establish a coherent, area-based strategy and delivery system for adult and community learning to improve access and exponentially increase participation in learning across the LSC area and especially amongst non-participating groups and communities by:-

- Developing local partnerships across colleges, the Adult Education Service, voluntary/community organisations and other providers with the responsibility for planning, marketing and coordination. This should include a clear strategy for targeting disadvantaged groups and the improved coordination of outreach and support services to remove barriers to participation (see Local Area Participation Plans above).
- Reviewing, through the Birmingham and Solihull Information, Advice and Guidance Consortium and with local partnerships, the availability and appropriateness of information, advice and guidance services at a neighbourhood level.
- Developing across the delivery network and, in particular, with colleges and the Adult Education Service, a common charging and fees policy.

- Establishing clear processes to support and promote progression into further structured and, where appropriate, accredited learning.
- Supporting the involvement and development of voluntary and community organisations either as a conduit for improving access for disadvantaged groups or as learning providers.
- Developing local area “infrastructure” plans to ensure availability of and access to appropriate facilities and support across the area.
- Establishing designated specialist centres to serve the whole area, both in terms of direct provision, special “one-off programmes for students from other local centres and as a resource for staff, curriculum and materials development (eg Brasshouse Languages Centre).

**(c) DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY AND SKILLS OF VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

To develop, in partnership with the Voluntary Sector Forum and Voluntary Services Council, the skills and capacity of a wide range of voluntary and community organisations.

- To deliver a wide range of public and community services.
- To act as a conduit, especially through grass-roots organisations, for engaging disadvantaged groups and communities both in education , training and employment and in the wider regeneration of their communities.
  - By establishing Service Development Groups, comprising networks of existing and prospective service providers, in each major area of public service delivery (eg care; housing; education and training) with resources to support organisational/management development, skills training and the achievement of quality standards required by purchasing/contracting organisations.
  - Providing professional development programmes for para-professionals and managers to progress into “mainstream” professional employment.
  - Establishing, through the Birmingham Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and in partnership with a wide range of public service agencies a substantial programme of secondment, work experience, work shadowing and exchange for people employed in the voluntary sector.
  - Providing a package of support for grass roots community-based organisations in terms of management development and training and supporting their organisational development.
  - Integrating the support for training available through providers, especially colleges, into the package of capacity building.
  - Pooling funds from a variety of sources (eg ESF co-financing; LSC Local Initiative Fund; SRB; Neighbourhood Renewal Fund; Community Champions Fund etc) to support all the above.

**(d) PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

To undertake, in partnership with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies and providers, a comprehensive review of the availability and appropriateness of learning provision and support services for people with disabilities and learning difficulties. This will include – working with individual specialist agencies and client groups to review the services against the needs of people with particular disabilities.

- A review of physical access to ensure that all LSC providers, meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- A review of transport.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the current working arrangements between institutions/providers and agencies providing support services.
- The additional support needs of individual groups and their availability across the education and training network and in the workplace.

The outcome of the review will be a strategy covering all aspects of provision and support services for public consultation.

**(e) REGENERATING COMMUNITIES****POLICY CONTEXT****Neighbourhood Renewal**

The Government's vision for its strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal is that within 10 to 20 years no-one should be disadvantaged by where they live. This is reflected in the following long term goals:

- To have lower worklessness; less crime; better skills and better housing and physical environment in all the poorest neighbourhoods;
- To narrow the gap on these measures between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.

The strategy focuses on three elements:-

- New policies; funding and targets to tackle problems such as unemployment, crime and poor services;
- Effective drivers of change at local and community level; and
- National leadership and support

*A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal, Social Exclusion Unit © HMSO 2001*

In order to make this happen public agencies, partnerships and the private sector, will need to work effectively together and actively involve community organisations and residents in the design, planning and implementation of services in order to the vision into reality.

**Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action**

The framework has been in development since October 2000 through a joint approach by the Department for Education and Employment, Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions and the Department for Trade and Industry. Its purpose is to develop a strategic approach to the labour market at a regional level by bringing together plans for employment and skills and integrating them into economic development strategies.

Within the Birmingham and Solihull area, this type of approach has already been in discussion given the availability of new employment opportunities in the city centre, the airport and in Solihull. The implication for many people is that for new jobs they will have to travel some way beyond their neighbourhoods. The framework also builds on existing ESF Regional Development Plans by helping to inform the targeting of programmes through the research and collation of data to better inform the allocation of resources to support priority measures to combat unemployment.

**OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK****Inter-Agency Planning and Co-Ordination**

The Government's strategy highlights the need to understand that working in isolation over a specific activity will not make the kind of difference required to raise a community or neighbourhood out of the level of deprivation it currently experiences. This requires a level of cross-agency working that goes way beyond what has been achieved to date. Fundamentally, it means local agencies acting as the co-ordinating agents for service delivery with a more prominent role in the design, commissioning and implementation for residents and



communities working through local area partnerships, neighbourhood forums, ward sub-committees etc.

For this to be effectively managed and delivered, agencies like the Learning and Skills Council must set out the operational framework and processes to facilitate the greater engagement of local communities.

### **City Strategic Partnership**

The City Strategic Partnership for Birmingham has been established in response to the Local Government Act (2000) requirement for local authorities to produce community strategies, and establish strategic partnerships which would share responsibility for a range of initiatives established by the Act.

Birmingham and Solihull LSC is an active member of the CSP and the local partnership in Solihull and is working with partners to support the City Council in preparing a community strategy by March 2002. Our own plans for area partnerships and local co-ordination and planning of resources and provision will provide an important link into the strategy through the identification of issues and local priorities for action. If the development of the strategy and the processes to co-ordinate and implement it can be effectively established and resourced, the strategy offers the opportunity to connect all strategic planning processes as well as providing cross-sectoral approaches to addressing themes and issues that go beyond administrative boundaries.

### **Birmingham Employment Partnership**

With the employment opportunities available in Birmingham over the next 5 to 10 years it is critical for partners to work together to agree and implement a coherent plan that sets out clear roles and responsibilities for all partners. The role of the Birmingham Employment Partnership is to act as a strategic partnership overseeing the direction and delivery of the plethora of employment initiatives.

This will be achieved through a focus on a demand-led approach, the proper engagement of businesses, clear planning and provision of learning opportunities and skills development and the direct involvement of communities and excluded groups through those organisations best placed to reach them.

The core objective of linking local people to local jobs cannot be achieved in isolation. Work at Touchwood was successful because it was carried out in partnership. This will be continued at Eastside. The partnership approach is at the core of our economic development activity. The recruitment and training hub at Eastside will be delivered, for example, in collaboration with Birmingham City Council, the Employment Service and Pertemps.

This inter-agency approach allows the delivery of learning and skills provision to be aligned with the objectives of local companies, other public agencies and the voluntary sector. We are committed to working through these partnerships to ensure there is a seamless approach offering high quality services tailored to meet the specific needs of deprived neighbourhoods and employers.

## (f) REGENERATION AREAS

### Regeneration Zones

Advantage West Midlands has designated two Regeneration Zones in Birmingham and Solihull:

- East Birmingham and North Solihull
- North West Birmingham and South Black Country

They have been selected on a need versus opportunity equation.

The areas are characterised by wards of high unemployment and educational underachievement adjacent to areas of significant job growth. At the core of the Regeneration Zones is the objective of meeting the employment and skill needs of target communities in these wards by increasing access and participation in the employment opportunities in the Zones such as the Eastside regeneration area Eastside or in areas adjacent like the Touchwood court shopping Centre in Solihull.

Labour market disadvantage is often associated with poor learning achievement. In the East Birmingham and North Solihull Regeneration Zone, progress towards the achievement of National Learning Targets has been particularly limited. Less than 30% of the local labour force had achieved NVQ level 3 or above in 1998 which compares with 40% in Birmingham and Solihull. 16% had achieved NVQ level 4, which compares with 26% in Birmingham and Solihull. More than 40% indicated that they had no formal qualifications. Within the Regeneration Zones, therefore, there is a need to integrate learning and skills into the development of all activity.

### Strategic Objectives

Within the Regeneration Zones there are a number of thematic areas. The LSC co-ordinates the Learning and Access to Jobs pillar and with its partners has prepared an Action Plan to direct activity within the Zones. The core objectives of this Plan are:

- To connect local residents to local jobs
- To invest in local communities
- To address barriers to employment
- To provide residents with the diverse range of skills required to take up new and existing employment opportunities.

The zone will support projects that sustain these core objectives by:

- Facilitating access to all zone residents to employment and training
- Supporting progression in training and employment
- Supporting appropriate intervention in learning or employment to support the individual
- Increased and improved communication with zone residents of learning and employment opportunities
- Developing and harnessing individual's aspiration to achieve their skills and employment goals
- Support engagement from disadvantaged zone residents in the opportunities provided by developments in the zone

## **The Single Regeneration Budget**

Single Regeneration Budget programmes were established in 1994 with the most deprived communities and excluded groups benefiting from the success of local partnerships in accessing funding from central government to develop and deliver local programmes covering health, housing, employment, education, community development and business support. Alongside these area-based initiatives, a number of thematic programmes have also secured funds. These include Core Skills, Birmingham CAN and the Engineering and Manufacturing partnership.

### **SRB1 – Small Heath**

This programme has formally ended. The forward strategy and issues to be addressed by the local Community Forum have been identified through a household survey of the area. The findings are summarised as follows :-

- Over 50% of the population in the Washwood Heath, Nechells and Small Heath area come from black and minority ethnic populations
- Only 2 in 5 households are in employment
- Over 25% of households are pensioner households

In relation to education and training the priorities are :-

- Greater local access to ICT for local residents due to the low proportion of households that do have a pc
- A demand for ICT training and customised programmes leading to employment
- Better provision and access to education and training locally with strategies to engage and build the confidence of residents
- More “on the job” training from local employers

### **SRB2 – Sparkhill, Sparkbrook and Tyseley**

With the programme approaching its final year of operation, the local area partnership is continuing to focus its activities in addressing the structural issues of unemployment in the area. The evaluation study for the programme highlighted the following :-

- Almost 65% of the area's population comes from black and minority ethnic population with Pakistani households being the largest group
- That the number of employees in employment in Sparkbrook and Sparkhill has actually declined by 4.5% compared to a citywide increase of 3%.
- New business survival rates in the area are low compared to citywide rates

Issues required to address these problems include :-

- Employment and training activities to be linked into the macro economic agenda to have a greater impact on structural unemployment
- To address the continuing high levels of unemployment in Birmingham through closer links between training, unemployed residents and actual job opportunities
- Developing closer links with local businesses to safeguard existing jobs

## **SRB 5 – HART**

Handsworth Area Regeneration Trust has developed from a partnership of five housing associations into a board comprising individuals, community groups and agencies overseeing the delivery of regeneration activities in the Soho, Handsworth, Sandwell, Aston and Ladywood wards. The priorities for the partnership are to :-

- Develop neighbourhood participation with the SRB6 partnership
- Supporting local businesses
- Developing employment opportunities and access to jobs
- Raising the skills and achievement of young people and their communities

Action points highlighted at local conferences and networking meetings in recent years have focussed on :-

- Creating an environment for local businesses to develop and implement skills that support the training and learning of residents
- Working with businesses to develop ways of analyse their staffing needs
- Engaging with parents and pupils to promote family centred approaches to learning
- Creating partnerships between statutory agencies, employers and training providers to develop specific actions to address particular gaps in the employment and skills market, thereby raising the chances of individuals securing jobs linked to training.

## **SRB5 – Family Support**

This programme will target resources in the areas of Aston, Nechells, Shard End and Kitts Green, Wyrley Birch and Stockland Green, West Northfield and Druids Heath. The programme seeks to work with local people and agencies to develop programmes of activities that are relevant to the needs of individual areas. Local Learning Centres will be developed as a focus for the delivery of services linked to health, education, family support and training.

## **SRB6 – North West Birmingham**

This programme covers a wider area across Handsworth, Aston and Lozells. It is approaching the mid-point of the programme and has struggled to meet the delivery targets agreed when the programme was approved. Over 70% of the population is from black and minority ethnic households with the largest group being of Indian origin. The area is also characterised by above average levels of unemployment. A mapping exercise of education and training provision produced 140 responses, which highlighted in particular that:-

- providers in the SRB6 area tended to offer entry level and level 1 learning
- providers outside the area attracting SRB6 residents tended to offer NVQ Level 2 and 3 provision
- many of the providers surveyed lack accreditation and quality kitemarks and appropriate management systems
- there is little or no vocational training provision in areas such as construction and engineering,
- training opportunities for the over 45's age group are very limited

The responses to these issues were identified as being the need to :-

- Develop a local training providers network to address, lobby and plan for the provision of learning opportunities that are currently not available
- Develop a quality assurance system
- Ongoing mapping and updating of provide provision

Other priorities identified at a conference for residents, agencies and local organisations were :-

- Matching local people into local jobs
- Developing culturally sensitive services and strengthening provision and support for secondary school pupils

### **New Deal for Communities (NDfC)**

NDfC is a Central Government regeneration initiative to support intensive regeneration of some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the country through a 10-year programme.

#### **New Deal for Communities Round 1 – Kings Norton**

Located on the southern edge of the city and comprising the three estates of Pool Farm, Primrose and the Fold. The area displays all the characteristics of isolation and lack of access to businesses and services traditionally experienced by outer estates. Unlike the inner city wards, the area is a predominantly white working class community.

The programme is leading on the development of a model of good practice on neighbourhood management as a means of addressing the issues of isolation experienced by outer estates. The challenges the residents face as identified through the thematic groups includes :-

- Provision of outreach services to give personal advice and, guidance and build confidence of individuals interested in returning to learning
- The need for basic skills provision as a first step
- Development of transitional support for students leaving school to assist in progression into FE and or employment
- Provision of adequate and affordable childcare to remove some of the barriers to employment

#### **New Deal for Communities Round 2 – Aston Pride 2001 – 2011**

The community led partnership Aston Pride has been awarded £54m for round 2 NDfC funding for a 10-year programme. The local population comprises :-

- 70% of the population from black and minority ethnic groups
- a growing Bangladeshi population with 25% of pupils attending local primary schools
- A male unemployment rate of 31% in 2000. compared to a citywide average of 12%
- Below average performance at Key Stage 2 level 4 and achievement of 5 GCSEs (A to C grades)

Identified priorities to address some of these problems include :-

- Developing closer working relationships with major employers in the area and along the key arterial routes
- Establishing women focussed programmes to tackle isolation and offer opportunities through informal learning in appropriate settings
- Targeting young people not engaged in education, employment and training

## **Neighbourhood Management**

### **Castle Vale Housing Action Trust (CVHAT)**

The HAT as it is more commonly known was established in 1993 to improve housing and living conditions on a 1960's estate located 6 miles north of east of Birmingham, that is home to a population approaching 10,000.

The HAT is due to end its 12-year physical and social regeneration programme for the Castle Vale area in 2005 and as a result is preparing its forward strategy. This includes setting up a number of successor bodies including a community housing association, a local development trust, a local community fund and credit union.

The priorities here are to ensure that the Local Learning and Skills Council is engaged in the decision making processes with the current HAT board and with its successor organisations to inform and plan for the future development and provision of opportunities for training and employment that the Trust has successfully put in place.

### **Optima Housing**

Birmingham City Council has established a housing association called Optima Community Housing to take ownership of the proposed transfer of council dwellings to support the regeneration of a number of estates. The proposed transfer (if successful) provides opportunities for developing employment and training that could be linked to the new organisation's maintenance and improvement programmes.

### **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund**

This is a national programme running from 2001 – 4 with Birmingham receiving an allocation of just under £50 million. It seeks to support local partnerships in changing the way in which public services operate to ensure that the combined resources of the public, private and voluntary sector can have the maximum impact in tackling social exclusion.

With Birmingham's approach for allocating funds to individual wards and to priority programme areas such as access to learning and employment routes for local people, the Learning and Skills Council will seek to support the City Council and other partners at a strategic and operational level. Given that the an essential element of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is the participation of local communities in setting priorities for service improvement, the Learning and Skills Council will seek to complement the processes at a local level to ensure that area planning processes are integrated with ward priorities and resident concerns.

## **Thematic Programmes**

### **SRB2 – Core Skills**

Through the Core Skills Partnership, major inroads are being made across the city into addressing problems of low achievement among students, raising the literacy and numeracy levels among adults, supporting employers in developing the basic skills needs of their workforce as well as developing the capacity of community organisations as champions for promoting and delivering core skills in the community.

### **SRB 4 – Community Safety**

Activities involve working with school and youth groups and with a range of community and voluntary organisations; to raise awareness of Fire and Police services, to encourage young

people to become young fire fighters, to join the Princes Trust Volunteers programme or to become special police officers. The aim is to increase recruitment, retention and promotion of minority ethnic entrants to the services.

Ensuring the development of partnerships and progression routes for individuals benefiting from this programme in North-West Birmingham is a priority for the Learning and Skills Council. The good work of community organisations and individuals within the communities needs to be developed further to ensure that once young people are involved diversionary activities and engaged in learning they can have the support needed to move into more formal and accredited levels of learning .

#### **SRB4 – BIRMINGHAM CAN**

Managed by the Birmingham Voluntary service Council, it supports the development and growth of voluntary and community based organisations through a range of training and support activities. The objective is to enhance the quality and delivery of organisational services and structures that the voluntary sector can deliver for the public sector.

This programme is complemented by the Learning and Skills Council's investment through its ESF Co-Financing. The funds will support the voluntary sector in developing workforce development strategies and block purchase, as a sector, the kind of training and management development that is customised to meet requirements of individuals and organisations.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### (i) **To establish mechanisms and processes that will enable local people to access employment opportunities in new developments such as Eastside through**

- Negotiating with developers to identify a critical path for recruitment and employment, working back from the scheduled completion date and identifying the need for specific activities such as outreach activity in deprived areas, delivery of training and preparation for interviews.
- Negotiating service level agreements with regeneration partnerships to co-ordinate local activity to support unemployed residents from deprived communities to access jobs.
- Regeneration partnerships adopting a commissioning approach to the development of employment support and training packages. In return for securing target outputs, partnerships will offer funding to organisations to develop support packages to address barriers to the labour market experienced by unemployed residents.
- An Impact Assessment Study of the employment and training opportunities generated at Eastside. The study will scope a detailed definition of skills and competencies for these opportunities and entry-level standards.
- The establishment of a 'Learning and Recruitment Hub' with partners to match individuals to jobs. The Hub will also provide access to training that will enable applicants to reach the required entry-level standard requirements.
- Use the Hub to support matching of local colleges and their vocational and area specialisms with those, which have expertise in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors.

### (ii) **To implement measures to address structural unemployment in those deprived wards with the consistently highest unemployment rates by :-**

- Applying the FRESA framework through to the Local Access to Employment Groups to develop a multi-track approach to employment and skills development which would address the planning processes associated with major physical developments, large-scale job losses redundancy and allow for a day to day response to recruitment
- Engaging with local businesses through, the Chamber of Commerce/ Business Link and local business networks to offer greater provision of outreach business support services and use of HR planning tools for SMEs to identify recruitment and workforce development issues
- All regeneration programmes having, as a condition of contracting, the commitment from organisations that seek funding to set out measures they will take to involve local people in decision making and enable them to access employment opportunities
- Adopting a public sector compact for reviewing employment practices and the development of pro-active measures to address issues of under-representation in the workforce in line with recommendations made by the Stephen Lawrence Commission for Birmingham.



- Ring-fencing vacant posts for positive action training programmes aimed at tackling under-representation in the workforce in line with the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000).
- Developing bridges into employment from voluntary into public and private sector including cross-sector secondments as an extension of initiatives such as Common Purpose.
- Ensuring that a team of outreach workers operates within the East Birmingham North Solihull Regeneration Zone. Through the outreach programme the team will provide links to community projects that can connect with the hub maintaining the conversion rate of unemployed zone residents into jobs.
- Conducting a review of employers' skill needs in Touchwood to determine an "entry standard" to employment that can be supported by the Hub training strategy. The review will also support individual companies within Touchwood plan their individual training and recruitment strategies

**(iii) To support the development of local adult and community learning provision within regeneration areas to enable learners to progress into accredited learning and skills development by:-**

- Agreeing lead area status for FE colleges to develop local learning networks with community based providers working in partnership with the lead FE institution.
- Supporting the development of local providers to enable them to act as a feeder for attracting local residents into learning at community venues and by offering informal learning opportunities as a means of engagement.
- Supporting local learning networks to build their capacity, gain quality kite marks and fund activities to target promotion and recruitment at excluded and under-participating communities they work with.
- Planning for the provision of learning programmes that were previously not available in the area by developing local providers to a level where they can offer new learning provision to a high standard.
- Conducting an assets review of community based providers to assess the level of investment necessary to raise the standard of provision.

**(iv) To support the development of local community and voluntary sector organisations to deliver services to their communities and customers by :-**

- Using the resources at the disposal of public agencies to develop contracting procedures that enable community and voluntary sector organisations to take move away from annual planning processes to three-year contracting where appropriate.
- Utilising the newly established sector development groups and others to be created as vehicles for forward planning and establishing mechanism for developing and delivering local services.

# Section 7

## Learning Strategy

## Section 7

### LEARNING STRATEGY

**National Target** : 80% 16-18 year olds in structured learning

**Birmingham and Solihull**

Baseline 2001	2002	2003	2004
75.4	76.8	78.4	80

**National Target** : 85% at Level 2 by age 19

**Birmingham and Solihull**

Baseline 2001	2002	2003	2004
78.2	80.5	82.9	85

**National Target** : 55% at Level 3 by age 19

**Birmingham and Solihull (Provisional Targets)**

Baseline 2001	2002	2003	2004
46.8	49.1	51.4	52

**National Target** : Raise literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults

**Birmingham and Solihull**

2001	2002	2003	2004
5,049	10,099	15,418	20,198

#### STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES AND REMIT

##### Funding Learning

- Working closely with schools, colleges and training providers to improve participation, attainment and standards;
- Planning and funding driven by the needs of:-
  - Individual learners
  - Employers and the economy
- Systematic provider review based on achievement and retention.

##### Quality Improvement Strategies

- Action to improve standards based on provider reviews and inspection findings.
- Ensuring the statutory entitlement for 16-19 year olds – driving up participation and achievement

## 1. 14-24 YEAR OLDS

### KEY ISSUES

#### (a) PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING

NATIONAL TARGET: 80% OF 16-18 YEAR OLDS IN LEARNING BY 2004

Proportion of 16 and 17 year olds in full time education and training

	Full Time Education and Training				
	1994/5	1995/6	1996/7	1997/8	1998/9
Birmingham aged 16	66	68	67	68	67
Solihull aged 16	84	81	77	74	80
Birmingham aged 17	51	56	55	56	56
Solihull aged 17	71	68	69	66	63

#### Progress required to reach the target

	Target	Total Needed	Baseline	Additional Qualifiers	Milestones				Annual Rate of Progress
	2004	2004	2000	2004	2001	2002	2003	2004	
No. of qualifiers		41,729	36,727	5002	37,939	39,190	40,484	41,729	
% achievement	80		73.9		75.4	76.8	78.4	80	2%

- The baseline figure represents those young people already participating in education and training through work-based learning, school sixth forms, 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges and further education colleges. The total population base of 16, 17, and 18 year olds in 2000 was 48494. Trends over the last six years indicate that although Solihull has been at or around the national target for 2004 for each of these years there has not been an upward trend. Birmingham while significantly below the 2004 target in each of the last six years has seen participation rates improve each year, although the current rate of increase (around 1% per year) is well below the required annual increase to achieve the national target.
- Ward level information from FE enrolments gives an indication of where efforts could be concentrated although these can be deceptive given that they do not reflect participation other than FE participation. However the progressive gathering of data by the LSC from all sectors about the curriculum offer and travel to study patterns will provide a good basis for analysing participation, drawing up local participation plans, and targeting measures on the areas where they will have most effect.
- Evidence from a wide range of sources including the Social Exclusion Unit indicates that those disengaged from the education and training system between the ages of 14 and 16 require much more flexible provision and support if they are to be re-engaged. This implies work with the voluntary sector, other specialist providers, and the Connexions Service to develop an alternative curriculum and outreach activities.

(b) **ACHIEVEMENT****NATIONAL TARGET 85% OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE LEVEL 2 BY AGE 19****CURRENT GCSE ACHIEVEMENT IN BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL.**

	<b>Birmingham and Solihull</b>		<b>Birmingham</b>		<b>Solihull</b>		<b>England</b>	
	<b>2001</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>5 or more GCSEs (A*-C)</b>	44	43.6	41.2	40.8	55.9	55.1	50	49

**Progress required to meet the level 2 target**

	<b>Target</b>	<b>Total needed</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Additional Qualifiers</b>	<b>Milestones</b>				<b>Annual rate of progress</b>
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	
<b>No. of Qualifiers</b>		12,157	10,857	1300	11,183	11,518	11,864	12,157	
<b>% Achievement</b>	<b>85</b>		<b>75.9</b>		<b>78.2</b>	<b>80.5</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>3%</b>

- GCSE continues to form the majority of level 2 qualifications. Solihull exceeds national average achievement levels for GCSE achievement at 16. Whilst Birmingham's performance is below national average levels it has shown considerable improvements in recent years. Current key stage 2 and key stage 3 performance in Birmingham is showing improvements, which outstrip national averages. These indicators show that it should be possible to achieve the level 2 target by 2004 even though a 3% improvement is required each year if the target is to be met.
- The area-wide inspection has drawn attention to the fact that the curriculum offer, particularly in schools, has limited relevance to labour market requirements, and that there are insufficient links between schools and work-based learning providers. The development of vocational GCSEs, and the requirements of technical certificates as part of work-based learning programmes, should improve this situation. It will be important for the LSC to ensure a co-ordinated approach amongst providers to these developments. The development of a more coherent Level 2 curriculum offer will help to drive up achievements.
- An important issue is the variable achievement rates of males and females in both Birmingham and Solihull and of different minority ethnic groups in Birmingham. Girls are continuing to outperform boys in GCSE by a significant margin. A particular concern is that a smaller proportion of African Caribbean (17%) and Bangladeshi (27%) boys obtained five or more GCSE (grades A-C) in 2001 than in 2000 with the achievement rate of the former being less than half the average rate for boys in the area as a whole. This points to the need for inter institutional and inter-agency strategies to effectively address the problem. In 2001 Indian pupils again performed better than other ethnic groups with 65% of girls securing five or more GCSEs at Grades A-C.
- The Level 2 Achievement Project, which commenced in the autumn of 2000 and continues until the autumn of 2002 has comprised additional funding to enable significant progress in raising Level 2 achievement. Actions are in place with employers, partner agencies, such as careers services, and voluntary sector organisations, colleges and work based learning providers which will produce a further 800 level 2 qualifications in Birmingham and Solihull by the Autumn of 2002. Actions include:-

- Working with voluntary sector organisations and the Connexions Service to identify potential trainees not recruited to programmes such as the Learning Gateway
- Tracking employees who move jobs without completing training
- Identifying employers willing to allow employees already operating at level 2 but without formal qualifications to undergo training, assessment and accreditation
- Identifying young people in temporary jobs without Level 2 qualifications
- Ensuring that young people leaving training for employment have the opportunity to continue their qualification
- Improving pastoral support by colleges and training providers for students at risk of leaving programmes
- Providing extra support and timely assessment to Lifeskills and level 1 students to ensure transition to level 2
- Improving retention rates in colleges and on work based learning programmes through the appointment of specialist staff able to introduce mentoring programmes and other initiatives.

Should the project prove successful there is every likelihood that it will be renewed.

**NATIONAL TARGET: 55% OF THE COHORT TO ACHIEVE LEVEL 3 QUALIFICATIONS BY THE AGE OF 19 BY 2004**

**PROGRESS REQUIRED TO MEET THE LEVEL 3 TARGET**

	Target	Total needed	Baseline	Additional Qualifiers	Milestones				Annual Rate of Progress
	2004	2004	2000	2004	2001	2002	2003	2004	
No. of Qualifiers		7255	6197	1058	6444	6703	6970	7255	
% Achievement	55		48.7		50.1	51.6	53.2	55	3.1%

- The baseline for Birmingham and Solihull is 46.9%. A 4% annual improvement is required if this target is to be met, which represents a major challenge.
- There are issues around the level 3 curriculum in Colleges. The level 3 offer across a broad vocational curriculum has declined in recent years in general FE colleges. Around half of the curriculum offer is now at levels 1 and 2, with progression to level 3 not always possible. Duplication of provision at different institutions does not help in the provision of a viable Level 3 curriculum offer in some vocational areas. This deficit is not redressed through the contribution that colleges make to the provision of advanced modern apprenticeships. Given the vocational facilities they have it is surprising that colleges only provided some 10% of Foundation and Advanced Modern apprenticeship places in Birmingham and Solihull in 2000/2001.
- There is a related issue amongst work based learning providers. The number of small training providers means that progression between foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships is not always possible if trainees wish to remain with the same provider. Achievement on work based learning programmes is also affected by weak framework completion, and poor delivery of key skills, reflected in a number of disappointing inspection reports. There will be significant policy changes following on from the Cassels Report (see below) such as the introduction of exam based key skills programmes, the technical certificate, new delivery mechanisms through employer support agents and programme support agents, and rigorous participation targets. These changes mean that providers will need to enter into collaborative delivery arrangements particularly with colleges, and/or develop their own teaching and training capability and facilities particularly relating to key skills

- Schools with sixth forms and 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges offer a programme heavily biased towards level 3 programmes, mainly GCE A level and AS provision. There are many schools with small 6<sup>th</sup> forms and inevitably small group sizes, which can make it difficult to generate a culture of high aspiration and achievement. It is difficult for such schools to offer a full Curriculum 2000 programme. Improved careers guidance and partnership arrangements with other providers would enable schools operating with small 6<sup>th</sup> forms to broaden their curriculum offer and /or make an alternative curriculum offer available thereby helping to drive up level 3 achievement rates.
- At present there is poor progression from full-time education and training into job specific training through Modern Apprenticeships. This is a logical progression route for many young people and needs to be promoted

**(c) 16-19 REVIEW**

An initial review of 16-19 provision in Birmingham and Solihull was carried out by Terry Melia, former Chief Inspector of the Further Education Funding Council and an interim report\* was published in July 2001. The review was carried out in partnership with the LEAs in Birmingham and Solihull. The purpose of the review was to:

- Inform future LEA and LSC planning processes
- Help meet government policy objectives of raising participation and achievement
- Ensure that all young people could access a broad curriculum

\* The full Interim Report is available on request from Birmingham and Solihull LSC.

- (i) The key conclusions were as follows

**Strategic Issues for Birmingham and Solihull**

- The ageing population
- The change in the ethnic composition of the population;
- Deprivation in many parts of Birmingham and in North Solihull;
- Travel to learn patterns;
- The rising skill levels required of the workforce;
- Tackling educational deprivation/non-participation

**Planning, Organisation and Infrastructure**

- Ensuring a collaborative not a competitive climate.
- The need to rationalise and realign provision:-
  - Small school sixth forms
  - Small training providers
  - Paucity of level 3 vocational provision in many colleges
- The financial stability of some colleges
- Cost effective delivery of the Curriculum 2000 entitlement to all students
- The need for a comprehensive curriculum mapping exercise as a precursor to an integrated plan for the area.
- Releasing the potential “treasure trove” buried in under-utilised accommodation to fund the transformation of post-16 education and training in the area

**Raising Standards and Improving Quality**

- Achievement levels of pupils at the age of 16 years;
- Developing centres of vocational and academic excellence;
- Improving the performance of training providers in the generic aspects of their provision, (e.g. quality assurance, equal opportunities and trainee support, delivery of key skills);
- Improving careers guidance and counselling across the education and training sectors;
- Improving the education building stock.

**(ii) Recommendations from the Interim report of the 16-19 Review**

- A detailed curriculum mapping exercise should be undertaken
- Collaboration between schools and colleges should be developed to enable access for all young people to the full range of curriculum 2000 options
- There needs to be rationalisation of vocational provision offered by both FE colleges and work based learning providers
- A multi-disciplinary Centre of Vocational Excellence run by all the colleges on a federal model should be considered
- The financial weaknesses of some colleges should be addressed
- A review of college building stock should take place
- A separate review of provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities should be carried out
- A Steering Committee should be established to implement the recommendations of the Review advised by a number of working groups for:
  - Curriculum mapping and travel to study issues
  - Estates and accommodation
  - Institutional collaboration
  - Provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
  - Non-participation.

All the issues raised in the conclusions and recommendations of the Interim Report are now being addressed by the Steering Committee which is chaired by Sir Ian Byatt, former director General of OFWAT with the detailed work being carried out by working groups

**(iii) Following the publication of the interim report the LSC together with the two LEAs produced a joint response, which was presented at the first meeting of the 16-19 Review Steering Committee. The key features are as follows:**

- The three organisations all believe that young people should have access to a broad-based, diverse, and progressive curriculum provided through a range of collaborative arrangements within which institutions would be able to specialise in different academic and vocational areas.
- This would require a new approach to organisational structures, which might include:
  - An area based collegiate network of schools linked to a sixth form college or community centre
  - Designated/agreed vocational specialisms for FE colleges within a federal structure
  - A cluster of vocational centres of excellence on a single site based on a federal structure and an integral part of a regional New Technology Institute



- A network of specialist training providers linked to designated specialist FE colleges
- Colleges as the hub of local adult and community learning networks.

Such structures would need to enable institutions to retain their identity and autonomy, but they would become more interdependent as they developed specialisms and became closer to their local areas.

**(d) AREA-WIDE INSPECTION**

The area-wide inspection of Birmingham and Solihull, led by OFSTED was conducted in late 2001 with a report expected in March 2002. Once the report is published the LSC will be required to produce an action plan relating to the report. In order to ensure consistency with the work of the 16-19 Review the action plan will be developed through the collective mechanism of the 16-19 Review Steering Group. This will ensure full involvement of all partners including the LSC, the two LEAs, the Connexions Service, colleges, schools and work-based learning providers.

Initial feedback from area inspection:-

**(i) OfSTED**

- In the past a strategic steer on post-16 education and training has been lacking, however the local LSC has made a strong start. Colleges understand and are committed to the strategic role of the LSC, but schools less so, which is understandable given that their relationship with the local LSC is still in its early stages.
- Some local partnerships are beginning to develop and are working well, but in general there are few links between schools, colleges, and work based learning providers. The main issue for many schools is to ensure the survival of their sixth form.
- Despite the fact that the quality of teaching is often high, retention rates are poor in some school sixth forms, and in particular in subjects such as A Level Mathematics. Recruitment and retention is better in newer subjects such as Sociology and Psychology.
- Educational Maintenance Allowances are generally assisting retention and participation. However it is anomalous that these are available to young people in Birmingham, but not in Solihull.
- There is no strategic approach to progression between levels or to the continuation of some subjects such as science and modern languages. Value added is patchy and is better in the newer subjects.
- There is little understanding in schools of the links between the curriculum offered and the requirements of the local economy. Similarly there is little awareness of the over-capacity in the system. Guidance relating to higher education is good, but guidance relating to vocational education and training and for employment opportunities is poor

**(ii) Adult Learning Inspectorate**

- There is good provision of work-based learning to underprivileged groups with a high proportion of starters having very poor attainment to start with. However there is generally low participation amongst ethnic minority groups.

There are a high number of small providers with less than 20 trainees. Some provision has inflexible start dates. In common with national patterns framework completion rates are poor in modern apprenticeships. Most ethnic minority trainees are on NVQ programmes rather than full apprenticeships.

- Management of training is generally good with clear targets being set. There is a good range of modern apprenticeship programmes with additional qualifications available, but some geographical areas are less well served than others. Teaching and learning on WBL programmes is satisfactory or better. Training is well planned, structured, and resourced, but staff qualifications could be better, and key skills assessment is inadequate. Mentoring is widespread and there are frequent assessment opportunities in the workplace, but classroom learning is not always effectively measured
- There are generally good levels of support and guidance, but retention is poor in some cases, and initial assessment could be improved. Induction is generally effective and well managed, but trainee reviews are insufficiently robust. There have been some helpful initiatives to inform young people about provision, but there remains a poor image of WBL amongst some young people.
- A strong lead is provided by the LSC with a helpful pattern of meetings. Collaborative work is encouraged by the LSC, and provider performance review is well managed. There is a highly structured and well organised process for strategic planning but communications between providers needs to be improved. There is good use of local labour market information to inform planning, and WBL providers are represented on all key LSC planning groups.

#### **(e) EMERGING 14-19 POLICY**

The LSC approach to collaborative arrangements between schools colleges and work based learning providers fits well with emerging government policy. The government is promoting a 14-19 continuum in order to motivate young people in schools and to provide vocational routes towards higher education. In order to meet government objectives by providing a full range of curriculum opportunities it will be necessary for schools and colleges to work together in an innovative way through different organisational models and forms of collaboration.

##### **(i) The Cassels Report**

The report of the Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Committee (The Cassels Committee) will have an important effect on the provision of work based learning in the coming years. The Committee was set up to advise on future strategy for the development, promotion, and delivery of Modern Apprenticeships. Its main findings are:

- The LSC should be responsible for developing and delivering modern apprenticeships through a national framework, which will strengthen the basic relationship between employer and apprentice. The framework would include a probation period of 8 weeks, an upper age limit of 19 for foundation modern apprenticeships, key skills in number and communication at foundation level, minimum durations of one year for FMAs and two years for AMAs, an accelerated option for AMAs for those over 18s who already have the relevant key skills. The Committee supported government reforms to build the content of apprenticeship frameworks, particularly the introduction of technical certificates, which should form links with HE courses.

- The LSC should develop the provider structure to make roles and responsibilities clearer. The LSC should register approved apprenticeship agents who will provide services to employers and organise apprenticeship agreements and on the job experience for young people.
- The committee set targets of 35% of young people progressing through apprenticeships each year by 2010 and 28% by 2004, along with a basic entitlement to a modern apprenticeship place for young people aged 16-17 who have 5 GCSEs (Grades A-G) including Maths and English
- To boost participation the committee recommended that factual information on modern apprenticeships should be improved, that there should be a national marketing campaign, and that there should be widespread celebration of success including the recognition of participating employers.
- The committee also recommended that a new programme called 'Entry to Employment' should be established for young people not yet ready to enter apprenticeships, that NVQ training should be allowed to continue for a limited period, and that the LSC should meet the assessment costs of NVQs at level 2 and above of employers who do not wish to allow their employees to undertake the full apprenticeship framework.

(ii) **Excellence Challenge**

Excellence Challenge funding has already been approved for Solihull and will shortly be approved for Birmingham. This funding is specifically intended to improve access to higher education for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds whilst maintaining entry standards. However it will contribute to improving achievement rates at Levels 2 and 3. The local LSC will mainly be involved in funding and monitoring Strand 1 of the programme, which aims to encourage collaborative working between schools, FE Colleges and Higher Education Institutions to extend existing programmes encouraging 13-19 year olds to enter higher education. Activities associated with Excellence Challenge will be wide ranging but will include taster programmes, and compact programmes guaranteeing HE places to young people on the achievement of agreed goals.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### i) To improve participation post 16 in Birmingham and Solihull by:

- Developing local area inclusion plans in collaboration with colleges, schools, WBL providers, voluntary agencies and the Connexions service to enable gradual progression towards 100% of the 16-19 cohort being involved in structured education and training within 10 years.
- Working with the Connexions Service, the voluntary sector, and providers to develop an alternative curriculum for disaffected 14-16 year olds aimed at re-engaging them in education and training. This will remove institutional barriers through outreach activities aimed at reaching the hardest to help, will improve the nature of advice and guidance given to young people, and develop more flexible provision which is not always institutionally based.
- Gathering data on travel to study patterns using LSC planning and funding mechanisms to prioritise growth in areas characterised by low participation amongst young people.

### ii) To improve achievement in line with targets by:

- Working with colleges through their planning processes to implement the recommendations in institutional OFSTED/ALI reports.
- Introducing much more systematic target setting on retention and achievement into the planning process, supported by the new local Standards Fund
- Working with the LEA, schools, colleges and HE partners to implement the Excellence Challenge initiative.
- Building on the good practice developed by the level 2 achievement project (see above)
- Developing local benchmarks to encourage schools and colleges to specialise in those elements of the curriculum they are best at. Over time this will improve standards and ensure that curriculum progression is available to level 3 in a broad and diverse range of subjects.
- Publicising the progression route from full-time education into jobs with training via modern apprenticeships in partnership with the Connexions service, colleges, schools, and work-based learning providers with a target number of 1000 young people following this route by 2004.

### (iii) To offer all young people an entitlement to a broad, diverse and progressive curriculum by:

- Introducing a 14-19 Development Fund to support collaborative activities between schools, colleges, and training providers across a broad range of activities aimed at delivering the entitlement to all young people. Activities will include:
  - Joint staff, curriculum, and materials development
  - Secondment of specialist staff to assist developments in partner institutions.
  - Small-scale capital to support improvements in facilities and equipment for use within a partnership.

- Ensuring the viable /efficient delivery of minority subjects through joint delivery
  - Development of joint enrichment and student support programmes
  - Funding of feasibility studies looking at ways of sharing staff between institutions, the management of shared facilities, new forms of governance
  - Development of partnerships between schools, colleges, and work-based learning providers to improve progression from full-time education into modern apprenticeship
  - Secondment/appointment of staff to co-ordinate partnership activities
  - Development groups to improve the integration of key skills into modern apprenticeships and to maximise the completion of frameworks
  - Joint staff and programme development in preparation for the introduction of technical certificates
- Exploring the scope for the development of a Centre of Vocational Excellence in the city centre to increase level 3 vocational provision and to influence the quality of provision throughout the network of colleges and WBL providers. The Centre of Vocational Excellence would form part of the New Technology Institute currently being developed in partnership with the four local HE institutions: University of Birmingham, Aston University, University of Central England, and Newman College.
  - In partnership with schools, colleges, work based learning providers and the Connexions service developing a Birmingham and Solihull guarantee indicating what young people can expect from a post 16 education and training programme wherever this is undertaken in Birmingham and Solihull including curriculum enrichment activities

**(iv) To establish a stable planning and organisational framework for the effective and efficient delivery of 14-19 education and training by:**

- Agreeing key efficiency and performance criteria with colleges, schools, and work-based learning providers
- Establishing a process of collective curriculum review along with cross- institutional staff, curriculum, and materials development
- Encouraging and supporting vocational specialisation in colleges and subject specialisation in schools
- Encouraging local partnerships to ensure quality and breadth of curriculum offer
- Developing local benchmarks to ensure consistency and improvements in the quality of provision.

**(v) To improve support services for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities by:**

- Working in partnership with institutions and the Connexions service to ensure that young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities along with their carers are aware of the options available to them at 16 and the levels of support available in institutions
- As part of the planning responsibilities of the LSC ensuring that appropriate levels of support are available to enable young people with learning difficulties and disabilities to access the full range of curriculum activity, recognising that achievement will often require a longer period of study than for other young people

- Ensuring the sharing of the good practice that exists in a number of institutions.
- Ensuring that transport difficulties are not a barrier to attendance by young people with learning difficulties and disabilities

**(vi) To expand and improve the quality of Modern Apprenticeship training in line with the recommendations of the Cassels Report.**

- Working with WBL providers to audit and develop staff skills and facilities.
- Working with the Business Link to engage SMEs more effectively in Modern Apprenticeship
- Working with institutions and the Connexions Service to ensure improved careers advice and guidance on the full range of opportunities available to young people.
- Working with the Education Business Consortium to ensure that young people are aware of the world of work as a factor in the curriculum choices they make at 14 and at 16 and that local employment opportunities influence the curriculum offered by institutions.
- Setting up sector development groups based on networks of providers and lead colleges to consider:
  - Curriculum and learning materials
  - Delivery mechanisms
  - Staff skills and vocational competence
  - Key skills delivery and integration
  - Expansion targets
- Determining a mechanism to award accredited or preferred provider status, and audit against this framework prior to awarding contracts for Modern Apprenticeship training.

## 2. ADULT LEARNING

Because of the diverse nature of adult learning and its different traditions it is difficult to categorise participants. For planning purposes this plan segments adults participating in learning into two categories:

- **Adult and Community Learning**

Adults participating in Basic Skills, ESOL, and ICT first rung provision taking place on an institutional or an outreach basis organised by colleges voluntary and community organisations or by the LEAs, with encouragement to progress to higher level vocational or academic provision. In addition, adults attending non-vocational programmes organised by the colleges or the LEAs, most of which will have clear progression opportunities to vocational provision, some of which will operate at a single level

- **Individuals in Employment**

Adults attending college programmes, or accessing programmes via Learn Direct, to update or extend their skills to improve their career prospects and options, especially at Level 2 and above.

### KEY ISSUES

1. Because of the previous funding regime competition developed between providers leading to fragmentation, duplication of provision, and a decline in the provision of non-vocational adult education relative to vocational provision which attracted funding more easily
2. With the ending of the artificial divide between accredited and non-accredited adult learning and the funding responsibility now lying with one body, the LSC, there is the opportunity to develop an area-wide strategy encompassing all providers, colleges, the LEAs, and voluntary/community organisations.
3. A partnership approach to the planning of adult and community learning would enable common marketing, common provision of information and guidance, and common fees policies thereby presenting a much clearer curriculum offer to the public. Such an approach could also present a more focused approach to widening participation by targeting disadvantaged groups through local area participation plans.
4. Because of the previous fragmentation of provision, making access to provision difficult, and with associated difficulties of maintaining appropriate levels of quality it would be helpful to establish specialist centres in some curriculum areas which would be a model for delivery and which would provide a resource for staff across the network to access high quality curriculum materials.
5. The LSC recognises the contribution that voluntary and community organisations make to widening participation and would want to provide them with opportunities for organisational development to ensure that the educational programmes they provide are of comparable quality to those elsewhere in the sector
6. There is a great deal of scope for widening participation of adults in learning in Birmingham and Solihull. Findings from the West Midlands Household Survey indicate that 64% of the respondents in Birmingham and Solihull had undertaken some learning over the last three years. However this compares unfavourably with the England average of 74%. Those who already have qualifications are more likely to be involved in learning activity than those with no qualifications.

7. The West Midlands Household Survey also indicates that older age groups (over 55 years of age) are more likely to be non-learners, that people from white ethnic groups are more likely to have higher level qualifications, that people from other ethnic groups are more likely to have no qualifications, and that people with disabilities are more likely to have no qualifications, and are more likely to be non-learners. This gives a clear indication of groups to be targeted via local participation plans.
8. The LSC has been set a target of 52% of adults to have achieved a level 3 qualification by 2004. The achievement of adults in Birmingham and Solihull in 2000 was 41%. This compared favourably with the West Midlands as a whole (39%), but unfavourably with the England average (46%). To reach the target an annual increase in level 3 qualifications of 3.3% is required, which represents an additional 12,306 individuals. In order to achieve this it will also be important to target those without level 2 qualifications to increase the rate of progression
9. In order to reach the Level 3 target, adults in employment funding their own learning is a particularly important group. The West Midlands Household survey has demonstrated that learners are more likely to be in employment than non-learners, and those striving to improve their qualifications are more likely to be employed in managerial, professional, or technical occupations. They are also more likely to be employed in large companies than in small ones.



## **ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING - STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

**To establish a coherent, area-based strategy and delivery system for adult and community learning to improve access and exponentially increase participation in learning across the LSC area and especially amongst non-participating groups and communities by:-**

- Developing local partnerships across colleges, the Adult Education Service, voluntary/community organisations and other providers with the responsibility for planning, marketing and coordination. This should include a clear strategy for targeting disadvantaged groups and the improved coordination of outreach and support services to remove barriers to participation (see Local Area Participation Plans above).
- Reviewing, through the Birmingham and Solihull Information, Advice and Guidance Consortium and with local partnerships, the availability and appropriateness of information, advice and guidance services at a neighbourhood level.
- Developing across the delivery network and, in particular, with colleges and the Adult Education Services, a common charging and fees policy.
- Establishing clear processes to support and promote progression into further structured and, where appropriate, accredited learning.
- Supporting the involvement and development of voluntary and community organisations either as a conduit for improving access for disadvantaged groups or as learning providers.
- Developing local area “infrastructure” plans to ensure availability access to appropriate facilities and support across the area.
- Establishing designated specialist centres to serve the whole area, both in terms of direct provision, special “one-off” programmes for students from other local centres and as a resource for staff, curriculum and materials development (eg Brasshouse Languages Centre).

## **INDIVIDUALS IN EMPLOYMENT**

**To ensure that opportunities exist for those in employment wishing to fund their own training for career development purposes by:**

- Reviewing with colleges the availability of specialised vocational and professional qualifications in those occupations where there is known to be a demand, concentrating particularly on level 3 qualifications but also ensuring that relevant qualifications are available at level 2 with appropriate progression routes.
- Given the complexity of the qualifications structure around vocational education at this level simplifying the curriculum offer as far as possible, in part by enlisting the support of professional and trade associations, and the Business Link, both in ensuring the provision of appropriate qualifications and progression routes, and in publicising them to individuals
- Supporting the development of specific processes within institutions to support this particular group of students and ensure successful course completion. Apart from tutorial support this might include materials availability via an internet web-site, and flexible attendance arrangements
- Supporting the development of progression opportunities to level 4 via professional qualifications and foundation degrees offered on a part-time basis

- Promoting to employers the benefits of supporting employees funding their own learning, if not through the payment of fees then in other ways such as allowing study leave
- Considering ways to target this learning group through specific publicity direct to them in the workplace indicating the opportunities available in their particular specialism. Such publicity would also include the opportunities available via Learn Direct which are also crucial to the development of those in employment (see Workforce Development section)

### 3. BASIC SKILLS

#### KEY ISSUES

##### Scale of Need

- The report 'A Fresh Start for Adults' produced by Sir Claus Moser identified that nationally 7 million, 12% of the adult population, have basic skills needs. Within Birmingham and Solihull the figure for basic skills needs increases to 20%, with basic skills being particularly low in specific wards where unemployment is high e.g. Sparkhill, Aston, Nechells and Ladywood (Source: The Basic Skills Agency – 'Benchmark Information on the Scale of Need in Different Areas of England' 1998)
- The population of Birmingham and Solihull is undergoing significant changes in its ethnic minority composition. In some wards the ethnic minority population is in excess of 50% of the population. Evidence suggests that many, particularly from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds have both English language and numeracy and literacy skills.
- The population is undergoing other demographic changes such as seeing a marked increase in its age profile. There is already evidence, which shows that many of the sub-regions' long term unemployed are older workers, many of whom lack the basic skills necessary to achieve formal qualifications.
- Basic skills and language needs range from people who encounter very severe difficulties through to those individuals who require some minimal support in order to develop their skills to the new basic skills level 2.
- Basic skills research highlights issues about motivating new learners to attend classes and also identified the need to develop the capacity and quality of 'grass roots' organisations from the community and voluntary sector to delivery quality basic skills.

##### Impact of poor basic skills and language

- National data highlights that people with inadequate literacy skills could earn up to 11% less than others, while people with inadequate numeracy skills earn on average 6%-7% less. On average people with basic skills needs will have spend three years less in full time employment compared with those whose skills are better.
- Evidence highlights the 'intergenerational' cycle of poor basic skills, with parents' poor basic skills resulting in low levels of basic skills within their children. One reason for people wanting to improve their own basic skills is in order to help children with their school work.
- Poor basic skills affects the ability of an individual to participate within the their community. National evidence highlights that people with low levels of basic skills are less likely to vote. Recent developments regarding Neighbourhood renewal and devolved power to communities is likely to mean that those without basic skills are less likely to participate therefore facing continued social exclusion.
- Basic Skills Agency research 'Use it or Lose it' highlighted that individuals without basic skills at level two had insufficiently developed skills and as such increased likelihood of losing those skills through lack of use.

- Relatively few jobs can be undertaken without competence in the basic skills, particularly in reading and oral communication. The Institute of Employment Research, 'Projections of Occupations and Qualifications' identified that businesses look firstly for effective oral communication skills, followed by competence in numeracy, reading skills and writing.
- Nationally poor basic skills problems cost industry billions. The Basic Skills Agency using Gallup research figures identified that on average each year in a company employing over 50 staff there was an estimated loss of £165,530.

### **Future Demands for basic skills**

- Technological advances resulting in the use of the Internet and e-mail have increased the demand for higher reading and writing skills. Failure to develop such skills could disadvantage individuals as technology becomes increasingly important in every day life.
- There is evidence of a growing professionalism of jobs previously regarded as lower level, reliant on manual ability and needing fewer qualifications. Examples of this are evident in the Health and Social Care sectors in which the growth of the para-professional roles has brought with it greater demand for skills associated with report writing, reading of instructions, measuring and communicating with others.
- In order to establish a greater understanding of employers' needs, Birmingham and Solihull LSC has commissioned a work related Basic Skills Survey. This will seek to identify the current and future work related basic skills needs for specific job functions across the following vocational sectors:-
  - Health and Care
  - Tourism, Leisure and Creative Studies
  - Engineering and Manufacturing
  - Construction/Transport
  - Professional and Financial
  - Retail
  - Media and Arts
  - Public

In addition particular attention will be given to ethnic minority businesses and the skill needs of second language speakers working within businesses. In order to access these businesses, links will be made with local specialist organisations such as the Institute of Asian Businesses and the Association of Black Businesses.

- The workplace is continually changing to keep up with new technology, improvements in products, services and the growing demands of customers. To meet the challenge of this changing environment, employers need to make greater demands on the skills, particularly the underpinning basic skills of their employees.
- Growth in the knowledge economy will demand higher levels of skills, including the underpinning basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening and numbers.

### **The Development of Basic Skills and ESOL in Birmingham and Solihull**

- For the last six years Birmingham has benefited from the establishment of a Birmingham Core Skills Development Partnership. This was formed following the successful bid to Single Regeneration Budget round 2. The Partnership is a wider strategic and operating mechanism between key partners within Birmingham and

exists to ensure levels of literacy, numeracy and IT skills in Birmingham increase to exceed national targets.

- The then Birmingham Training and Enterprise Council was a founding partner of the Birmingham Core Skills Development Partnership. At the time of the Partnership formation the borough of Solihull came under the remit of central TEC. Despite changes that resulted in Solihull coming under the remit of Birmingham TEC the Core Skills Partnership was unable to widen its remit in order to extend its activities into the Borough. Consequently Solihull has been unable to enjoy the benefits of the Partnership and its funding resource. Given Birmingham and Solihull LSC's clear remit for basic skills, the development of basic skills activities within the Borough is a major aim.
- The infrastructure to strategically develop basic skills learning and achievement currently exists. The LSC remit on basic skills strengthens the opportunity to build upon successful work achieved by the Partnership.
- The involvement in the Birmingham Core Skills Development Partnership has resulted in the development of:
  - Local organisations to deliver basic skills within the workplace leading employees upskilled.
  - A workplace basic skills package which links directly to the menu of workplace support and which has been used by both Business Link and LSC to assist the development of business competitiveness.
  - Key business intermediaries in the 'brokerage role' supported by the integration of basic skills promotion/referral within the LSC and Business Link IIP Advisor role.
  - Basic skills developments within the voluntary and community sector capacity building for the benefit of voluntary sector employees/volunteers and their clients.
  - The Learning Advisor role as a key intermediary to develop the quality and capacity of the voluntary and community sector.
  - Targeted outreach as part of the Connexions strategy in order to engage disadvantaged and socially excluded young people into basic skills learning.
  - Whole city plan which has resulted in both joined up thinking and action to benefit of Birmingham residents and economic growth
  - Basic skills materials to support basic skills learning for both young people from yr10/11 through to employees within the workplace.
  - ESOL Diagnostic assessment materials which have been used to inform the development of national ESOL Assessment materials.
  - Aide Memoire to assist the pre-screening process for potential basic skills and ESOL needs.
  - Identification of resource boxes targeting literacy, numeracy, ESOL and ICT for use by basic skills practitioners and by employers/ Trade Union Learning Reps.
  - Provider staff expertise in their own key skills through achievement of the Key Skills Deliverers Award by 70 Provider staff
  - Skills of 300 frontline staff to recognise basic skills.
- Whilst recognising the achievements to date of the Partnership, Birmingham and Solihull LSC will seek to play its role in taking forward agreed activities that are believed will make a further impact on basic skills delivery and achievement: -
  - Extending existing activities through linkages with Health, Housing and Youth Offending Services agendas.

- Linking Adult Basic Skills with the Neighbourhood Renewal agenda.
- Incorporating Basic Skills in the 14-19 Education and Training agenda.
- Continued work to raise basic skills levels of people in work.
- Enabling the effective use of information and communication technology to support basic skills learning.
- Enhancing the use of Learning Champions/key intermediaries to raise basic skill awareness and support basic skill infrastructure development.
- The further development of learning centres/learning points to access new learners and delivery of new ways of developing basic skills.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**Local Targets: 20,198 new learners aged 16 plus participating and achieving in basic skills (literacy, numeracy and language) learning up to level two against the new basic skills standards by 2004**

**(i) To reduce progressively the number of adults with basic skills and language needs which act as a barrier to their participation in education, training and employment by: -**

- Identifying current number of adult learners involved in basic skills and their achievement/ progression rates
- Benchmarking current participation and achievement across the existing provider network and a range of different delivery contexts (eg Adult and Community Learning, Workplace basic Skills, Vocational Training)
- Promoting basic skills learning opportunities to all potential basic skills learners, particularly targeting adults as identified within 'Skills for Life – National Strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy'
- Developing a capacity building programme for existing and new providers to support the expansion of basic skills provision
- Integrating basic skills into other learning opportunities
- Increase the volume of intensive basic skills provision targeting key client groups in line with Skills for Life – National Strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy.
- Developing the use of ICT as a tool for basic skills delivery

**(ii) To increase participation and achievement of young people in basic skills and language learning particularly targeting underrepresented groups by:**

- Incorporating basic skills and language into the 13 -19 education and training agenda
- Integrating basic skills and language into existing provision targeting young people.
- Increasing the use of intensive basic skills provision targeting young people
- Local promotional campaign linked to the National campaign 'Get On' targeting young people
- Developing building programme for existing and new providers to support the expansion of basic skills and language provision
- Developing the use of ICT as a tool for basic skills delivery.

**(iii) To increase participation, achievement and progression in language learning by ethnic minority groups targeting those individuals for whom English is a second language by:**

- Identifying current number of second language learners involved in basic skills and their achievement/ progression rates
- Benchmarking current participation and achievement across the existing provider network and a range of different delivery contexts (eg Adult and Community Learning, Workplace basic Skills, Vocational Training)
- Promotion of language learning opportunities targeting specific community groups as part of a local campaign to support the national 'Get On' campaign
- Increase the amount of basic skills and language learning targeting specific community groups.
- Targeted work with Asian businesses to develop language skills of second language speaking ethnic minority employees.
- Developing programme of quality development and capacity building for existing and new providers with specific focus on second language learning.
- Identify and disseminate good practice on language learning.

**(iv) To work with employers across all sectors and sizes of business to improve their employees' work related basic skills and language competence and contribute to the skills and productivity by: -**

- Integration of workplace basic skills training into the wider menu of business support and workforce development available through the Business Link/LSC
- Providing targeted support for ethnic minority run businesses and employees
- Reviewing work related basic skills provision against current/future occupational and sectoral requirements
- Improving employer awareness of the business need for workplace basic skills
- Developing the brokerage role of key business intermediaries in promoting basic skills.

**(v) Enhance the skills levels of staff and key intermediaries in order to build capacity and improve quality of basic skills and language learning by:**

- Identifying the number of basic skills tutors and support staff including current skills levels.
- Developing a staff development plan targeting tutors and key intermediaries, which is linked to the Common Inspection Framework.
- Embedding the use of the new basic skills standards and qualifications within all basic skills delivery.



- Enhancing staff expertise through achievement of national qualifications and targeted staff training
- Developing capacity building programme for existing and new providers to support the expansion of basic skills and language provision
- Improving quality of providers through provision of basic skills teaching resources.

#### 4. PARTNERSHIP WITH HIGHER EDUCATION

##### KEY ISSUES

1. The three main HE institutions in Birmingham all work with FE institutions to some extent in part to widen participation in HE amongst young people and adults. An analysis of applicants to the local HE institutions shows that The University of Birmingham and Aston University attract mainly 17-19 year old applicants (85% of applications) while the University of Central England and Newman College attract students with a more mixed age profile with only 63 % being aged 17-19.
2. In 2000 43.3% of HE applicants in the West Midlands applied to go to an HE establishment in their home region and while The University of Birmingham and Aston University tended to attract students from further a field, 65% of the student body at UCE was made up of local people. UCE is the most socially inclusive of the local universities with 39% of students coming from the families with no family tradition of participation in higher education compared with 29% at Aston and 17% at Birmingham. 34% of the students at UCE are from minority ethnic groups. Progression into employment at all three institutions is high at over 95%
3. While only responsible for funding the level 3 work in local HE institutions the LSC would want to promote joint activities which improve participation in HE amongst three key groups, adults, young people with no family tradition of participation in HE, and people in work:

##### ADULTS

- FE colleges with established outreach and community provision are well placed to encourage adult students, to continue to participate in learning to HE level. In 2000/2001 the colleges in Birmingham and Solihull excluding the College of Food Tourism and Creative Studies enrolled 4165 students on HE programmes. While a proportion of these are students on higher level professional and vocational programmes a significant number are adults progressing to HE from access and similar programmes.
- In order to expand participation amongst adult HE institutions will need to increasingly work with colleges in local areas often on an outreach basis. The development of local participation plans (see participation section) will facilitate this.

##### YOUNG PEOPLE

- Young people progressing through schools and FE colleges need to know about and experience the different delivery styles in HE if they are to succeed when they enter an HE institution. Teachers in schools and colleges need to prepare young people for different learning styles they will experience in HE. HE lecturers need to know about the student experience in schools and FE colleges in particular the high levels of student care which have enabled the students to succeed at level 3 and which they continue to need if they are to succeed in HE. The Excellence Challenge (see 14-24 section) initiative will support the kind of staff development, curriculum enrichment and other activities, which will enable schools and FE institutions to improve delivery to students, and focus on progression to HE .
- In order to achieve participation targets HE institutions will increasingly need to recruit young people locally via the network of schools and FE colleges. Young people will increasingly see the benefits of studying locally so that they can continue to live at home and continue with part-time jobs rather than incur debts by travelling away to university.

- LSC initiatives, through the 16-19 Review, to encourage a broad and diverse curriculum for all young people delivered on a collaborative basis by schools and colleges will make progression to HE for more young people a realistic aspiration.

## **ADULTS IN EMPLOYMENT**

- Increasingly policy initiatives such as New Technology Institutes are promoting partnerships between FE and HE institutions at the Level 3/Level 4 interface. The proposed New Technology Institute for Birmingham and Solihull will form the first stage of a City Centre, Centre of Vocational Excellence comprising some 2/3rds FE work at Level 3 and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> HE work at Levels 4 and 5. This facility will provide a single gateway to HE opportunities in a range of specialised curriculum areas relating to technology, concentrating on innovation in curriculum delivery. The four HE institutions in Birmingham: The University of Birmingham, Aston University, the University of Central England, and Newman College are all involved in this development along with the FE colleges. It will also provide a unique opportunity to develop an innovative FE/HE curriculum in a range of vocational areas around the needs of local employers
- Few small businesses are aware of the potential contribution of either colleges or universities in assisting them in product development and innovation. Through the close involvement of the Business Link the new Technology Institute will provide SMEs with specialist facilities and expertise to accelerate the modernisation and diversification of their businesses. This will include specialist demonstration facilities and expertise in technology transfer, and product development
- Current curriculum developments such as foundation degrees require joint working between FE and HE Institutions, along with employers if they are to be attractive to potential students and their employers, and if they are to include innovative delivery modes, including provision for people in employment, with work based projects and work based assessment being part of the qualifications.
- Colleges accrediting NVQs in companies are aware of people accredited to level 3 who are actually operating at level 4 and who would benefit from the assessment of their higher level qualifications through partnership with an HE Institution
- Curriculum Reviews being undertaken by the LSC indicate shortages of employees with higher level qualifications at technical, professional and managerial levels in a number of sectors. The sectors with the highest levels of graduate employees are professional and financial services (40%) and public services (46%). Those sectors with the lowest levels of graduate employees are Construction (22%) Manufacturing (20%) Retail/Distribution (14%) Hospitality (13%) and Transport/Communication (18%).
- These curriculum reviews along with the work of sector organisations such as the CITB, indicate very clearly that employers understand and are explicit about the requirement for higher level skills across a range of sectors. There is an issue around the way in which institutions are able to respond to these requirements and the extent to which they are able to work directly with employers to design and deliver the kind of HE programmes that are needed.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### (i) To increase the number of adult students involved in HE programmes by:

- Reviewing current partnership arrangements between FE and HE institutions in Birmingham and Solihull with the objective of enhancing these arrangements and agreeing a single articulation agreement which will enable local students to progress into HE
- Developing the level 3 and access curriculum in colleges which will facilitate progression opportunities for adults
- Developing a joint strategy involving the whole network of FE/HE Institutions to expand the provision of HE locally involving expanded delivery in FE institutions and on an outreach basis.

### (ii) To increase the number of young people participating in HE by:

- Promoting a collaborative approach to the Excellence Challenge initiative to ensure that through a range of curriculum initiatives amongst schools and colleges more young people see progression to HE as a realistic aspiration
- Encouraging a major expansion of Level 3 programmes in colleges to ensure progression routes into HE
- Agreeing articulation arrangements between schools, colleges, and HE providers to encourage clear progression to local HE institutions for local young people.
- Using the New Technology Institute initiative to expand curriculum development at the FE/HE interface in all aspects of technology with networking arrangements to ensure that students in schools and FE colleges benefit from the materials development, staff development and enhanced facilities and progression opportunities on offer at the New Technology Institute.

### (iii) To develop FE/HE/Employer partnerships aimed at accrediting employees at level 4 in companies by

- Reviewing existing research and undertaking a further research programme in partnership with employers to determine the nature of higher level skills required in the local economy
- Strengthening partnerships between FE and HE institutions along with employers to develop foundation degrees with flexible delivery arrangements specifically in sectors with shortages of higher level skills such as construction and health and care, and establishing progression routes to full degrees.
- Along with FE and HE partners seeking innovative ways of accrediting higher level skills already being used by employees.
- Using the New Technology Institute initiative to expand curriculum development at the FE/HE interface in all aspects of technology including foundation degrees, new approaches to traditional qualifications and specialised short courses

**(iv) To enable SMEs to take advantage of the facilities and expertise available in colleges and universities to help them to modernise and diversify their activities by:**

- Involving the Business Link closely in the development of the New Technology Institute
- Providing specialist demonstration facilities at the New Technology Institute
- Ensuring that technology transfer and product development facilities are available at the New Technology Institute
- Establishing the New Technology Institute as a referral point to enable SMEs to take advantage of other specialisms available through colleges and universities such as short management programmes.

## 5. VOCATIONAL SPECIALISATION

### KEY ISSUES

1. Much vocational education and training is expensive to offer and duplication of facilities across Birmingham and Solihull means that individual institutions cannot reach a critical mass of students and trainees in order to make the necessary investment worthwhile. This can lead to standards of facilities and curriculum delivery, which are average at best.
2. The Interim Report of the 16-19 Review produced by Terry Melia in May 2001 pointed to the decline of curriculum progression to Level 3 in Birmingham's colleges. Duplication of provision does not help to ensure a viable Level 3 curriculum offer, necessary for student progression and to meet the requirements of local employers.
3. In the workforce development section of this strategic plan there are learning and skills balance sheets for each sector. These highlight the market requirements for skills and the provider position in terms of supply. All the balance sheets indicate the need for a higher skilled more flexible workforce. A number of them also report a need for more skills at managerial and technical levels. This is a clear indication of the need for curriculum progression in colleges to level 4 and the need for colleges to substantially expand level 3 provision.
4. A priority for the LSC is to create the best facilities and curriculum offer for students and trainees in all vocational areas. Collective discussions have already taken place with colleges aimed at encouraging them to specialise in those areas where they already have strengths and not to offer those areas where they have no prospects of achieving the highest standards. College principals have already identified areas of specialisation where there are currently strengths. Where agreement is not immediately possible the process of vocational/sectoral review following the model already established by the Construction Review will identify which institutions or groups of institutions are best placed to develop to the highest standards in specific areas of vocational provision. Each review will have a steering committee on which the colleges will be represented, emphasising the collective nature of this process
5. The initial review of education and training in a major vocational area (Construction) has now taken place (see workforce development section) and has revealed a mismatch in the relationship between provision and the requirements of the market. For example:
  - The scale of facilities is inadequate to the requirements of local employers and the national companies undertaking major developments in the centre of Birmingham and in Solihull
  - Providers do not cover the full range of skills required in the industry, for example there is no provision for steel erection
  - There are inadequate links between employers and providers to ensure curriculum relevance and adequacy.

The main recommendation of the Construction Review was that a new construction education and training centre should be built and operated on a joint basis by the four colleges most involved in construction education and training. The nature of the management arrangements needs to be determined but construction will provide a useful model for how the vocational curriculum can be delivered in a collaborative way.

6. There are now plans for further reviews which will cover the full range of vocational education and training over the next three years beginning with the generic areas of engineering, business and finance, health and care and information and communications technology. This programme has been agreed with the college principals
7. This work is an essential preparation for the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence in Birmingham and Solihull. The area already has two pathfinder centres, for early years care at South Birmingham College and for catering and hospitality at the College of Food, Tourism, and Creative Studies. The development of further centres will be a collective process undertaken in collaboration with the colleges to ensure benefits for the full network of colleges and providers
8. As part of this process the scope for a City Centre, Centre of Vocational Excellence will be explored which would bring together a number of curriculum areas under one roof run by the colleges on a federal basis. This centre would specialise in Level 3 provision and would be an important factor in driving up participation, retention, and achievement at level 3, and in developing provision at the level 3/level 4 interface. The first step in this process has been a successful application for New Technology Institute funding which has involved the network of colleges and the 4 HE Institutions the University of Birmingham, Aston University, the University of Central England, and Newman College.
9. If the LSC strategy for vocational specialisation is to be successful as a means of rationalising the curriculum offer, and ensuring progression to level 4 in line with the requirements of students and employers, there needs to be a commitment to a collaborative approach, and increasingly federal arrangements to ensure clear progression and access to specialist facilities for students as well as staff from other providers. This commitment has so far been forthcoming which bodes well for the developments envisaged in this plan
10. In order to support vocational specialisation there will need to be a long-term capital investment in buildings and facilities. This was one of the key findings of the Construction Review. The LSC as a priority is undertaking an assets review of the building stock of all the FE colleges prior to developing an infrastructure development strategy, which over the next 10 years will transform FE buildings and facilities (see section on Assets Review)

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### (i) To agree areas of vocational specialisation with the colleges in Birmingham and Solihull by:

- Establishing criteria for vocational specialisation such as current size of provision, state of facilities, location, quality of provision, curriculum offer, relationship to employers
- Agreeing with institutions their areas of vocational specialism in an open process involving all institutions
- Using curriculum reviews to determine specialisation issues where further research is necessary. This process would also involve deciding on the generic curriculum areas such as business studies to be offered at all institutions and the niche areas within these generic areas in which individual institutions might specialise

- Agreeing areas of vocational specialisation prior to the development of submissions for Centres of Vocational Excellence
  - Exploring the scope for a City Centre, Centre of Vocational Excellence based on the developing New Technology Institute
- (ii) To ensure that the highest standards are achieved and maintained in the areas of vocational specialisation by:**
- Setting recruitment targets to enable institutions to recruit to the levels necessary to make provision viable at all levels up to Level 4 including targets for the provision of specialist programmes for employers
  - Progressively setting retention and achievement targets at levels above national benchmarks to reflect the opportunities given to institutions through the development of curriculum specialisms.
  - Ensuring that there is sufficient capital investment in facilities to make them comparable with the best and attractive to potential students.
- (iii) To put in place a development programme to support vocational specialisation and Centres of Vocational Excellence by:**
- Determining criteria for Centres of Vocational Excellence, which take account of employer and student requirements, facilities, and quality of delivery.
  - Clarifying the role of Centres of Vocational Excellence in the delivery of modern apprenticeships, both directly and in supporting work-based learning providers
  - Developing ways in which Centres of Vocational Excellence can integrate with, and become an essential part of business support available through the Business Link, such as in the provision of demonstration facilities.
  - Determining how centres of Vocational Excellence relate to HE at the Level 3/Level 4 interface.
- (iv) To determine new organisational models to maximise the benefits of vocational specialisation by:**
- Encouraging the sharing of staff between institutions
  - Providing specific funding for staff development and materials development.
  - Developing ways for the wider college network, schools and work-based learning providers to benefit from rising standards brought about by vocational specialisation through the sharing of good practice
  - Devising appropriate management and governance arrangements for the City Centre, Centre of Vocational Excellence
  - Making the improved vocational education and training facilities available to young people in schools as part of a collaborative approach to curriculum enrichment



- Providing taster programmes to young people aspiring to HE as part of the Excellence Challenge initiative.

## 6. INFRASTRUCTURE

To complement and support the 16-19 Review and the reviews of individual vocational areas across Birmingham and Solihull the LSC has commissioned a comprehensive review of the property, accommodation, and physical resources of all FE and 6<sup>th</sup> form Colleges. The objective is to determine a long-term infrastructure development strategy aimed at achieving world class education and training facilities over the next decade. The review is taking place in partnership with the colleges which are represented on the Review Steering Committee. The recommendations which emerge from the Review will be implemented in collaboration with the colleges.

### KEY ISSUES

1. Despite the efforts that colleges have made in recent years to improve their buildings many of the colleges in Birmingham are suffering from many years of under investment. Not only is the state of the buildings poor in many cases, but the location of a number of buildings is no longer appropriate given changes to travel to study patterns.
2. In the Interim Report of the 16-19 Review Terry Melia identified that there was a surplus of FE accommodation. Two colleges, for example, City College and South Birmingham College between them have 15 major sites and over 150 smaller properties. Utilisation surveys have shown that these two colleges have 40,000 square metres of surplus accommodation. If the colleges were to dispose of surplus buildings the savings on recurrent expenditure could finance a building programme of some £70m. This is one example of how the college building stock could be brought up to date to provide world class facilities.
3. A start has been made to replace defective college buildings in the proposals to build a new Joseph Chamberlain College and a new Matthew Boulton College. These developments have been made possible because of the value of the sites on which the current buildings stand
4. The pattern of FE provision across Birmingham and Solihull is variable. For example one area which has a shortage FE facilities is North Solihull, an area of social and educational deprivation. A solution needs to be found which involves the FE College and the 6<sup>th</sup> Form College in the south of the Borough and the two local schools with 6<sup>th</sup> Forms. Any new development will need to take account of the impact on FE provision in East Birmingham.
5. The development of vocational specialisation and Centres of Vocational Excellence will be an important factor in determining the kind of infrastructure developments that will be required. There will be more examples of shared accommodation and facilities as institutions begin to work in partnership on a collaborative basis. Specific capital funding is available to support the Centres of Vocational Excellence initiative
6. The Assets Review looking at college buildings and facilities, which began its work in the autumn of 2001 is considering:
  - Individual college accommodation strategies in the context of the area wide requirements for specific vocational provision.

- Other information being gathered by the LSC in particular curriculum mapping and travel to study data, which will be the main sources of evidence for curriculum rationalisation to ensure a broad curriculum offer at all levels in all vocational areas.
  - Areas of growth and decline in vocational provision both on a local and national basis and the reasons for this such as student choices and the requirements of the local economy.
  - Whether the existing FE building stock will be fit for purpose in the medium and long term and whether retaining existing buildings is more cost effective than replacement or refurbishment
  - How best to deal with the over-capacity identified by Terry Melia in the 16-19 Review Interim Report.
  - Whether buildings have appropriate access and facilities for people with disabilities
  - How a strategy for improving college buildings can take account of vocational specialisation, the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence, and organisational changes through the development of institutional partnerships and collaborative approaches to curriculum delivery.
7. It is important to ensure that all young people on programmes funded by the LSC should benefit from the same high standards of accommodation. Initial individual reviews of the accommodation used by work based learning providers have discovered a great deal of variability. Of 16 sites visited so far only two have been graded as excellent, eight as good, two as average, and four as poor. The LSC needs to encourage work based learning providers to improve the accommodation where training takes place and this should be a factor in agreeing new contracts
  8. One of the main reasons for undertaking the individual review of accommodation used by work-based learning providers was to determine the ways in which the needs of people with disabilities are met particularly regarding access to buildings and facilities in the context of the Disability and Discrimination Act.
  9. The LSC needs to work in partnership with the two LEAs to review accommodation for post 16 students in schools with the objective of upgrading accommodation where necessary.
  10. The LSC needs to work with colleges and schools with 6<sup>th</sup> forms and to resolve issues fragmentation of computer systems and variability in computer based learning materials available to students.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- (i) **Over a 10 year period to improve the building stock of colleges in Birmingham and Solihull to world class standards by:**
  - Reviewing the state of current buildings and facilities taking account of likely curriculum change and requirements over the next 10 years
  - Ensuring that the review takes full account of the requirements of people with disabilities to access buildings and facilities on the same basis as other students.

- Initiating a strategy, which prioritises building improvements, taking account of changes that are likely to occur such as developing partnership and collaborative arrangements in curriculum delivery, shared use of accommodation, vocational specialisation and Centres of Vocational Excellence.
- Developing the strategy in partnership with the colleges, Birmingham City Council, Solihull Borough Council and the National LSC.
- In co-operation with College Corporations developing a funding strategy drawing on all available sources of funding to improve the building stock, such as receipts from sales of existing buildings, LSC capital budgets, and capital grants for specific initiatives such as Centres of Vocational Excellence.
- Providing FE facilities in North Solihull

**(ii) To extend the review process to work based learning providers to ensure that trainees benefit from high standards of accommodation by:**

- Reviewing accommodation of all work based learning providers and judging it on the basis of the best FE accommodation.
- Ensuring that the reviews take full account of the needs of people with disabilities to access buildings and facilities on the same basis as other trainees
- Making the Improvement of standards of accommodation a factor in re-contracting with work based learning providers.
- Assisting work-based learning providers to secure the means of improving accommodation and/or partnership arrangements with colleges to ensure that the highest standards of accommodation are available to trainees.

**(iii) To work with the two LEAs to review the quality of accommodation of buildings used by school 6<sup>th</sup> forms and to ensure that this students benefit from high standards of accommodation by.**

- Undertaking a review of school accommodation in the context of improvements in accommodation in neighbouring colleges, and prioritising development needs.
- Securing capital funding for building improvements in schools in partnership with the LEAs.

**(iv) To improve the ICT infrastructure in colleges and schools by:**

- Reviewing the current infrastructure to reveal the extent of the fragmentation and duplication, which exists in current college/ school networks.
- Through a partnership approach to infrastructure development developing proposals to ensure high and common standards for network operation and content across schools and colleges in Birmingham and Solihull

- Seeking capital funding to harmonise networks to facilitate the sharing of materials
- Encouraging collaborative applications for example to the 14-19 Development Fund to improve the quality of learning materials on college/school networks and ensure their relevance to all students.

## 7. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

### (a) Principles

The Quality Improvement Strategy for the Birmingham and Solihull area will:

- Identify and address short term development issues that affect the performance and delivery of programmes and courses.
- Ensure that facilities, materials and staff skill are effective and relevant to the vocational and course area.
- Anticipate changes in teaching and training delivery and curriculum as a result of Government policies.

### (b) Implementation

The mechanism for identifying development needs will be through:

#### (i) Provider Quality Improvement

Colleges and providers will be asked to produce a quality improvement strategy for their organisation based upon:

- outcomes of inspections
- outcomes of provider performance reviews
- outcomes of their self assessment and development planning processes
- assessment of capacity and capability to respond to new and emerging Government policies

#### (ii) Local LSC Quality Improvement Strategy

**The local LSC will draw up an area wide strategy based upon:**

- development issues highlighted through the providers' quality improvement strategies
- key findings from Area Inspection and 16 – 19 Review
- development issues arising from vocational reviews and creation of Centres of Vocational Excellence
- LSC response to Government policy on the delivery of post 16 education and training.

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

ISSUES	ACTIVITIES	FUNDING	TIMESCALES
<p>1. 14 – 19 Curriculum</p> <p>(i) Schools: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delivery of full entitlement – Curriculum 2000</li> <li>introduction of vocational GCEs</li> </ul> <p>(ii) FE: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delivery of full entitlement – Curriculum 2000</li> <li>increased focus on vocational specialisms</li> </ul> <p>(iii) WBL: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>key skills delivery and assessment</li> <li>introduction of technical certificates into MA frameworks</li> <li>expansion targets for participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative partnerships with FE and WBL providers for staff and curriculum development and new delivery arrangements</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative partnerships</li> <li>Delivery and infrastructure standards agreed and reviewed for each major vocational area (Accredited College status)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative networks of providers and colleges based upon sector development groups</li> <li>Development of curriculum, learning materials and delivery arrangements</li> <li>Delivery and infrastructure standards for Modern Apprenticeship training agreed (Accredited Provider status)</li> </ul>	<p>£ 1,000,000 LIF – Development Fund</p> <p>Standards Fund LIF</p> <p>Standards Fund LIF</p>	<p>2002 – 03</p> <p>2002 – 03</p> <p>2002 - 03</p>
<p>2. Pre and Post Inspection Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All provision within scope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification and dissemination of good practice on self assessment and development planning</li> <li>Agreement and monitoring of action plans to strengthen provision assessed as inadequate by OFSTED/ALI</li> </ul>	Standards Fund	On Going
<p>3. Adult and Community Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requirements and standards for inspection and provider performance review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dissemination of findings from pilot inspections and provider performance reviews</li> <li>Development of processes to review and assess provision</li> <li>Programme of support in place to assist organisations reach required quality standards</li> </ul>	LIF	2002 - 03

ISSUES	ACTIVITIES	FUNDING	TIMESCALES
4. Basic Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of new basic curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider briefings on new standards and revised materials</li> <li>• Funding of facilitators to provide specialist advice and support the drawing up and implementation of action plans</li> </ul>	Standards Fund	2002 - 03
5. New Provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope, requirements and standards for new providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information seminars for all interested organisations on scope for new contracts, quality standards and requirement and support available</li> <li>• Programme and support to take forward selected organisations to become an LSC contractor</li> </ul>	LIF SRB	On Going
6. Relationships with other bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSDA</li> <li>• Sector Skills Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local agreements to facilitate and deliver events to meet identified needs within the college and provider base</li> </ul>	Standards Fund LIF	On Going



## 8. HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY

The Birmingham and Solihull LSC is committed to promoting high standards and good practice in health safety and welfare in all its learning, education and community activities.

### LSC EMPLOYEES

Statement of General Safety Policy for Employees

A copy of the Birmingham and Solihull LSC's policy is attached.

### Employee Development

The Executive Director will:-

- appoint a suitably qualified specialist to provide information and inform the LSC Board and Executive Director on health, safety and welfare issues.
- ensure that all accident incurred by learners will be investigated, reported and recorded in line with the national guidelines
- provide appropriate information to local Council members, and the National LSC, on any action taken with providers to prevent a re-occurrence
- provide appropriate development opportunities for relevant staff to maintain the health and safety strategy.
- ensure all LSC employees who have access to learners through their normal duties will attend a programme of development on the national "eyes and ears" monitoring initiative

### PROVIDERS

#### Providers Responsibilities

The primary responsibility for health and safety rests with the providers contracted by the LSC. Providers will be selected on their capacity to provide a safe, healthy and supportive learning environment for all learners and will be required to demonstrate:

- a planned approach to health and safety
- competent health and safety management
- arrangements to promote safe working and supervision for all learners
- systems for ensuring healthy safe environments and adequate supervision for learners on their own premises or at placements
- mechanisms for informing learners of health and safety arrangements, and their role and responsibilities, including entitlements
- systems for discovering, investigating, reporting and recording accidents or incidents including procedures for preventing a re-occurrence.

As part of their contractual arrangement with the LSC all providers will be required to complete the Gateway Questionnaire.

### NEW PROVIDERS

The LSC will complete a contract capability assessment to ensure Providers have the capacity to offer provision to an acceptable standard.

### PROVIDER DEVELOPMENT

Support through the work based learning standards fund and local initiative fund will be made available for provider staff to raise health and safety standards and develop staff competence

## **PROVIDER MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Self-assessment reports, development plans, provider performance review, and the eyes and ears approach will provide a basis for targeted monitoring and risk banding providers.

Monthly internal reviews will take place to maintain current information on provider performance including providers' health and safety arrangements.

### **Continuous Improvement**

Through provider performance review, the identification of best practice, and support through the local Initiative fund and standards fund, the LSC will strive to improve health and safety management, and develop learner awareness.

## **OFFICE SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT**

The following statement is prepared in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Section 2(3), and sets out the general policy of the Birmingham and Solihull LSC with respect of Health & Safety at work of the LSC's staff and the organisation and arrangements for carrying out this policy.

In this document the Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council and its Board are referred to as the LSC.

## **STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY**

The Birmingham and Solihull LSC regards the occupational health and safety of its staff at Chaplin Court, being of the highest importance. It is the LSC's policy to seek to provide healthy and safe working conditions for all its employees. The LSC also seeks to conduct its undertaking in such a way as to ensure, as far as it is reasonably practicable, that persons not in its employment who may be affected by its activities are not thereby exposed to risk to their health and/or safety.

Every employee of the LSC has a duty, whilst at work, to take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of him or herself and of any other persons who may be affected by his or her acts or omissions at work, and to cooperate with the LSC in any duty or requirement imposed by the relevant statutory provisions.

Any other person (acting as a subcontractor) has a duty whilst at work on entering the LSC's premises to take reasonable care for the health and safety of him or herself and of any other persons who may be affected by his or her acts or omission at work.

The objectives of the policy are: -

- To promote standards of health and welfare that fully comply with the terms and requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other relevant statutory provisions and approved Codes of Practice.
- To maintain healthy and safe work places, systems, equipment, and methods of work and to protect LSC staff and others in so far as they come into contact with foreseeable work hazards, and to provide and maintain means of access and egress from the workplaces which are, so far as is reasonably practical, safe and without risks to health.

- To ensure the safety and absence of risks to health, so far as is reasonably practicable, in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- To provide and maintain a healthy and safe working environment for staff, with adequate facilities and arrangements for welfare.
- To identify and implement procedures to control any identified hazards or risks
- To provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of staff and other persons using the LSC's premises.
- To provide, where appropriate, suitable and sufficient personal protective equipment, to support staff undertaking their normal duties on behalf the LSC.
- To develop safety awareness between the staff and individual responsibilities for health and safety at all levels.

If the LSC provides equipment, goods or services to other bodies or individuals it will carry out the duties laid upon the classes of persons referred to under section 6 of the Act, eg persons who design, manufacture, import, supply, erect or install articles or substances for use at work.

If the LSC uses equipment, goods or services provided by other bodies or individuals, it will, so far as the danger arises on its own premises, take such immediate precautions as may be necessary against risks to health or safety arising there from, of which it may become aware. As appropriate, the LSC will report the existence of these risks to the supplier for attention, and will keep under review the progress made with their correction.

The LSC will ensure its providers, subcontractors and other associates meet the same standards as it sets for itself, by the inclusion of health and safety clauses in its contracts.

Consult with all staff on the health, safety and welfare policy through the Employee Communication Group at least quarterly. Communicate this policy and relevant health, safety and welfare information through induction, and staff briefing.

This policy will be kept up to date. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed annually.

An electronic copy of this policy will be made available to all staff through the LSC computer network.