

# Learning and Skills Council

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

## Local Strategic Plan 2002-05

Essex



## Council Members

Mr Mike Malone-Lee – Chairman  
Ms Alison Webster – Executive Director

Ms Susan Anderson, Heddingham School  
Mr Ian Barber, Unison Eastern Region  
Mrs Brenda Coleman, Coleman’s Solicitors  
Mr David Ellerby, Harlow College

Ms Maureen Frewin, Southend Association of Voluntary Services  
Mrs Margaret Jones, Thurrock Borough Council  
Mr George Krawiec, Southend on Sea Borough Council  
Mr Paul Lincoln, Learning Services Directorate, Essex County Council  
Mr Peter Martin, Member of East of England Development Agency

Mr John Norman, Stansted Airport Limited  
Mr Chris Paveley, Fax-Line Servicing Limited  
Mr Alan Rapkin, Endaim Limited  
Mr Frank Thompson, Unilever Bestfoods

## Council Observers

Mr Brian Archer, Business Link for Essex  
Mr Richard Burton, Jobcentre Plus  
Mr Mervyn Stokes, Government Office for the East of England  
Mr Alistair McGarry, Connexions Partnership

## > Contents

Chairman’s Foreword	2
LSC Essex Critical Success Measures	4
1. The National Context	5
2. Essex Profile	6
3. Developing the Strategic Plan for Essex	8
4. Priorities	10
5. Measuring Progress and Evaluation Strategy	22
6. Annual Business Plans	22
7. LSC Essex as an Organisation	23
8. Conclusion	24
<i>Appendices</i>	
1a. List of Organisations at Consultation Events	25
1b. Consultation Events – Summary of Issues Raised	28
2. Core Strategic Partners	30
3. Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD)	31
4. Definitions of Qualification Levels	32
5. LSC National Targets	33

## > Chairman's Foreword

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has been given the task of changing the whole culture of post-16 learning in Essex, Southend and Thurrock. We are a new organisation with a new remit. We cannot hope to achieve what we have been set up to do without the active engagement and support of many other organisations, employers and individuals in the learning process in a way that has never previously been attempted. The prize of success in this endeavour is great. Success will have tangible benefits for the whole economy of Essex and our international competitiveness.

The LSC is a national organisation with 47 local Councils. The Council for Essex is drawn from employers and the wider community. Council members give their time freely to work with the staff of the Learning and Skills Council to help shape post-16 learning provision. It is my job to bring together all our creative energies to achieve real results across the whole of Essex. In fulfilling this role there are a number of critical challenges which we in Essex have to face and resolve. They include:

> **Meeting the Challenge of Diversity** – The LSC Essex area is one of the largest in terms of its geographical size, number of businesses, and population. It has urban deprivation both at local authority ward and District levels, and equally has large rural areas with all the associated problems affecting the farming and rural communities. Essex also provides significant numbers of skilled people for the London and border labour markets as 300,000 commute out of Essex each day. We must ensure these commuters are able to access continued learning at a time and place to suit their needs.

Other factors outside the LSC remit are critical to the effectiveness of the Essex labour market including road and rail travel networks. In this high tech age, of growing importance is the information communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, for example delays in establishing broadband based networks will impact on the ability to grow home based ICT related jobs, so important in rural areas.

In establishing this network the LSC must tackle the well-documented skill shortages affecting the utility companies.

> **Basic and Employability Skills** – There are too many adults in Essex who do not have basic literacy and numeracy skills. This is a huge personal disability for them and an obstacle to the prosperity of Essex. We must achieve our aim of raising the literacy and numeracy skills of nearly 30,000 people so that they can have more fulfilling working lives.

> **Essex Sea and Airports** – Rising to the challenge of meeting the growth related skills needs of our sea and airports presents a fantastic opportunity for Essex people. This is a unique situation and LSC Essex will ensure this is given priority.

> **Higher Level Qualifications** – Essex is falling behind other regions in the qualification levels of our workforce. We must increase the qualification levels of our workforce at NVQ 3, or equivalent, as a priority, as they are not increasing quickly enough. Equally, we need to increase the number of people moving into higher education in line with the Government's target for 2010. We need to work closely with the three Higher Education Institutions to improve the opportunities for progression for all.

> **Increasing Participation in Learning** – Far too many of our young people are leaving education and training at the age of 16. This is not in their long-term interests or in the interests of Essex. We need to increase the number of people participating in learning, both young people and adults. This is a particular issue in certain local communities where deprivation is also prevalent. Our aim is to increase the number of young people in education or training by about 5,500 in the next two years. Targeted action with our partners will be needed.

> **Increasing The Value of Vocational Learning** – Raising the perceived value of the vocational learning route to that achieved by our international competitors is a necessity if we are to meet our labour market needs, and enable young people to fulfil their potential. We are especially concerned at the above average number of young people entering jobs without further learning in Essex.

> **Engaging Employers** – We must close any gaps between those who provide education and training and employers so that employers have confidence that their future workforce will have the skills that they need. We need to identify employers' current and future skills needs, and together ensure we develop individuals to maximise their personal potential and their suitability for good employment.

> **Equal Opportunities** – We must find ways of removing the obstacles to learning that can be associated with gender, age, race and disability, and social background. We will also be paying particular attention to the participation and achievement levels in certain local areas, including the rural parts of Essex.

> **Partnership** – The LSC cannot achieve any of this by itself. We need to find new ways of working in collaboration with partner organisations, regionally and locally, and with providers of education and training in order to put learners and their needs at the heart of the system. We need the active help and support of all concerned whether as practitioners, employers or learners to ensure that our plans will work.

In this plan we set out our priorities, strategies and measures to meet these challenges. We very much look forward to working with you to make a meaningful difference to the lives of our people and the competitiveness of our businesses.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Chairman – Mike Malone-Lee

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Executive Director – Alison Webster

## > LSC Essex Critical Success Measures

To address the challenges facing Essex we have, through our consultation with local communities employers and partners, identified the following as critical measures of our success:

LSC Essex Measures	Baseline	2004	2005
<b>To increase the level of participation and achievement of young people</b>			
• 16-18 year olds in structured learning.	73% (41,517)	82% (46,971)	84% (47,835)
• Level 2 achievement by age 19.	76% (14,616)	82% (15,900)	85% (16,385)
• Level 3 achievement by age 19.	45% (8,682)	50% (9,727)	52% (10,024)
<b>To increase the level of participation and achievement of adults</b>			
• Adults participating in learning.	Baseline to be set	-	To be agreed in 2002
• Raise literacy and numeracy skills.	Not available	23,483	30,000
• Level 2 achievement.	65%**	-	To be agreed in 2002
• Level 3 achievement.	41% (316,000)	48% (375,063)	50% (387,500)
<b>Increase engagement of employers in workforce development</b>			
• Employer engagement in workforce development.	Baseline to be set	-	To be agreed in 2002
• Address skills growth needs of Sea and Air Gateway employers.	Skills Brokers to be recruited	-	Workforce development needs being met
<b>Raise quality and equality of education and training</b>			
• Learner satisfaction.	Baseline to be set	-	To be agreed in 2002
• Address learner needs in deprived and rural locations.	Local areas identified	-	Targets to be set via local Strategic Partnerships
• Progression into higher education.	Baseline to be set	-	To be agreed in 2002

\*\*Essex Household Survey, 2000 (economically active)  
For definitions of qualifications levels, see Appendix 4

## > 1. The National Context

The LSC was launched in April 2001, taking over the roles of the former Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) and the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). However, the new organisation is not simply an amalgamation of the two – the LSC has been given a wider and more challenging remit, namely:

### Our mission and vision

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

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

### Our key tasks

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills has asked the LSC to:

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

### Why the change?

Under the new structure, the LSC is responsible for setting the strategy for and funding of further education, work-based learning, workforce development, adult and community learning and, from April 2002, school sixth form provision. This single system approach aims to channel resources more effectively, and allow for greater flexibility and diversity at local level. The 2003/2004 budget for LSC nationally will be £7.3bn.

### Not change for change's sake

There were, however, many examples of good working practices, and successful programmes under the previous structure. These are acknowledged, and will help shape the new national, regional and local pictures. The LSC will build on success where it exists to drive forward the agenda.

### Remit for the future

The LSC is a strategic planning organisation with for the first time, a statutory duty to encourage participation in learning, and to engage employers. For the national targets see Appendix 5.

This translates into raising the skills, knowledge and understanding of the 30.5m young people and adults in England. However structural change can only go so far. There needs to be a "culture change" among young people, adults and employers so that learning becomes a desired and attainable goal for everyone. To achieve this remit in Essex we must work at grass roots level, orchestrating closer collaboration between our partners and learning providers.

## > 2. Essex Profile

The following section provides a “snapshot” of the post-16 learning market in Essex. It highlights some of the key characteristics of Essex and some of the challenges that the Learning and Skills Council will face in the coming years.

Essex’s output is estimated to be £16.2 billion, contributing to an estimated 27% of the regional output – the largest share for any of the six local LSCs in the East of England region (Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and Essex). Essex also has the largest share of the post-16 population (30%) with 1.3 million people, and the largest share (29%) of employers in the region with 62,000 employers, the vast majority of which employ 10 people or fewer (85%).

Essex is characterised by the diversity of its economy and post-16 population. For example, the district of Basildon accounts for an estimated 12% of Essex’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the largest share of the fourteen districts and unitary authorities, and Basildon’s Engineering sector accounts for an estimated 16% of the district’s total GDP (£1,869 mil), nearly double that for Essex (8.1%), making it a significant sector to the district. However, for Basildon’s neighbouring district, Brentwood, the Engineering sector only accounts for 7% of its GDP, whilst the Financial and Business Services sector accounts for an estimated 40% of the district’s GDP, this compares to an estimated 20% for Essex. Brentwood has benefited from the expansion of the Financial and Business Services sector, and the relocation of back-office/support functions out of London, and this has resulted in considerable office growth in the district in recent years.

The working patterns of Essex’s post-16 population are also diverse, and according to the 1991 Census of Population, 42% of residents commute to work outside of Essex, equating to around 300,000 workers, and around half of these commute into London. A large share of these commuters come from the southern more urban sub-regions of Essex, and the needs and characteristics of these areas often differ from the more remote and rural sub-regions of Essex, such as the district of Maldon with an estimated persons per sq. km. of 157 compared to 4,191 for Southend.

A summary of some of the key characteristics and challenges facing the post-16 population and employers in Essex is given below.

> **Areas of Growth:** Essex is unique in having Sea and Air Gateways. These represent significant areas for job growth and demand for skills. There are however skills mismatches between the prospective jobs and the local people, which will need to be proactively managed.

> **Areas of Deprivation:** Essex is perceived as a prosperous area. There are however urban areas of deprivation, which need to be targeted for support. These are predominantly within the district’s of Basildon, Harlow, Southend, Tendring, and Thurrock. LSC Essex will need to work closely with local partners to identify needs and appropriate solutions. Equally, Essex has rural communities who are facing their own challenges, especially farmers and those dependant on tourism related employment.

> **Young People and Participation:** An estimated 73% of 16 to 18 year olds in Essex participate in learning. However Year 11 destination data suggests that participation rates for 16 year olds are not uniform across Essex, with 83% of Year 11 pupils in Thurrock continuing structured learning in 2000, compared to 92% of Year 11 pupils in Brentwood and Rochford.

There is evidence to suggest that retention rates also vary across sub-regions and providers in Essex and this needs to be investigated further as more comprehensive data becomes available.

> **Young People and Achievement:** An estimated 76% of Essex’s 19 year old population is educated to Level 2, and an estimated 45% are educated to Level 3. Essex figures are lower than the national average, significantly lower than the region’s average and much lower than the National Target of 85% for Level 2 and 55% for Level 3.

> **Adult Participation:** An estimated 43% of Essex’s economically active population are “Learners” i.e. they participated in either education or training in the last year, and the inverse of this is 450,000 economically active people who are “Non-Learners”.

On average, adult participation decreases with age. Participation rates also correlate with occupation, for example an estimated 40% of people in Essex employed in professional/associate professional occupations are “Non-Learners”, this compares to 75% of those in plant and machine operative occupations.

> **Adult Achievement:** An estimated 280,000 economically active people in Essex are qualified below Level 2; while an estimated 488,000 economically active people are educated below Level 3, and in excess of 150,000 economically active people are estimated to have no qualifications. Achievement has a similar relationship with age and occupation group as participation.

> **Workforce Development:** An estimated 30% of businesses in Essex did not support any training in 1999. This is surprising in light of additional evidence that shows the extent of the dynamic environment in which businesses operate and the impact this has on their workforce. An estimated 80% of businesses in Essex experienced a “major change” (legislation, lost/gained major client, introduced new product/service etc.) in the past 3 years, and over 50% of those experiencing a “major change” said this had an impact upon their workforce.

> **Skill Shortages and Gaps:** An estimated 38% of all employers with vacancies in 1999 found one or more of them hard-to-fill, and of those employers with hard-to-fill vacancies 62% said this was due to a “shortage of appropriately skilled applicants”. Engineering related businesses and utility companies are facing difficulties in attracting suitably skilled people. Skill gaps also exist within employers’ existing workforce, with an estimated 15% of businesses reporting a skills gap within their workforce in 1999.

> **Barriers to Training:** An estimated 13% of businesses in Essex said the quality of training provided locally was a barrier to training, and an estimated 17% said the times at which training is provided is a barrier – clearly quality and flexibility is a significant barrier that needs to be addressed if employers are to be encouraged to participate in further workforce development activities.

An expanded analysis of the issues discussed above is available on request from the Research Analysis Team at LSC Essex on 01245 550 089.



## > 3. Developing the Strategic Plan for Essex

### 3.1 Our Approach

If the LSC's remit and stretching targets are to be met, it is imperative that the demand for, and numbers engaged in learning are substantially increased at all levels and throughout Essex.

This will require a change in attitude and motivation to reach a point where our people will:

- > Want to learn
- > Start to learn
- > Continue to learn

The Council's aspiration was reinforced by the views expressed during our consultation events. However, to achieve such a culture change will require clear objectives and sustained action over the initial 3 years covered by this Plan, and beyond.

In developing this Plan, we were determined that it should be informed and shaped by the needs of employers and local communities.

### 3.2 The Consultation Process

An extensive consultation exercise was undertaken during October and November 2001. We distributed more than 500 copies of both the drafts for consultation of the Local Strategic Plan and the Equal Opportunities Strategy as well as making the documents available on the LSC website.

We held ten geographically based events dedicated to sharing our initial thoughts on priorities and actions with key partners and stakeholders. 267 people attended these events, taking part in facilitated breakout groups where participants informed us about local issues and concerns.

In order to capture the views of the business community, a county-wide event was held with business leaders and organisations representing significant numbers of businesses in Essex.

In addition, LSC officers addressed, and invited feedback from, over 100 people at meetings organised by a variety of other organisations.

See Appendix 1a on page 25 for a complete list of the organisations consulted.

We received a vast number of helpful suggestions and details of specific local issues affecting communities, employers, learners and potential learners. A summary of the issues raised are set out at Appendix 1b on page 29. These will be taken forward as we develop the Annual Needs Assessment of the Post-16 Population in Essex and the annual Business Plan.

### 3.3 Underpinning Principles

From the consultation exercise there emerged eight overarching principles, which are central to the way LSC Essex needs to fulfil its role.

Namely to:

- > Champion a cultural change where our people will:
  - Want to learn
  - Start to learn
  - Continue to learn
- > Be data led and needs driven to ensure objectivity in our decision making and resource allocation
- > Be local community focused to target resources on key issues for maximum impact
- > Ensure that quality, equality and diversity are embedded in all we do
- > Be flexible and responsive to meet new and emerging needs
- > Nurture and develop effective collaboration between learning providers and disseminate best practice to raise the quality of provision
- > Strive for simplicity in funding resource allocation and administration
- > Work in partnership to achieve shared strategies and resources, and targeted action regionally in the context of the Regional Economic Strategy and the Framework for Regional Employment Skills Action (FRESA); and locally with Essex-wide and Sub-Essex Strategic Partners (see also Appendix 2 on page 30)

### 3.4 The Six Priorities

The consultation confirmed both the relevance and scope of the priorities, to meet our critical success measures:

- > To further develop the demand for, and provision of, learning and skills in Essex
- > To increase the level of participation and achievement of young people
- > To increase the level of participation and achievement of adults
- > Increase engagement of employers in workforce development
- > To ensure high quality provision that meets the needs of learners, employers and communities
- > To develop and implement an Equality and Diversity Strategy

We were also given a clearer steer on the aims and objectives we should be striving for and the actions required.

These are set out in section 4.

## > 4. Priorities

### 4.1 The Six Priorities

#### Priority 1: To further develop the demand for, and provision of, learning and skills in Essex

##### Aims for the year 2005:

- > To develop a shared understanding with strategic partners of the needs and the provision required in Essex
- > To convince employers and people of all ages and at all stages of life to recognise the benefits of learning, education and training
- > To develop close links with other strategic, planning and purchasing organisations to ensure coherent strategies and cost effective provision

##### Strategic Objectives:

1. Develop accessible sources of information on learning and skills needs and disseminate best practice
2. Develop and implement with our partners a promotional strategy to sell the benefits of learning to key target audiences
3. Undertake local area surveys with learning partnerships to research and identify client needs, and the learning provision required to meet those needs
4. Achieve integrated planning and provision with strategic partners

##### Commentary:

- > From the consultation, one of the key roles for LSC Essex is to gather and disseminate learning and skills information. To fulfil this role will require close and effective collaboration with partners in the gathering of data, and its analysis, and the creative use of web based and traditional forms of communication. LSC Essex will host an on-going series of best practice seminars to ensure information is disseminated widely and timely
  - > Considerable activity has, and is, being undertaken to stimulate demand for learning. LSC Essex believes it can add value to this process by planning and co-ordinating with partner organisations, concerted campaigns to get the message across, and acted upon, by key audiences including employers, adults, young people and their parents
  - > In order for LSC Essex to be objective in its decision-making processes, it is imperative that a shared understanding is reached with partners as to the demand and supply issues in each locality. These surveys will need to be prioritised with partners to target localities where the issues and levels of need are most urgent
  - > LSC Essex is but one of many organisations with an interest in, and funding available, to target learning and skills issues. Close and effective co-ordination with strategic partner organisations can make a significant difference in the level of impact achieved. These include for example, the three Learning Partnerships, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), Local Area Strategic Partnerships, Essex Economic Partnership (EEP), Thames Gateway South Essex, Haven Gateway, East of England Development Agency (EEDA), Government Office for the East of England (GO-East), Connexions and Jobcentre Plus
- Links with neighbouring local LSCs and East of England networks will be important to ensure learner needs are met and best practice is spread widely

## Priority 1.

Milestones		
Year 1	Year 2	Outcomes for 2005
<b>Strategic Objective 1 – Develop accessible sources of information on learning and skills needs and disseminate best practice</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot LSC Essex Website/ e-Newsletter.</li> <li>• Develop Research Network in Essex.</li> <li>• Organise best practice seminars.</li> <li>• Develop links with East of England/National Networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend web based range of information sources.</li> <li>• Widely circulate e-Newsletter.</li> <li>• Maintain Research Network.</li> <li>• Organise best practice seminars.</li> <li>• Contribute to Regional/National Networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website widely known and used.</li> <li>• e-Newsletter established and valued.</li> <li>• Research Network fully functional.</li> <li>• LSC Essex recognised for disseminating best practice.</li> <li>• Essex embedded in Regional/National Networks.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 2 – Develop and implement with our partners a promotional strategy to sell the benefits of learning to key target audiences</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement with partners targeted promotional campaigns for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young People</li> <li>• Adults</li> <li>• Employers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Launch Champions of Learning Awards.</li> <li>• Lead/sponsor Essex Business Awards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement with partners targeted promotional campaigns to contribute to participation and employer engagement targets.</li> <li>• Run Champions of Learning Awards.</li> <li>• Lead/sponsor Essex Business Awards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement with partners targeted promotional campaigns to contribute to participation and employer engagement targets.</li> <li>• Champions of Learning Awards widely recognised.</li> <li>• Lead/sponsor Essex Business Awards.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 3 – Undertake local area surveys with learning partnerships to research and identify client needs, and the learning provision required to meet those needs</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree with partners, priority areas for surveys.</li> <li>• Pilot in two areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete area surveys in the rest of Essex.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area surveys successfully completed – action plans in place.</li> <li>• Complete picture of local demand and supply needs and issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 4 – Achieve integrated planning and purchasing with strategic partners</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree joint strategies with key partners.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain European Social Fund (ESF) Co-Financing Partner links.</li> <li>• Develop effective links with Higher Education (HE) institutions.</li> <li>• Collaborative links established with Health Sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities for joint action/achieve integrated strategies with partners.</li> <li>• Effective collaboration established between co-financing organisations.</li> <li>• Essex attracts and uses its fair share of ESF.</li> <li>• Progression routes into HE mapped and communicated.</li> <li>• Joint planning mechanisms operational.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective partnership working, measured by a survey of key partners.</li> <li>• Co-Financing fully operational.</li> <li>• Essex attracting/spending fair share of Regional ESF allocation.</li> <li>• Seamless progression into HE.</li> <li>• Joint planning and funding agreements in place with Health Sector.</li> </ul>

## Priority 2: To increase the level of participation and achievement of young people

### Aims for the year 2005:

- > Young people in Essex offered flexible learning pathways from 14-19 and beyond, that suit their individual learning styles and needs
- > Young people realising the value of learning and well informed of the options available to them
- > Local targets for participation and achievement met or exceeded

### Strategic Objectives:

1. Develop and support collaborative approaches for 14-19 year olds promoting progression and transferability, and building upon existing good practice
2. Support providers to improve retention and achievement for young people
3. Ensure that all young people have the support and opportunities they require to participate and succeed in learning

### Commentary:

- > Developing flexible learning pathways for young people will require collaborative approaches to offer increased opportunities to Year 10 and 11 learners, and to improve transferability between academic and vocational routes, allowing all learners to access the learning most appropriate to their needs. There are many good examples of such approaches in the LSC Essex area, including those developed via the Learning Partnerships, Education Business Link Consortium, providers of alternative education programmes and Education Action Zones. We will need to build upon this good practice
- > Equally, opportunities for Year 10 and 11 learners to spend time with employers, post-16 providers and universities will help to inform learning choices, as well as enhancing their learning experience. Initiatives will be developed to provide these opportunities, in line with LEA education plans, and in collaboration with Connexions and other key partners
- > We will need to incorporate and build upon the findings of The Cassells Report and the developments to vocational qualifications to raise the profile and reputation of vocational learning to achieve parity of esteem. To this end, collaborative approaches between schools, post-16 providers, employers and Higher Education institutions will be developed. We are concerned at the number of young people entering employment without further learning, which will require targeted action via the Connexions Partnership
- > Many young people face very real difficulties in pursuing their learning, and we will develop new approaches to overcome these barriers, building on the many examples of good practice in the LSC Essex area. This will be guided by the Equality and Diversity Strategy as outlined under Priority 6. Equally, we need to ensure opportunities exist to stretch the most able learners
- > The Connexions Partnership has a key role in ensuring young people (13-19) have access to the information and advice to make informed choices. We will work with Connexions in particular to improve retention rates in learning

## Priority 2.

Milestones		
Year 1	Year 2	Outcomes for 2005
<b>Strategic Objective 1 – Develop and support collaborative approaches for 14-19 year olds promoting progression and transferability, and building upon existing good practice</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing good practice identified.</li> <li>• Working relationship developed with LEAs and other partners.</li> <li>• Pilot projects developed:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative learning options including work placements for 14-16 year olds.</li> <li>• Higher Education placements and visits for 14-19 year olds.</li> <li>• Work placements and vocational training for learners on academic courses.</li> <li>• Test new approaches to develop employability and entrepreneurial skills.</li> <li>• To target young people entering jobs without further learning.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful pilots and good practice rolled out to other geographical and programme areas.</li> <li>• Targets for participation and achievement of young people attained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiatives integrated within mainstream learning and fundable for all learners.</li> <li>• Targets for participation and achievement of young people attained.</li> <li>• Increased employment with learning.</li> <li>• Increased progression into HE, including via vocational route.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 2 – Support providers to improve retention and achievement for young people</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing good practice identified.</li> <li>• Enhanced support for learners at risk of non-achievement.</li> <li>• Targeted support:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical (deprived and rural areas).</li> <li>• Programme areas/sectors.</li> <li>• Specific learner groups.</li> <li>• Basic skills.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good practice shared.</li> <li>• Successful approaches developed further.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targets for level 2 and 3 and achievement for 19 year olds attained.</li> <li>• Targets for level 2 and 3 achievement for 19 year olds attained.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 3 – Ensure that all young people have the support and opportunities they require to participate and succeed in learning</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing good practice identified.</li> <li>• Target geographical areas and learner groups with low participation.</li> <li>• Approaches developed with Connexions, LEAs and other key partners to ensure that young people have the support they need to stay in learning and progress into further opportunities. e.g. mentoring programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good practice shared.</li> <li>• Successful approaches developed further.</li> <li>• Participation target for 16-18 year olds attained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible and responsive funding securing learning that meets all learners' needs.</li> <li>• Participation target for 16-18 year olds attained.</li> </ul>



### Priority 3. To increase the level of participation and achievement of adults

#### Aims for the year 2005:

- > To secure reasonable and appropriate provision, which meets adult learner and employer needs and aspirations
- > To improve the basic skills levels of adults who lack the levels of literacy and numeracy to enable them to function effectively in employment and society
- > To encourage non-participant adult learners to engage in, continue and return to learning throughout their lives in order to increase participation, retention and attainment levels, reduce social exclusion and improve progression
- > To work with partners to build an inclusive learning infrastructure that meets the needs of individuals and employers

#### Strategic Objectives:

1. Implement the Skills for Life Strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy levels
2. Secure provision of sound information and advice to adults about learning choices, pathways and career options
3. Widen and increase the participation and achievement of adults
4. Continue to build, maintain and sustain effective partnerships to develop a learning culture that fosters, actively encourages and delivers timely, flexible, and responsive modes of learning

#### Commentary:

- > Adult and Community Learning (ACL) is offered through 3 LEA's, 12 Adult Community Colleges, Further Education and Private Training Providers
- > Raising the literacy and numeracy skills of adults during the life of this plan is a very challenging target. It will be taken forward with partners and providers, through a local strategy, which takes account of local developments and implements the national Skills for Life Strategy
- > The availability of comprehensive information, advice and guidance (IAG) is essential in assisting adults to make informed choices. We will continue to fund provision through the IAG Partnership, and build on its strengths to expand and enhance the service
- > Working with partners we will seek to widen and increase the participation, retention and achievement of adults and encourage a culture of lifelong learning. This will require raising awareness of learning opportunities, funding sources and progression routes, and promote the benefits of learning to non-learners, including the disadvantaged
- > Campaigns of short taster courses such as the successful Bite Size courses will be built upon to provide a stepping stone to formal learning
- > Increasing the numbers of adults achieving Levels 2 and 3 qualifications will enable us to increase the skills base and draw more learners through Levels 1-4, encouraging progression to Higher Education. However, the nature of the Essex economy and trend analysis indicates that to meet the Level 3 target will require a dramatic increase in achievement, and targeted action with our Partners
- > New and innovative forms of delivery, which meet the needs of adult non-participant learners and employers, will be funded through the Council's Local Initiative Fund and European Social Fund co-financing

### Priority 3.

Milestones		
Year 1	Year 2	Outcomes for 2005
<b>Strategic Objective 1 – Implement the Skills for Life Strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy levels (See also Priority 4/Objective 5)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to develop Skills for Life Strategy to meet targets.</li> <li>• Build provider capacity to meet basic skills needs and attract new learners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills for Life Strategy produced/ reviewed to reflect progress against targets.</li> <li>• Needs and gaps better understood.</li> <li>• Support provider development funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Skills embedded across a range of LSC provision – targets met.</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of adults with improved literacy and numeracy.</li> <li>• Increased basic skills provision.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 2 – Secure sound information and advice to adults about learning choices, pathways and career options</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with IAG Partnership to develop easily accessible/high quality services.</li> <li>• Work with partners to engage people affected by industrial/ economic change.</li> <li>• Work closely with learndirect to provide comprehensive information on learning opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish clear pathways and support networks to encourage and enable progression.</li> <li>• Work with Jobcentre Plus to establish joint planning for industrial and economic change.</li> <li>• Work with learndirect to improve reliability of information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive IAG services in place.</li> <li>• Relationship established/seamless IAG support.</li> <li>• Increase percentage of adults aware of learning opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 3 – Widen and increase participation and achievement of adults and drive up the demand for learning</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and fund new and innovative provision of adult community learning.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of learning opportunities, funding sources and progression routes.</li> <li>• Develop links with Community/ Voluntary sector to act as advocates of learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and use learner feedback, tracking and destination data to ensure continuous improvement.</li> <li>• Devise a marketing strategy based on researched and identified need.</li> <li>• Use funding to support initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation and achievement targets attained.</li> <li>• Increase percentages of adults aware of learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Number of Community/ Voluntary sector organisations involved.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 4 – Continue to build, maintain and sustain effective partnerships to develop a learning culture that fosters, actively encourages and delivers timely, flexible and responsive modes of learning</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to develop/ deliver cost-effective learning which opens up progression.</li> <li>• Promote availability of new/ existing provision for commuters shift workers, outreach community workers/ voluntary organisations.</li> <li>• Encourage collaboration between providers.</li> <li>• Improve the supply of trained childcare workers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage/reward flexible, timely and responsive provision.</li> <li>• Encourage and incentivise providers.</li> <li>• Build capacity of providers working in collaboration.</li> <li>• Improve the supply of trained childcare workers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased range of flexible/ responsive provision to suit adult/ employer needs.</li> <li>• Increased learning opportunities in non traditional venues.</li> <li>• Collaborative approaches embedded.</li> <li>• Enable progression of childcare workers.</li> </ul>

## Priority 4. Increase engagement of employers in workforce development

### Aims for the year 2005:

- > Employers in Essex will be able to access information and advice on skills issues through a one stop shop approach
- > The provision of learning services will better match the needs of employers
- > The market for learning services will grow through being responsive and customer focused
- > The skills related upskilling and recruitment problems experienced in Essex will be addressed
- > There will be a substantial increase in employers who recognise the competitive advantage of a skilled workforce, and invest in their people

### Strategic Objectives:

1. Develop and implement an information and advice service for employers in Essex to encourage increased training activity
2. Provide a Skills Broker Service for employers in Essex with over 250 employees, which will support the planning and provision of skills
3. Work with Business Link for Essex to deliver a package of support to encourage Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) (under 250 employees) to train and develop their staff through appropriate mechanisms including Investors in People (IIP)
4. Provide a service and support for employers going through structural change or relocating in Essex
5. Support employers to develop the framework for Employee Development Schemes, with a focus on Basic Skills
6. Address the issue of supervisory and management skills, which are below the national average in Essex

### Commentary:

- > In highly competitive and changing markets, businesses require immediate access to information, and advice on skills issues. Working with Business Link for Essex, Learndirect and other partners, a solution-based service is to be developed. This service should be available both electronically and personally
- > We need to target help for businesses employing fewer than 250 people. New services will be developed to enable businesses to realise benefits from developing their staff
- > Research indicates that there are gaps in the skills required of existing employees, and certain occupational areas for which vacancies have proved hard to fill owing to a lack of skilled people. We will, through our new Skills Brokerage Service, gather and act upon market intelligence to achieve solutions through employers
- > The Essex labour market is undergoing significant change with new employment opportunities being created including the Gateways in South Essex, Harwich and Stansted. Other changes are occurring for example in the employee skills required by the manufacturing industry. We will need to pay particular attention to the needs of employers relocating in Essex and ensure an aftercare package of support is in place with our Partners

## Priority 4.

Milestones		
Year 1	Year 2	Outcomes for 2005
<b>Strategic Objective 1 – Develop and implement an information and advice service for employers in Essex to encourage increased training activity</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up an information line for one point of contact for all employers.</li> <li>• Market service to employers.</li> <li>• Build collaboration with other agencies and providers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build awareness and usage.</li> <li>• Evaluate service and recommend improvements.</li> <li>• Set usage and customer satisfaction targets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service fully operational.</li> <li>• Usage and customer satisfaction targets met.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 2 – Provide a Skills Broker Service for organisations in Essex with over 250 employees, which will support the planning and provision of skills</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit/train/induct Skills Brokers.</li> <li>• Develop portfolio of clients for long term relationship.</li> <li>• Identify issues and skills gaps/shortages.</li> <li>• Broker solutions between employee and providers.</li> <li>• Market the services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a productive relationship with 40 large employers.</li> <li>• Be working in local areas bringing together employers and providers.</li> <li>• Identify skills issues to inform Area Reviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a productive relationship with 80 large employers.</li> <li>• Influence the provision and increase usage by employers.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 3 – Work with Business Link for Essex to deliver a package of support to encourage SMEs to train and develop their staff through appropriate mechanisms</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Workforce Development (WfD) Strategy.</li> <li>• Investors in People target achieved (Dec 2002).</li> <li>• Agree baseline for new national measure of employer engagement.</li> <li>• Pilot Sector Skills Programmes.</li> <li>• Pilot and evaluate CD Rom/ on-line service for employees.</li> <li>• Pilot Level 2 Initiative.</li> <li>• Embed apprenticeship programme in employer package.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement WfD strategy.</li> <li>• Achieve employer engagement target.</li> <li>• Implement 3 sector strategies.</li> <li>• Set usage targets.</li> <li>• Roll out Level 2 Initiative in two areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and evaluate WfD strategy.</li> <li>• Employer engagement target met.</li> <li>• Sector strategies embedded.</li> <li>• Usage targets met.</li> <li>• Embed Level 2 entitlement as an employer package.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 4 – Provide a service and support for employers going through structural change or relocating in Essex</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot, with providers, a service for employers managing change.</li> <li>• Ensure Rapid Response to notification of redundancies.</li> <li>• Work with the Inward Investment Office to ensure the skills base meets the needs of relocating companies.</li> <li>• Research issues/develop strategies for the Sea and Airport Gateways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broker customer led service.</li> <li>• Support Jobcentre Plus to deliver Rapid Response with employers at risk.</li> <li>• Develop service to attract new investors.</li> <li>• Begin to shape provision and awareness of new job opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure client satisfaction.</li> <li>• On-going Rapid Response.</li> <li>• Agree and deliver priorities with Essex Investment Office.</li> <li>• Gateway strategy being implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 5 – Support employers to develop the framework for Employee Development Schemes, with a focus on Basic Skills</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot learner focused programmes for delivery in company.</li> <li>• Pilot Learning Representatives in the Health Care sector.</li> <li>• Pilot Basic Skills Brokerage Scheme.</li> <li>• Pilot for local government workers and Basic Skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out pilot if successful.</li> <li>• Set target for number of Learning Reps.</li> <li>• Meet targets for Brokerage Service.</li> <li>• Roll out Basic Skills Agenda in Local Government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet volume targets for Learning Representatives.</li> <li>• Continue Brokerage Scheme.</li> <li>• Service implemented with 4 Local Authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 6 – Address the issue of supervisory and management skills in Essex, which are below the national average</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate a Management Development Network.</li> <li>• Support Supervisory/management Development Skills in SMEs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and build membership.</li> <li>• Fund support package for SMEs and meet target.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully operational and self sufficient network.</li> <li>• Meet target.</li> </ul>

**Priority 5. To ensure high quality provision that meets the needs of learners, employers and communities**

**Aims for the year 2005:**

- > Learners in Essex will be in provision, which is continuously improving to meet identified needs
- > Funding will be flexible and responsive, securing provision that meets the needs of learners, employers and communities
- > Learning will be delivered by a broad spectrum of providers working collaboratively to meet the needs of each individual learner
- > Learner satisfaction will result in young people and adults wanting to come back for more

**Strategic Objectives:**

1. To fund learning provision which is continuously improving, and to support providers to improve standards and share good practice
2. Develop an Annual Needs Assessment of Post-16 Population in Essex. This will inform our priorities and issues for purchasing learning
3. Develop mechanisms for introducing capacity building and contracting with new providers including the voluntary sector

**Commentary:**

- > The prime responsibility for the quality of provision rests with the provider and we will expect all providers to strive for continuous improvement. LSC Essex will encourage and support this by combining rewards and sanctions with targeted support to make improvements and share good practice. The Standards Fund will be a key mechanism for this
- > We will establish a regular cycle of Provider Performance Review to allow a structured assessment of providers against a set of common criteria, as well as facilitating dialogue and action planning between the LSC and individual providers. Inspection findings, learner feedback and performance data will all provide valuable sources of information for assessing and benchmarking
- > We are confident that by working together we can drive up standards and build upon the improvements in quality already achieved by many providers. However, where provision fails to improve we shall switch to better providers, or cease funding for particular areas of provision within large organisations
- > The Annual Needs Assessment of the Post-16 Population in Essex will build upon the existing mapping of provision and need undertaken by Learning Partnerships, Connexions Partnerships and others. Learning Providers, employers, learners and other key partners will all be essential sources of local knowledge and information
- > Developing provision to better meet local needs will require new levels of collaboration, as well as working more closely with agencies who can provide specialist support to meet the wider needs of learners. Centres of Vocational Excellence will offer providers the opportunity to develop specialist strengths and deliver high quality learning to meet local skills needs
- > Underpinning our approach to funding will be a principle to minimise bureaucracy whilst ensuring accountability, quality and adherence to funding requirements

**Priority 5.**

Milestones		
Year 1	Year 2	Outcomes for 2005
<b>Strategic Objective 1 – To fund learning provision, which is continuously improving, and support providers to drive up standards and share good practice</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish baselines for retention and achievement, inspection grades, performance review assessments and learner satisfaction.</li> <li>• Agree recovery plans for areas of poor provision and encourage growth for good and excellent provision.</li> <li>• Hold provider events to share good practice and identify areas for collaboration.</li> <li>• Support national initiatives to reduce bureaucracy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality improvement targets set and action plans agreed to improve retention and achievement.</li> <li>• Improvement plans agreed for coasting providers and alternative provision developed to replace areas of poor quality.</li> <li>• Good practice events held and collaborative initiatives under way.</li> <li>• National initiatives to reduce bureaucracy supported.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved inspection and provider performance review results, increased levels of learner satisfaction and retention and achievement.</li> <li>• All provision continuously improving.</li> <li>• Provider events valued and collaborative approaches achieved.</li> <li>• Reduction in bureaucracy achieved.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 2 – Develop an Annual Needs Assessment of the Post-16 Population in Essex. This will inform our priorities and issues for purchasing learning</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad priorities and specific gaps in provision identified.</li> <li>• Funding allocations will give priority to provision that meets identified needs.</li> <li>• Pilot approaches developed to address priorities and gaps:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical</li> <li>• Occupational</li> <li>• Learner needs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area surveys as well as increased partner feedback and continued research will result in a more detailed Annual Needs Assessment of Post-16 Population in Essex.</li> <li>• Funding increasingly aligned to priorities and gaps in provision.</li> <li>• New initiatives developed to build upon successful pilots.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive and detailed analysis of learning needs.</li> <li>• All funding aligned to identified priorities and needs.</li> <li>• New initiatives fully integrated within existing delivery mechanisms.</li> <li>• At least 50% of Further Education Colleges having one Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE).</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 3 – Develop mechanisms for introducing, capacity building and contracting with new providers including the voluntary sector</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative approaches developed between providers, including those from the voluntary sector.</li> <li>• Fast track package of support developed for capacity building new providers.</li> <li>• Consultation undertaken with voluntary sector to develop appropriate funding mechanisms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot consortium for contracting with smaller providers.</li> <li>• Continue support to capacity build new providers to plug gaps in provision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network of consortia in place across LSC Essex area.</li> <li>• Specialist provision in place to meet specific needs.</li> </ul>



## Priority 6. To develop and implement an Equality and Diversity Strategy

### Aims for the year 2005:

- > Learners in the Essex community will enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing LSC provision: barriers to entry, participation, progression, attainment and outcome will mostly be broken down
- > The learning society in Essex will be largely free from discrimination and prejudice. It will encourage and help all learners to reach their full potential
- > To improve the learning and skills participation and achievement levels in the most deprived parts of Essex and rural areas

### Strategic Objectives:

1. LSC funded provision is accessible to all, in terms of entry, participation, progression, attainment and outcome
2. Support employers in developing equality and diversity policies and promoting inclusive employment practices
3. Continue to develop our understanding of the learning needs of marginalised and excluded people, in particular in the more deprived and rural parts of Essex
4. Continue to develop our management information in order to monitor performance, measure impact and plan change

### Commentary:

- > Learning providers will ensure their provision fully embeds equality and diversity. We will encourage and support this via the Standards Fund and other funding streams
- > We shall maintain and develop discrete funding to support disabled learners, including learning disabilities (see Appendix 3)
- > We shall expect our providers to be exemplary equal opportunities employers
- > The cycle of Provider Performance Reviews will allow us to assess providers' performance. It will also enable us to work with providers to plan actions to improve performance and disseminate good practice. Area surveys and the inspection cycles will be important tools in improving quality
- > By working together we can make provision in Essex fully accessible. We can improve the delivery of equality and diversity by building on the standards of the best
- > Our workforce development activities with employers will include a focus on equality and diversity. Access to learning for people at work will be delivered with due regard to equality of opportunity. Employers will be encouraged to adopt best practice, including work/life balance
- > The development of management information will enable better monitoring of providers' performance in relation to equality and diversity
- > We shall maintain a separate Equality and Diversity Strategy for 2002/2003, using that year to prepare to mainstream equality and diversity in all our strategies and activities from 2003/2004
- > Below average participation and achievement in learning is a particular issue in certain local areas, and the rural parts of Essex. We will work with local strategic partners to address these learning issues

## Priority 6.

Milestones		
Year 1	Year 2	Outcomes for 2005
<b>Strategic Objective 1 – LSC funded provision is accessible to all, in terms of entry, participation, progression, attainment and outcome</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality and diversity contract targets agreed with most providers.</li> <li>• Providers' training and quality development needs supported.</li> <li>• Funds for disabled learners deployed strategically and effectively.</li> <li>• Local Initiative Fund (LIF)/co-financing European Social Fund (ESF) used to support new provision.</li> <li>• Promote progression into Higher Education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract targets agreed with all providers.</li> <li>• Providers to meet targets and new learners' needs.</li> <li>• Funds for disabled learners deployed strategically and effectively.</li> <li>• Equality and diversity embedded in Local Strategic Plan.</li> <li>• Targets set for progression into HE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target setting and achievement embedded in providers' practices.</li> <li>• New provision contracted to meet specific needs.</li> <li>• Funds for disabled learners deployed strategically and effectively.</li> <li>• Provision is inclusive, accessible and "equality proofed".</li> <li>• Increased progression into HE.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 2 – Support employers in developing equality and diversity policies and promoting inclusive employment practices</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality and diversity business case developed and piloted.</li> <li>• LSC staff trained to promote business case.</li> <li>• Best practice seminars organised.</li> <li>• Support of partner organisations secured and active.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business case established and in use.</li> <li>• Employers buy in to activities: LIF/ co-financing (ESF) supports.</li> <li>• Good practice spreads among networks.</li> <li>• Partner organisations promote business case.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in businesses with active equality and diversity policies.</li> <li>• More employees access work-related training.</li> <li>• Good practice spreads among networks.</li> <li>• Selected businesses identified as equality and diversity champions.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 3 – Continue to develop our understanding of learning needs of marginalised and excluded people</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, with partners, the needs of disadvantaged learners.</li> <li>• Develop research programme to address knowledge gaps.</li> <li>• External Equality and Diversity Group active.</li> <li>• Agree plans with Local Strategic Partnerships in low participation/achievement areas (urban and rural).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner demand better understood.</li> <li>• Undertake research – act on findings.</li> <li>• External Equality and Diversity group functioning fully.</li> <li>• Implement Plans via Local Strategic Partnerships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs of disadvantaged learners met.</li> <li>• Learner demand routinely disseminated through partnerships and acted on.</li> <li>• New provision for disadvantaged learners implemented.</li> <li>• Learning participation and achievement levels increased in deprived and rural areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 4 – Continue to develop our management information in order to monitor performance, measure impact and plan change</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management information used to monitor performance.</li> <li>• Improved Management Information developed to enhance equality and diversity monitoring.</li> <li>• Establish, in line with national guidance, impact measures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive systems enable realistic targets to be set and monitored.</li> <li>• Impact measures fully in place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management information fully supports target setting, monitoring and impact measurement.</li> <li>• Better analysis/impact measures available to inform strategic planning.</li> </ul>



## > 5. Measuring Progress and Evaluation Strategy

LSC Essex places great emphasis on measuring progress and evaluating its Strategic Plan at various levels in order to determine the difference in learning and skills issues achieved over time. The three levels are shown below:

- > LSC Essex's contribution to the learning targets for England by 2004
- > Service/Initiative Performance Measures  
(For example: Work Based Learning and Bite Size course attainment, retention and drop out rates)
- > Provider Quality Measures, Inspection Grades and Learner Satisfaction Measures

The six Key Priorities, stated earlier in the document, will have collectively identified specific outcomes over the life of the plan and beyond. For each of these, tracking systems will be put in place to enable evaluation to be undertaken.

The results from measuring progress towards the 3-year outcomes will provide valuable information, which will feed back into the strategic planning process in order to help the on-going development of the strategic plan.

Evaluation activity is seen as a journey over time where LSC Essex will become more focused and specific in its activities. This will ensure that the six Key Priorities are met in the most appropriate way by showing distance travelled in terms of learning and skills as well as value for money. It will also provide an appropriate measure for adjusting funding priorities annually to achieve specific outcomes.

## > 6. Annual Business Plans

With an agreed three-year strategy in place, the Business Plan for each year will be aligned to the proposed activities and targets, within the constraints of the existing funding methodology. Working closely with National Office (NO), we shall strive to obtain greater flexibility and simplified funding lines to align with our strategic goals.

**The Business Plan will include:**

- > Targets to be achieved in Essex
- > Gaps and trends in provision to meet known employer demand to address skill shortages and gaps in existing workforce skill levels
- > New initiatives to meet identified needs

The breadth and depth of information supplied to inform learning providers' plans will be improved over the life of the Strategic Plan, both in terms of analysed research data and the results of local area surveys of needs and provision.

## > 7. LSC Essex as an Organisation

### 7.1 Organisation and Staffing

An initial organisation structure was developed in late 2000 in order to enable the transfer of staff from predecessor institutions, and to secure the successful launch of the LSC in Essex.

Because of the above imperatives, it was clear that a revision to the organisation structure would be necessary by Autumn 2001, if we were to meet the challenges ahead. This review has been completed and a revised structure was in place by January 2002.

Levels of expertise relative to the wider LSC remit have varied, and the opportunity has been taken to recruit new staff to build levels of knowledge and experience in specific areas, e.g. Further Education and Basic Skills. A comprehensive learning and development plan will be implemented during the period covered by the Strategic Plan.

Secondments are also being used to further supplement levels of expertise.

### 7.2 ICT Systems

ICT systems operated locally will be part of the national systems and based on the strategies developed by NO to support identified business requirements.

Locally, LSC Essex will contribute to the development of ICT systems by participation in development and user groups and by exploitation of functionality of systems.

### 7.3 Financial Audit and Control Systems

LSC Essex will operate financial audit and control systems in line with NO guidance. Appropriately trained local finance staff will operate local systems and work with NO staff to assist in the continuous improvement of systems and controls.

Financial performance reports will be produced monthly for review by budget holders, the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Council. A Risk Management policy supported by a local risk register will be developed, and will be reviewed by the SMT.

A local Audit Committee has been established to maintain an overview of risk management and internal control matters. An annual Internal Statement of Control will be produced based on evidence of performance against a schedule of controls. It will be reviewed and ratified by the local Audit Committee. The work of the Provider Financial Assurance function and the work of internal audit will support assurance on financial control.

### 7.4 Provider Performance and Quality

A local quality improvement strategy will be developed to provide a framework to facilitate continuous improvement. Cross team and directorate working will result in provider monitoring, support and any necessary interventions being fully aligned to our strategy. Regular Provider Performance Reviews (PPR) will be led by the Strategy Directorate to ensure the consistency and robustness of approach across our provider base.

### 7.5 Health and Safety

#### LSC Employees

LSC Essex is committed to providing and maintaining exemplary safety standards for its staff and visitors. Its local safety policy document sets out the responsibilities and arrangements for not only workplace standards, but also working practices that will help to prevent ill health and accidents. Consultation and review of performance takes place through a safety group made up of representatives from across the organisation.

### Learners

It is recognised that the primary duty of care for learners rests with providers. However, LSC Essex is committed to ensuring its learners are in safe environments, are trained in safe working practices, and become safe learners. Health and safety is therefore integrated into the work that is done with providers to raise standards through continuous improvement. The in-house qualified health and safety advisers work with the operational directorates which contract, and manage quality improvement. Their work with providers is pro-active in promoting good practice, and encouraging collaboration and networking. They also monitor provider performance, on a selective risk basis, and provide support as required.

## > 8. Conclusion

This Strategic Plan has been built on a sound understanding of the current and future needs of learners in Essex, informed by both research and the results of our extensive consultation. The plan has been widely welcomed as a step forward in the move towards an integrated approach to post-16 learning.

We believe it focuses on the key issues facing local communities and employers in Essex, whilst ensuring we contribute towards achievement of the initial national targets for 2004.

We look forward to taking forward this strategic plan with our partners, and to making a material difference to the learning and skills of our people and the competitiveness of businesses in Essex.

## > List of Organisations at Consultation Events Appendix 1a.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AMT Centre</li><li>• Anglia Polytechnic University</li><li>• Anglia South Open College Network</li><li>• Area Dean of Thurrock</li><li>• Bank of England Printing Works</li><li>• Barnstaple School</li><li>• Basildon Adult Community College</li><li>• Basildon Careers Centre</li><li>• Basildon District Council</li><li>• BBC Essex</li><li>• Beauchamps High School</li><li>• Belfairs High School</li><li>• Benham &amp; Co Ltd</li><li>• Billericay, Brentwood and Wickford Primary Care Trust</li><li>• Bird Luckin Ltd</li><li>• Braintree Citizens Advice Bureau</li><li>• Braintree College</li><li>• Braintree Library</li><li>• Brentwood Academy of Health &amp; Beauty</li><li>• Brentwood Borough Council</li><li>• Brentwood County High School</li><li>• Brentwood Diocesan Head Teachers Conference</li><li>• Brentwood Mind</li><li>• Brentwood Training Services</li><li>• Bridge Links Ltd</li><li>• Business Link for Essex</li><li>• Castle Point &amp; Rochford Adult Community College</li><li>• Cecil Jones High School</li><li>• Chaplain to Industry &amp; Commerce in Southend</li><li>• Chelmsford Adult Community College</li><li>• Chelmsford Borough Council</li><li>• Chelmsford Chamber of Commerce</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chelmsford College</li><li>• Chelmsford Community Voluntary Services</li><li>• Clacton &amp; District Volunteer Bureau</li><li>• Clacton County High School</li><li>• Clacton Library</li><li>• Colbayns High School</li><li>• Colchester Adult Community College</li><li>• Colchester Borough Council</li><li>• Colchester Community Voluntary Services</li><li>• Colchester Economic Forum (Colecon)</li><li>• Colchester Enterprise Agency</li><li>• Colchester Institute</li><li>• Colchester Institute at Clacton</li><li>• Colchester Library</li><li>• Colchester Royal Grammar School</li><li>• Countryside Properties PLC</li><li>• Crown College</li><li>• Department of Social Care – Southend on Sea Borough Council</li><li>• District Manager, Essex Libraries</li><li>• Dyslexia Institute</li><li>• East Division Youth Office</li><li>• East Essex Adult Community College</li><li>• East of England Development Agency</li><li>• Education Action Zone – Clacton</li><li>• Education Department – Southend on Sea Borough Council</li><li>• Elmbrook School FE Unit</li><li>• Employment Service – Chelmsford</li><li>• Employment Service – Clacton</li><li>• Employment Service – Colchester</li><li>• Employment Service – Harlow</li><li>• Employment Service District Office</li><li>• Enterprise – Essex County Council</li></ul> |
|--|---|

- Epping Forest College
- Epping Forest District Council
- Essex Careers & Business Partnership – Clacton
- Essex Careers & Business Partnership – Head Office
- Essex Careers & Business Partnership – Rochford
- Essex Chambers of Commerce
- Essex Community Foundation
- Essex County Council
- Essex Disabled People’s Association
- Essex Libraries Headquarters
- Essex Police
- Essex Probation Service
- Essex Roofing Co Ltd
- Essex Social Services
- Essex Southend & Thurrock Connexions
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Society
- Ethnic Minority Community Development – Harlow
- Field Studies Council
- First Thamesway
- FLS Ltd
- Ford Dunton Technical Centre
- FSB
- G E Cook & Sons Ltd
- Government Office for the East of England
- Great Baddow High School
- Great Clacton Junior School
- Hamlin Trust
- Harlow College
- Harlow Co-operative Development Agency
- Harlow District Council
- Harlow District Council For Voluntary Services
- Harlow Fields School
- Harlow ITEC

- Hassenbrook School
- Hogarth Primary School
- Independent Living Disability Services
- InterAct
- Into Employment (Linked)
- ITEC Learning Technologies
- Jobcentre Plus – Chelmsford
- King John School
- Link-Ed Ltd
- Little Pals
- Loughton Library
- LR Training Partnership
- Maldon & South Chelmsford Primary Care Group
- Maldon District Council
- Marconi Applied Technologies
- Mayflower High School
- Mencap
- Ms. M. Higgleton – Business & Personal Development Adviser
- NACRO
- NE Essex Business Education Partnership
- Newsquest Essex Ltd
- Nortel Networks
- North Essex Adult Community College
- North Essex Health Authority
- North Essex Learning Partnership
- North and West Essex Adult Community College
- NSF Boost
- Oak View School
- Ormiston Children& Families Trust
- O'Rourke Group Ltd
- Palmer’s College
- Pear Tree Mead Primary and Nursery School

- Pelcombe Training Ltd
- Platform 1 Training
- Polish Society
- Post-16 Education and Lifelong Learning – Essex County Council
- Professional Training Centre
- R C H Group
- Rathbone
- Realife Trust
- RFEA – Employment Consultant
- Rochford District Council
- Rural Community Council of Essex
- S.Essex Divisional Youth Office – Essex County Council
- Saffron Sight
- Saffron Walden County High School
- Scarletts Quality Plants
- SE TV & Media Workshop
- SEETEC Group
- SEEVIC College
- Shoeburyness High School
- South East Essex Christian Hospice
- South East Essex College
- South Essex Learning Partnership
- South Ockendon Community Forum
- Southend Adult Community College
- Southend Centre for the Homeless
- Southend Education Action Zone
- Southend Enterprise Agency Ltd.
- Southend on Sea Borough Council
- Southend Youth Service
- Springlands Nursery
- St John Payne School
- St Thomas More High School

- St. A.R. Partnership
- St. Benedict’s College
- Synergy
- Talk Yourself into a Job
- Tendring Adult Community College
- Tendring Construction Co
- Tendring Council for Voluntary Services
- Tendring District Council
- Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership
- The Business Enterprise Agency
- The Catch Project
- The Endeavour School
- The Finishing Line
- The Hedley Walter High School
- The Philip Morant School
- The Plume School
- The Trident Trust
- Thurrock Adult Community College
- Thurrock and Basildon College
- Thurrock Community Leisure Ltd
- Thurrock Council
- Thurrock Council of Voluntary Service
- Thurrock Learning Partnership
- Thurrock Youth & Play Service
- Thurrock Youth Service
- Thurstable School
- Training Business Group Learning
- Trust Links
- Turnabout Trust
- Unilever Bestfoods

## > Consultation Events – Summary of Issues Raised Appendix 1b.

### 1. Developing The Market For Learning

- > Provide relevant and timely research database/disseminate widely
- > Broker the sharing of best practice and its dissemination
- > Address "market failure", i.e. skill shortages (new recruits)/skills gap (existing workforce) – specifically:
  - Employability skills
  - Craft skills (plumbing/heating/ventilation)
- > Encourage Family Learning initiatives
- > Develop links with Higher Education Institutions to enable progression
- > Secure the effective integration of the voluntary sector into local learning provider networks
- > Ensure sustainable out-reach provision in areas of deprivation
- > Ensure access to information, advice and guidance in rural areas
- > Ensure longer term (sustainable) funding to overcome annual/fragmented-bidding rounds
- > Address the needs of the most deprived wards in Essex
- > In Tendring address the West Clacton area
- > Simplify audit and administration for learning providers
- > Make links with neighbourhood renewal partnerships
- > Support campaigns for improved transport in deprived areas:
  - Basildon, Harlow, Thurrock
  - Public transport is not good at night/worries on safety
  - Lower number of car owners in these areas
  - Would like local/community learning
- > Support campaigns for improved transport in rural areas
- > Rural areas need special help. e.g. In Maldon, Tendring, Braintree and Uttlesford districts
- > Promote community (on-line) learning and use of library facilities
- > LSC to seek ways of adding value – address the "big issues" and "if it isn't broken – don't fix it!"
- > Evaluate the Colchester Learning Shop for possible replication elsewhere
- > Ensure evaluation of learning seeks feedback from employers and learners
- > Change in learning culture:
  - Marketing learning
  - Barriers to learning need to be addressed
  - Motivation to train/build confidence
  - Change public perception on learning

### 2. Participation and Achievement of Young People

- > Secure "parity of esteem" of vocational and academic routes post-16. Seek to gain status for vocational routes as in for example, Germany
- > Promote recognition and adoption of informal learning via Youth Service

- > Secure provision suitable for young (single) parents/plus childcare
- > Involve role models (sportsmen/women) in raising motivation to learn
- > Promote and secure seamless provision 14-19 to enable ladders of progression in all localities of Essex
- > Target young people at 16 with no qualifications
- > Address the imbalance between the achievement of boys and girls
- > Develop relationship between schools and industry/employers
- > Consider the specific needs of young people in care
- > Measure distance travelled not just whole qualifications
- > Ensure the learning environment is stimulating not "passive"
- > Teacher recruitment in South East Essex is a problem

### 3. Increase Adult Participation and Achievement

- > Secure better use of facilities in rural areas for out of hours learning provision
- > Address the needs of wives of serving officers at Colchester Garrison
- > Secure flexible learning provision for commuters/shift workers
- > Target Level 3 achievement to match international competitors (France at 80% already)
- > See provision from the learner's viewpoint in terms of time, cost and motivation
- > Consider bursaries into higher education and "adult apprenticeships"
- > LSC Essex should address dyslexia, ex-offenders, mental health, physically disabled and special needs issues
- > The LSC need to focus on the lost generation of learners 40-45 plus

### 4. Engage Employers in Learning

- > Address growth opportunities at:
  - Bathside (Tendring)
  - Shellhaven (Thurrock)
  - Stansted (Uttlesford)
- > Secure one point of contact for information (quality check for customer satisfaction). Also to inform LSC of employer needs, share knowledge/good practice
- > Develop Skills Broker Service
- > Influencing the supply side for flexible and on-site learning provision
- > Need to promote learning which is needed and not just fashionable
- > Southend Airport employers urgently seeking engineering trainees/provision
- > Management skills are so diverse they could fall between Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and LSC
- > Small companies need to be educated as to why training is good for business
- > Small companies have problems with training:
  - Do not have training managers
  - Training is expensive/loss of time from employees
  - Employers need to be well supported
- > Develop relationship between schools and industry/employers



## > Core Strategic Partners

### Appendix 2.

LSC Essex implements its strategy through and by agreement with a number of different providers:

- > **Adult Community Colleges**
- > **Business Link for Essex** – for delivery of workforce development services (including Investors in People)
- > **Community and Voluntary Organisations** – particularly for disadvantaged and excluded young people and adults
- > **Education Business Link Consortium**
- > **Further Education Colleges**
- > **Information Advice and Guidance Partnership (IAG)** – a mutually supported network of providers (including Adult Community Colleges, FE Colleges, voluntary and community groups)
- > **Private Training Providers**
- > **School Sixth Forms (from April 2002)**

### Wider Strategic Partners

To ensure that the LSC Essex strategy fits within a coherent framework for Essex and the East of England, partner relationships with the following are essential:

- > **Connexions** – a radical new Government service to support young people through their teenage years, and their transition to adult life. Connexions enables them to make informed learning choices, through advice, guidance and support measures
- > **Essex Chambers of Commerce** – membership based organisation for Essex businesses
- > **Government Office East (GO-East)** – co-ordinating the work of government departments in the East of England
- > **Jobcentre Plus** – support for finding and keeping rewarding jobs
- > **Learning Partnerships (3: North, South, Thurrock)** – two-way communication with current and potential learners, crucial for promoting local innovation, and improving local planning and delivery
- > **Local Strategic Partnerships** – will bring all existing plans for local services together and set out a vision for the future
- > **National Training Organisations (NTOs)** – to draw together wider employment interests, including professional bodies, education, Trades Unions and Trade Associations. Provide sectoral market information to influence training delivery, curriculum development and qualifications
- > **Thames Gateway, South Essex** – (area of responsibility stretches from Thameside to east of Southend) – focus for public and private investment in regeneration and growth, including transport
- > **The Early Years Development Partnerships (3: Essex, Southend, Thurrock)** – childcare issues
- > **The East of England Development Agency** – working to improve the region's infrastructure, people skills, economic productivity and competitiveness
- > **The Essex Economic Partnership (EEP)** – a public/private partnership for the economic development of Essex
- > **Trades Unions** – stimulating interest and demand for learning among employees
- > **Ufi – University for Industry** – to stimulate demand for lifelong learning among businesses and individuals, and to improve access to relevant, high quality learning opportunities. To provide flexible, interactive learning by using technology to widen access to learning

## > Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD)

### Appendix 3.

Learners in Work Based Learning (WBL) with additional learning or social needs are funded under arrangements set out in the Learning and Skills Council Operations Guide. In FE, the former Further Education Funding Council's (FEFC) arrangements will be maintained. In Adult and Community Learning (ACL), Local Education Authorities (LEAs) are required to produce an annual public statement explaining what steps they take to ensure that their ACL provision meets the needs of disabled people.

#### In Essex:

- > We will have a mechanism in place to ensure that providers take forward their responsibilities for ensuring their provision meets the needs of disabled learners
- > We have a designated member of staff whose remit is to oversee, and who will be accountable for, provision for such learners
- > We will carry out a regular audit of provision and support for these learners, as well as an audit of what proportion of learners in FE, ACL and WBL is disabled
- > We will make sure that providers collect sufficient data to inform our LLDD policy and to monitor learners' progress
- > We will ensure that all providers address the needs of disabled learners in their approach to continuous improvement and the quality assurance and inspection processes

The Council is undertaking an exercise to map the various approaches and to develop a funding system which is understandable for learners, their advocates and providers alike. The principles are that funding must follow the learner and that there should be common levels of funding for learners with similar additional learning needs who are pursuing similar programmes anywhere in the country and in any LSC sector. The overall policy aim is to drive up standards for those learners traditionally marginalised within education and training.

The recommendations from the review will be included in the general consultation on the funding system for 2002-2003. It has not yet been decided whether the new funding system will be introduced from 2002-2003.

## > Definitions of Qualification Levels

### Appendix 4.

The definitions of attainment levels listed here are those used by the Department for Education and Skills in, for example, estimating progress against the National Learning Targets. They are based on the qualifications data available from the Labour Force Survey.

<b>Level 5</b> Higher degree.	NVQ level 5.	
<b>Level 4</b> First degree. Diploma in higher education. RSA higher diploma. Teaching (including FE, secondary, primary and others).	Other degree. HNC, HND, BTEC etc higher. Other HE below degree.	NVQ level 4. Nursing etc.
<b>Level 3</b> NVQ level 3. RSA advanced diploma. Scottish CSYS (67% of). Trade apprenticeship (50% of).	GNVQ advanced. OND, ONC, BTEC etc national. SCE higher or equivalent (3+).	A level and equivalent (2+). City & Guilds advanced craft. AS level or equivalent (4+).
<b>Level 2</b> NVQ level 2. RSA diploma. AS level or equivalent (2 or 3). BTEC, SCOTVEC first or general diploma. O level, GCSE or equivalent (5+ grades A-C).	GNVQ intermediate. City & Guilds craft. Trade apprenticeship (50% of).	A level and equivalent (1). Scottish CYCS (33% of). SCE higher or equivalent (1 or 2).
<b>Below Level 2</b> NVQ level 1. CSE below grade 1. City & Guilds other. AS level or equivalent (1).	GNVQ/GSVQ foundation. GCSE below grade C. SCOTVEC modules. BTEC, SCOTVEC first or general certificate.	Less than 5 GCSE grades A-C. RSA other. YT, YTP certificate.

## > LSC National Targets

### Appendix 5.

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

© LSC 2001. Published by the Learning and Skills Council.

Extracts from this publication may be reproduced for non-commercial educational or training purposes on condition that the source is acknowledged and the findings are not misrepresented.

If you would like further copies of the Corporate Plan please ring our helpdesk number on 0870 900 6800.

EE110/02



**Learning+Skills Council**  
Essex