

LSC Workforce Development Strategy

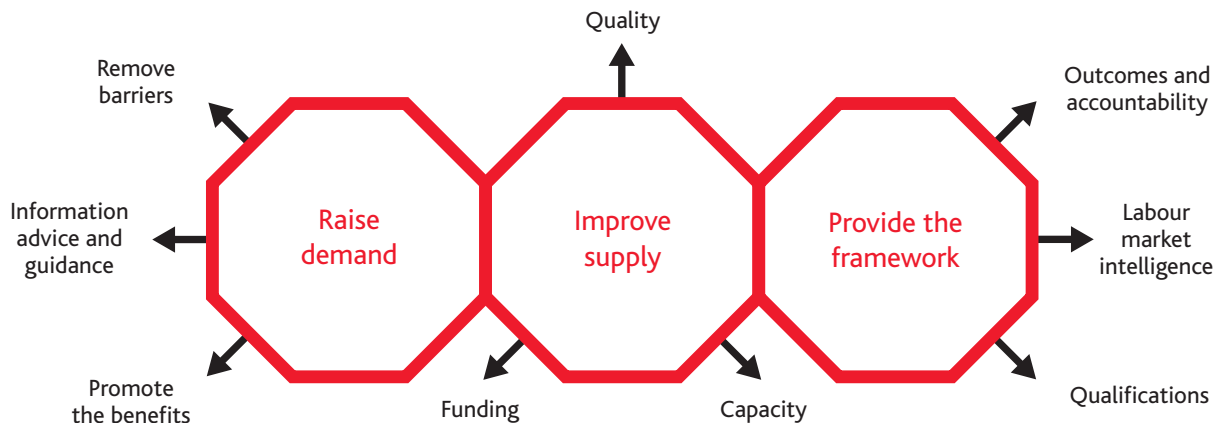
Summary of the National Policy Framework to 2005

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Learning+Skills Council

Action to improve the match between supply and demand for workforce development



LSC Workforce Development Strategy National Policy Framework

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for funding and planning education and training for over 16 year-olds in England.

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 the knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.

With a budget of £7.3 billion, the Council operates through 47 local offices and a national office in Coventry.

The LSC Corporate Plan to 2004 sets out our key tasks relating to adults skills and workforce development:

- to increase demand for learning by adults and equalise opportunities through better access to learning;
- to raise skill levels for national competitiveness;
- to improve the quality of education and training;
- to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

Cabinet Office Strategy Unit vision and strategy for workforce development

In 2010, the UK will be a society where Government, employers and individuals actively engage in skills development to deliver a sustainable economic success for all (In Demand (2): An Action Plan for Adult Skills in the 21st Century, October 2002)

Key Government Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets relating to workforce development

- to reduce by at least 40% the number of adults who lack NVQ level 2 or equivalent qualifications by 2010, with 1 million adults in the workforce to achieve level 2 between 2003 and 2006;
- to improve the basic skills of 1.5 million adults between 2001 and 2007, with a milestone of 750,000 by 2004. (Spending Review White Paper, July 2002)

Introduction from the Chairman

Developing the skills of the workforce is critical if we are to increase productivity, support advances in enterprise and innovation, and improve levels of social inclusion.

Currently, our workforce lags behind the best in the world – our labour productivity is 9% behind that of Germany, 18% behind France and 38% behind the US. This is far below where we need to be to achieve our vision that:

by 2010, young people and adults in England will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world

Reducing the proportion of the workforce with low skills will contribute to closing this productivity gap. This means addressing the needs of:

- the 1 in 5 adults¹ who have significant difficulty with literacy and numeracy – a cost to the industry of some £4.8 billion per year²
- the 7.2 million economically active people of working age³ in England that lack the benchmark Level 2 qualification, equating to five good GCSEs, and statistically associated with sustained employability; and
- the 12.4 million economically active people of working age⁴ in England lacking Level 3 skills equating to the threshold for university entrance, which will be required for an increasing proportion of all jobs by 2010.

This workforce development strategy sets out how LSC will deliver our statutory responsibility to raise skill levels and the demand for learning, and engage employers in improving skills for employability and national competitiveness.

We have developed the strategy in consultation with Government and our key partners, at national, regional and local level. We have worked closely with the Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit – now called the Strategy Unit

– to integrate our approaches to workforce development, and our strategy is published alongside their second report, In Demand (2): An Action Plan for Adult Skills in the 21st Century.

In line with this Government framework for action, our approach is threefold. We will take action to:

- raise informed demand for employment-related skills among individuals and employers;
- support improvements to the responsiveness and flexibility of the supply side; and
- contribute to the development of an underpinning framework of better skills and labour market intelligence, responsive vocational qualifications and improved links to the wider educational agenda.

Raising demand for workforce development is a complex dynamic. We need to work with employers and individuals to convince them of the returns from investment in skills, and motivate them into action. Workforce development has to be perceived as an activity that is integral to business success; capable of delivering increased efficiency, innovation and supporting the management of change. Individuals need to appreciate the enhanced employment opportunities that open up as a result of participating in learning. We will work with our partners – Business Links, Investors in People UK, Sector Skills Councils, Chambers of Commerce, the CBI, Regional Development Agencies, Ufi/**learn**direct, Trade Unions, Information, Advice and Guidance Partnerships and others – to demonstrate the benefits to employers and the workforce, and provide clear information and advice on the opportunities available.

Raising demand for workforce development will not in itself deliver increases in productivity. We need to stimulate and support the supply side – the further education colleges, the public, private and voluntary sector providers that we fund – to offer responsive and flexible solutions to meet the demands

¹ A Fresh Start: Improving Literacy and Numeracy, Report of the Working Group chaired by Sir Claus Moser, DfEE, 1999

² The Cost to Industry, ALBSU, 1993

³ Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002

⁴ Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002

of employers and the workforce. Harnessing the £2.5 billion public funds spent on adult skills through further education, work based and other routes, is essential if we are to deliver this strategy. Equipping employers with greater purchasing power will also incentivise providers to tailor provision, and lower the unit cost that LSC contributes. Alongside innovative work in this area, we welcome the Government's commitment to review the arrangements for funding for adult learning post 19.

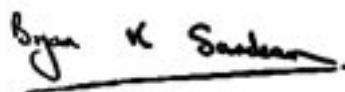
This strategy places workforce development at the heart of the LSC remit; it is critical to the achievement of our corporate targets and vision. Our 2001 Corporate Plan set a target of a five percentage point increase in attainment by adults at Level 3 between December 2000 and December 2004. In our next Corporate Plan we shall set similarly challenging targets for improved performance at Level 2. To achieve them and support the delivery of the Government's new PSA targets for Level 2, we need to develop better links with the schools and sixth form colleges, higher education institutions and agencies working to help get individuals back into the labour market. But we also need to reach a much higher proportion of those adults already in the workforce. We cannot rely on so many additional adults finding an individual route back to college or distance learning. Our approach to reaching these adults will be primarily an employer-led one. However, we will work with our partners, including Trade Union officers and networks of human resource and development professionals, to reach and represent the needs of adults in the workforce. Our work will be underpinned by the principles of equality and diversity at the heart of our remit, and we will develop specific actions to ensure that disadvantaged groups participate in workforce development.

We will also pay particular attention to supporting the needs of SMEs and micro businesses, who account for 99.2% of England's 3.21 million businesses, 63% of the total turnover and who have the potential to benefit most from investment in workforce development.

This strategy provides a framework for activity across the LSC: nationally; across the 47 local Councils; and, interfacing with Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action across the 9 regions of England. It is not intended to be restrictive; local innovation and flexibility is crucial if we are to succeed. Local Councils will work within this framework, developing local responses based on an understanding of the local employer base, their networks of providers, and the local economy and labour market. Local Councils will set out in Local Strategic Plans their response to meeting the objectives of this strategy.

In line with our own Corporate Planning timetable, this strategy is for activity to 2005. It will be reviewed annually to take account of policy development, evaluation of our progress and the outcomes of pilot work. This summary document sets out the broad, national framework, and will be accompanied by supporting material in the form of a series of implementation guides. This will enable us to update and localise the activities that will deliver our objectives, and develop new and innovative approaches.

Workforce development is perhaps the most challenging and exciting aspect of the LSC's agenda. We look forward to working with our partners to implement this strategy, developing flexible approaches that ensure a better match between supply and demand.



LSC Strategic Objectives for Workforce Development

The LSC vision is that:

by 2010, young people and adults will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world

Our corporate objectives to 2004 are to:

- extend participation in education, learning and training;
- increase engagement of employers in workforce development;
- raise achievement of young people and adults; and
- raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction.

Workforce development is at the heart of this vision. It must be a key driver for all LSC funded provision and activity if we are to achieve our vision, objectives and targets. We intend to be bold and radical in thinking about workforce development, recognising within this the importance of consistent delivery across all the key public agencies contributing to workforce development, and the need to target resources where they have most impact.

The LSC strategic objectives for workforce development are:

- to raise informed demand for employment-related skills among individuals and employers;
- to support improvements to the responsiveness and flexibility of the supply side; and
- to contribute to the development of an underpinning framework of better skills and labour market intelligence, responsive vocational qualifications and improved links to the wider educational agenda.

Measuring Progress

As well contributing towards our Corporate Targets, it is important that we develop an outcomes-based approach to measuring progress in workforce development. This strategy will adopt a range of measures of success, based on the following:

- contribution to our targets for adult participation, basic skills, attainment at levels 2 and 3, as set out in our 2001 Corporate Plan and taking into account the Government's further commitments in the Spending Review;
- interim measures of success to support local planning and evaluation for 2002-05;
- a new measure, and ultimately a target, for the level of engagement in workforce development amongst employers – as part of work to develop an outcomes based approach to measuring success;
- evaluation of work across our programme of sectoral and structural pilot activity;
- contribution to the success of Frameworks for Regional Economic and Skills Action Plan (FRESAs), and evaluation of the Spending Review regional pilots pooling LSC RDA funds for adult learning.

The LSC Workforce Development Strategy will be reviewed annually and rolled forward, in line with our Corporate Plan. In reviewing the Strategy we will take account of progress in line with our measures of success, but also emerging Government policy and local delivery models, integrating innovation and best practice.

Implementing the National Framework – Developing the Local Workforce Development Offer

The Cabinet Office Strategy Unit report, *In Demand (2): An Action Plan for Adult Skills in the 21st Century*, sets workforce development in the wider context of Government policy and maps out an action plan for the development of policy up to 2010.

The LSC is a key delivery agent to this Government action plan. Working closely with the Strategy Unit, Government and partners, LSC has developed this Workforce Development Strategy to 2005.

The LSC Workforce Development Strategy is a dynamic plan, which operates on a number of levels. This is reflected in the structure of the strategy as a document, and the ongoing implementation process:

National framework

We take *In Demand (2)* as our starting point and the basis of our national framework set out in this summary document. This framework identifies key objectives and corresponding actions that we will focus on to support the achievement of our corporate targets and contribute to the delivery to the Government action plan and vision for workforce development.

Activity and delivery around these objectives will need to evolve in line with emerging Government policy, including: review of funding for adult learning; development of the vocational qualifications system; outcomes of the 'Success for All' consultation to develop provider responsiveness and quality in teaching and learning; and, the forthcoming DfES Skills Strategy.

Implementation guides

A series of implementation guides will be published alongside this summary document. These correspond to the actions summarised under each objective, and contain information on how LSC will deliver the objectives of the national framework. Several are published along side this summary document. Publication of further implementation guides will be phased

over the coming months. This staged approach will enable the LSC to work with Government and our partners to develop responses and proposals to deliver emerging policy, building on local delivery models, partnership, best practice and innovation.

Local delivery

Local LSCs will develop local approaches to delivery, operating within the national framework. Activity will be prioritised based on local needs, and will build on local and regional partnership arrangements and provider infrastructure. In addition to incorporating the outcomes of evaluation of the programme of pilots that are integral to this strategy, innovative local approaches will be encouraged and best practice disseminated across the LSC network. It is also critical that local delivery patterns inform the ongoing development of the implementation guides and the review and roll forward of the national strategy. We will develop a consistent offer to employers and the workforce, but importantly one that is delivered and developed with the emphasis on local flexibility.

To support this process, national LSC will facilitate a series of themed workshops, led by local LSCs and involving key partners. We will also develop a toolkit for workforce development advisors to support implementation and work with employers.

Local LSCs will respond by integrating this activity into Local Strategic Plans from 2003. There is no obligation on Local LSCs to publish formal local workforce development plans – although some may choose to. We will monitor the integration of workforce development activity in Local Strategic Plans.

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Objective

1

To raise informed demand for employment-related skills among individuals and employers

In order to stimulate **employer** demand for workforce development, the LSC will:

- a Promote investment in skills as a business solution and 'meet employers in their world';
- b Maximise the role of management and leadership in creating demand for workforce development in line with the Government strategy for management and leadership;
- c Co-ordinate messages about workforce development to employers working with government agencies and key stakeholders;
- d Support the provision of relevant information and advice to employers;
- e Build the capacity of publicly funded workforce development advisors to work with employers;
- f Promote best practice and support the development of local, regional and sectoral employer networks;
- g Promote business and organisational effectiveness, particularly in medium and small organisations, working with frameworks such as the Investors in People Standard, supported by Laurel Online, and the offer available to employers through the Small Firms Initiative;
- h Support entrepreneurship, particularly in deprived areas by building on successful initiatives such as the New Entrepreneur Scholarship fund;
- i Support the development of mechanisms designed to overcome financial barriers inhibiting employer investment in workforce development, managing Employer Training Pilots and considering mechanisms such as tax credits, transferable training loans, and approaches that encourage employers to engage with providers.

In order to stimulate **individual** demand for workforce development, the LSC will:

- j Develop proposals for a coherent and integrated national Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service for adults by 2003, working with Ufi/**learn**direct and IAG Partnerships;
- k Implement a national framework to support local arrangements between Jobcentre Plus, IAG Partnerships and Local LSCs, and ensure links with the Connexions Service;
- l Support the role of Union Learning Representatives and Learning Advisors in the workplace;
- m Ensure that IAG Partnerships have access to high quality labour market and skills intelligence;
- n Support the development of employer provided IAG, working with DfES, the Guidance Council and IAG Partnerships and, where appropriate, roll out the **matrix** quality standard with employers from March 2003;
- o Develop inclusion strategies to underpin IAG for individuals in the workplace;
- p Increase the purchasing power of individuals by working with Government to implement the Individual Learning Account successor scheme, and alongside this by testing a variety of real loan account mechanisms to support skills development;
- q Develop positive action strategies with disengaged or under represented groups to ensure equality of opportunity and meet skills shortages;
- r Support access to learning for disadvantaged individuals and/or groups.

Objective

2

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To support improvements to the responsiveness and flexibility of the supply side

In order to support the development of responsive supply, which meets the needs of the demand side, the LSC will:

Support the increased flexibility of funding arrangements by:

- a Working with the DfES to review the systems of funding for adult learning;
- b Introducing greater flexibility into local LSC spending, enabling intelligent purchasing;
- c Piloting regional pooling of LSC RDA budgets for adult skills;
- d Developing and testing mechanisms that promote innovation and incentivise providers to develop a responsive workforce development offer.

Raise the quality of workforce development provision by:

- e Implementing provider performance indicators and benchmarks for workbased learning;
- f Disseminating good practice in workforce development provision amongst providers;
- g Considering mechanisms to present information on quality from the Common Inspection Framework to individuals and employers;
- h Supporting the skills of teachers and trainers using the Standards Fund across all sectors of LSC funded provision including workbased learning, and implement a standards framework for teachers and trainers;
- i Supporting the quality of literacy, numeracy and language skills provision delivered in the workplace and for the workforce;
- j Working with Government and providers to develop a management and leadership college for the post-16 sector to open in 2003;

k Developing approaches to support the quality of employer led provision for employees;

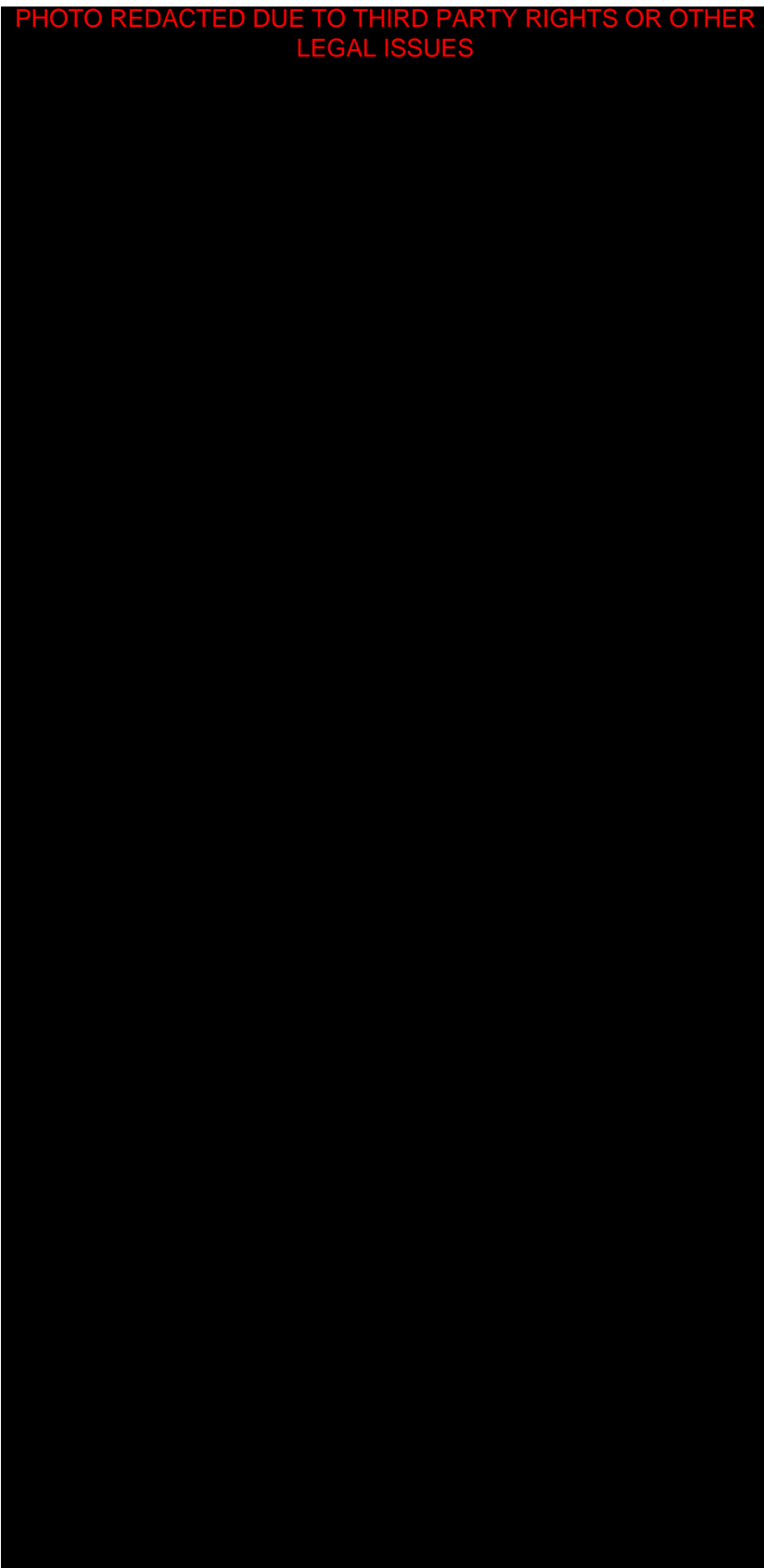
l Building on the outcomes of LSC Local Area Strategic Reviews as a means of engaging new providers where provision does not meet workforce development needs.

Build the capacity, flexibility and relevance of workforce development provision:

- m Integrating the delivery of skills and business support for SMEs and entrepreneurs and improving the capacity of publicly funded workforce development advisors to broker access to and deliver a wide workforce development portfolio;
- n Supporting the development of flexible provision and delivery mechanisms which meet employer needs;
- o Extending the Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) programme beyond the FE college sector to non-FE colleges and vocational training centres in companies;
- p Maximising the contribution of e-learning to workforce development working with Ufi/**learn**direct and other key partners to implement the recommendations of Get on with IT: The Post-16 E-Learning Strategy Task Force Report, the LSC Distributed and Electronic Learning Group Report, and Success for All;
- q Facilitating links between employers, teachers and trainers.

Objective

3



To contribute to the development of an underpinning framework of better skills and labour market intelligence, responsive vocational qualifications and improved links to the wider educational agenda

In order to support the development of a better framework the LSC will:

Improve the quality and use of skills and labour market intelligence by:

- a Implementing the LSC research strategy in the context of the Government's Partnership Agreement on Skills and Economic Intelligence;
- b Participating in the development and implementation of the skills academy to support the capacity of the skills research community;
- c Commissioning an annual skills needs assessment to support local, national and partner planning and funding;
- d Disseminating key skills research findings and ensure that LMI is utilised by key stakeholders.

Support the development of a more flexible and responsive qualifications system by:

- e Working with DfES, Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA) in the context of the QCA Quinquennial Review to develop the vocational qualification system to improve responsiveness to both employer and individual needs;
- f Working with QCA and SSDA to further develop a comprehensive, flexible, coherent National Qualifications Framework which embraces the best of vendor awards, considering pilot work in sectors where 'vendor' awards have an important role in the qualifications market;
- g Supporting the QCA in developing a more flexible qualifications framework which enables unit achievement;
- h Undertaking feasibility work to consider how a national credit based system could be implemented;

- i Developing design principles to fund employer training schemes which have been approved by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), rolling out in applicable sectors in 2003;
- j Piloting and evaluating adult apprenticeship programmes in targeted sectors or localities;
- k Undertaking a programme of 18-month sector pilots designed to test key propositions relating to the nature, delivery and funding of the qualifications framework and its fit with the needs of employers.

Improve links to the wider educational policy agenda by:

- l Supporting links and facilitating collaboration between schools, FE colleges and other training providers;
- m Leading on the implementation of recommendations of the report of the Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Committee on the new generation of Modern Apprenticeships;
- n Supporting links between IAG Partnerships and Connexions Partnerships;
- o Supporting the Government's 50% participation target for HE, implementing Partnership for Progression with HEFCE;
- p Working with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to support the increased vocational relevance of higher educational awards;
- q Developing links between CoVES and National Technology Institutes;
- r Developing collaborative approaches to workforce development policy working with HEIs and DfES;
- s Supporting the Government's Skills for Life agenda by incorporating literacy, language and numeracy skills training up to Level 2;
- t Produce a national strategy and delivery plan to widen adult participation across all sectors of post-16 education and training.

4

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ISSUES



Measuring progress

Measures of success from 2002

- a Our key measures of success will be the contribution which a coherent workforce development strategy makes to the achievement of the LSC Corporate Plan targets for adults: participation in learning; achievement at basic skills, Level 2 and Level 3; and employer engagement in all of these. The second Corporate Plan, which will issue later this year, will include a high-level adult participation target, and new targets for attainment rolled forward to the end of the Spending Review period to 2006, supported by targets at local LSC level. The new targets for adult achievement will all depend heavily on increased workplace attainment;
- b We will set a series of interim measures of success for workforce development for 2002-04; local and national self-assessment of progress towards the objectives set out in this strategy. We propose to judge progress, reporting annually to the national Council, and inviting local LSCs to do likewise to their own Councils, against the extent to which the LSC's 'offer':
- fully matches current local, regional and national employment needs;
 - matches the estimated future needs of employers and individuals;
 - offers a high quality coherent delivery network of integrated provision;
 - is capable of sustaining skills to retain existing business and employment, as well as enabling rapid response to threats and opportunities;
 - contributes to the delivery of the FRESA;
 - delivers flexible learning;
 - meets both employer needs and individual needs through simple, robust assessment and certification, including progress below the threshold of a full Level;
 - attracts new and returning learners with low starting skills and gets most of them to at least Level 2;
 - brings into learning and employment individuals from groups often excluded from learning and employment;
 - gives incentives to skills critical to local economic success, with a strong sectoral and/or occupational focus;
 - draws in employer and individual contributions into flexible, co-funded training which encourages retention, completion and success.
- ...and beyond 2003:
- c The Learning and Skills Act committed the LSC to working to drive up employer involvement and financial support for the development of their workforce. LSC's first Corporate Plan also committed us to developing a new mechanism for measuring the level of engagement in workforce development amongst employers. This measure will be rolled out in 2003 in order to set the baseline, and will support LSC planning;
- d In Demand (2): An Action Plan for Adult Skills in the 21st Century, sets out the Government commitment to develop a clear framework for measuring outcomes on workforce development performance. Proposals will be developed by Autumn 2003. The LSC measure of employer engagement will yield important data for mapping and achieving success as part of this work;
- e Robust evaluation of the LSC programme of sectoral and structural pilots work in order to make clear, evidence based policy decisions that will enable us to mainstream approaches and make recommendation feeding into the next Spending Review;
- f LSC workforce development activity will contribute to the delivery and evaluation of Frameworks for Regional Economic and Skills Action (FRESAs) from October 2002, and the Spending Review regional pilots pooling LSC RDA funds for adult learning from April 2003-March 2005.

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