

**LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

STRATEGIC AREA REVIEW

**Summary of the Main Findings and
Recommendations from the
Completed Reviews**

April 2005

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Note to the Reader

This report summarises the findings of the LSC's Strategic Area Review process in Nottinghamshire. The report can be read as a continuous document but it is also appropriate for the reader to 'dip into' parts of the document relevant to their area of work. The segmentation of subjects covered by the review should help with this process. Complete copies of the reports referred to in this review can be found on:

www.lsc.gov.uk/notts/documents/keyinitiatives/STARdocs

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Glossary

A' Level	Advanced Level Qualification (Level 3)
AS Level	Advanced Supplementary Level Qualification (Level 3)
A2	Second Year of an A' Level course
ACL	Adult and Community Learning
ACLS	Adult and Community Learning Service
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
ASG	Area Strategy Group
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic Group
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
COVE	Centre for Vocational Excellence
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DELG	Distributed and Electronic Learning Group
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
E2E	Entry to Employment
EMDA	East Midlands Development Agency
ESF	European Social Fund
FE	Further Education
FT	Full Time
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HE	Higher Education
IAG	Information Advice and Guidance
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILT	Information Learning Technology
ILR	Individual Learner Record
LEA	Local Education Authority
LLDD	Learners with Learning Difficulties and / or Disabilities
LLSC	Local Learning and Skills Council
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSCN	Learning and Skills Council Nottinghamshire
LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NLN	National Learning Network
NTN	Nottinghamshire Training Network
NTO	National Training Organisation (now replaced by Sector Skills Council)
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
Pfi	Private finance Initiative
Level 1	Equivalent to 5 A* - G GCSEs or NVQ Level 1
Level 2	Equivalent to 5 A* - C GCSEs or NVQ Level 2
Level 3	Equivalent to 2 A' Levels or NVQ Level 3
SME	Small Medium Enterprise
SSP	Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership
SSC	Sector Skills Council
StAR	Strategic Area Review
Ufi	University for Industry
WBL	Work Based Learning

Executive Summary

1 Background to the Strategic Area Review

This report is a summary of work that has taken place as part of the Strategic Area Review within Nottinghamshire between March 2003 and January 2005. It highlights the key themes that have emerged as a result of the individual reviews and outlines the steps that are being taken to implement their findings.

Strategic Area Reviews were launched as part of the Government's strategy 'Success for All' in March 2003. Success for All sets out the Government's policy for reforming further education and training, placing Strategic Area Reviews as one of four key strands of its strategy to raise standards within the sector. The overall aims of Strategic Area Reviews are to ensure that learner, employer and community needs are met, and to improve the choice and quality of post-16 education and skills provision.

The approach adopted in Nottinghamshire has been to conduct a range of individual reviews over the two-year timescale, to consult on each of these and then to produce this summative report highlighting common themes. As such, this final report presents information that is already in the public domain. Eight geographically based reviews of provision, nine sector skills studies and twelve reviews that can be described as being thematic in nature have taken place as part of the overall Strategic Area Review.

This has all taken place within the context of a rapidly changing education and training landscape. The key national strategies that have emerged during the course of the Strategic Area Review include the roll-out of 'Success for All', The Skills Strategy, 14-19 White Paper, 'Every Child Matters' and the Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners.

2 Overview of Nottinghamshire, the Economy and its Learners

The LSC Nottinghamshire (LSCN) area comprises of the local authority areas of Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City. Throughout this report, any reference to 'Nottinghamshire' refers to the whole of the LSCN area with any distinctions between the County and City being made by the according terms.

The total population of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County in 2001 was 1,015,498 (Census 2001), an increase of 1000 people from 1991. This growth took place in Nottinghamshire County, where an increase of 13,400 people over the ten-year period contrasted with a decline of 12,400 in Nottingham City. 2003 Working Futures data shows that 478,077 people were in employment in Nottinghamshire during 2002, with a predicted increase of 16,080 jobs by 2012. The same data set also shows that there are 33,092 businesses in Nottinghamshire, with the largest overall sector in 2002 being retail distribution, whilst the largest increase in employment between 2002 – 2012 is predicted to be the other business services sector, with 12,431 new jobs. Retail, health and social care and education are the sectors with the next largest predicted increases.

Nottinghamshire enjoys considerable prosperity but there are also areas of disadvantage and disaffection in both the City and County, with the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 showing that it has 37 of the country's most educationally disadvantaged wards. Whilst employment has increased in recent years, it is often low-paid and in industries which are susceptible to global competition. Furthermore, Nottinghamshire has seen a higher than average amount of displacement from unemployment to the category of 'economic inactivity', which includes full-time students and those claiming incapacity benefit. Forecasters have raised concerns about the ability of the labour market in Nottinghamshire to meet employer demands. This is in part due to the predicted 5% decline in 'primary age' workers (aged 25-44) between 2001-2006.

Nottinghamshire has higher rates of working age people without any qualifications and those lacking basic literacy and numeracy than the national average. When this is compounded by key attainment levels of 14-19 year olds in Nottinghamshire persistently below the English average, the need for an increased range of lower level and alternative qualifications to enable lifelong learning to take place becomes apparent. This theme runs throughout the report although improvements in 14-19 attainment and efforts to increase such pathways are also recognised.

Nottinghamshire learners perceive the main benefits of learning as being related to career development. Initiatives such as the Educational Maintenance Allowance have been successfully implemented and have helped to reduce barriers to learning. However, analysis of equality and diversity issues within Nottinghamshire reveals that there remain marked differences across all ethnic groups in exam achievement at the end of compulsory education. Some of these differences also continue in the post-16 environment although different performance between education sectors in relation to equality and diversity measures are recorded.

There is a significant mis-match between the needs of employers and the provision currently delivered through LSC funding. Outlining the demands of employers, the report suggests that the engineering & manufacturing, construction and retail sectors have a greater need for skilled employees than is currently being delivered through the education and training sector. The closer configuration of learning provision to the needs of the economy and the need for appropriate career guidance to closer link study with employment are key themes that run throughout the report.

3 Education and Training Provision in Nottinghamshire

This report summarises several reviews of education and training provision that have taken place over the two years of the Strategic Area Review process. Whilst these reviews focused heavily on the areas for improvement within sectors and individual institutions, it is also recognised that many of the solutions to the issues identified can be found within the excellent practice that does exist within Nottinghamshire. Recently published OfSTED inspections of FE colleges in Greater Nottingham for example, declared several areas of provision to be 'Outstanding'.

Reviews of Further Education provision have been grouped around the Greater Nottingham and north Nottinghamshire areas. The reviews found that, in Greater Nottingham, the current structure of FE colleges does not best meet the needs of learners or employers and struggles to be financially buoyant. The need for a more coherent and planned curriculum, establishing clearer progression pathways from lower levels and removing duplication at higher levels of study was highlighted. The development of more effective employer engagement strategies also featured strongly as did the need for the more effective use of the FE estate in Greater Nottingham.

The need to reduce franchise and partnership provision and ensure that what is delivered is good quality, local and meets LSC priorities was highlighted by the review as an issue that will be problematic for some FE colleges across Nottinghamshire to achieve. Reviews focusing on north Nottinghamshire highlighted the need for learning providers in the area to engage effectively with the 14-19 agendas in their localities and the need for further analysis of education and training in the Newark area.

Positive trends in the performance of Work Based Learning (WBL) providers were identified by the review, in part as a result of the development of Nottinghamshire Training Network. However, concerns about the overall standard of WBL in Nottinghamshire remain and the profile of the vocational route needs to be raised with potential learners, parents and

stakeholders. A need to increase the amount of construction and engineering WBL provision in Nottinghamshire to meet the skills needs of the sectors is also identified in the report.

The size and performance of school sixth forms is analysed in the report, with wide variations in both being highlighted. These factors have been viewed in more depth through an area review process, which the report also details. These area reviews have considered the curriculum offering of school sixth forms across Nottinghamshire, with the overall finding that until recently, there has been little collaboration between schools in local areas and little variation from a 'standard' Level 3 curriculum offer. The report recommends that there is a need to widen the curriculum offer through collaborative work, to be led by 14-19 Area Strategy Groups, with a need for the LSC to become more closely involved in performance monitoring for school sixth forms. The importance of impartial information, advice and guidance is also raised as a point of concern for the Area Strategy Groups. Specific issues raised within the area reviews, such as the establishment of two post-16 centres in Bassetlaw and the need for structural change in 14-19 provision within Newark, are also highlighted within the report along with a positive update on the progress being made towards these overall objectives.

This report summarises the current structures in place for Adult and Community Learning (ACL) delivered by the County and City councils and finds there to be a need to improve the added value gained by LSCN contracting with Nottingham City Council for the service. It also concludes that there is a Nottinghamshire-wide need to improve the strategic relationships and processes within ACL, focusing on better co-ordination with FE colleges, clarification for external institutions and recognising the structures developed to contract with the voluntary sector. These conclusions were linked to the proposal for restructuring ACL funding arrangements at a national level, the implementation of which is expected to have significant implications for Nottinghamshire provision.

Reviews of provision for young people and adults with learning difficulties and / or disabilities (LLDD) took place as part of the StAR and the outcomes from these have been linked with the review of Foundation and Level 1 provision in this report. The LLDD reviews concluded that such provision should become more learner centred and more focused on the skills needs of employers. Areas of duplication should be removed, with strong improvements required in terms of learner progression and achievement. Data collection should be improved, enabling effective learner tracking mechanisms to develop. The reviews also concluded that the coherence and effectiveness of information, advice and guidance at entry and during progression in learning should be improved.

The final area of 'supply-side' provision detailed in this report is that of 'e-learning'. FE colleges and schools are found to be significantly more advanced than WBL and ACL providers in their use of e-learning and there is evidence that the main area of further development is the 'up-skilling' of teachers, lecturers and trainers to adopt e-learning methods.

4 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions reached by the range of reviews conducted for the StAR, the following recommendations are made in this report: That LSCN should:

- Prioritise funding of education and training provision that meets the skills shortages and key sectors highlighted in this report and identified by the LSC at a regional level;
- Improve the breadth and depth of provision to better match the needs of individuals in Nottinghamshire not currently engaged in post-16 learning;
- Restructure FE provision in Greater Nottingham to better meet the needs of learners and employers and improve financial viability;
- Reduce high levels of franchise and partnership activity in FE colleges, ensuring that remaining provision is for local learners, meets LSC priorities and is of high quality;

- Work with Nottinghamshire Training Network to resolve the current skills gaps in engineering and construction WBL provision and continue to improve the overall quality of WBL;
- Work with school sixth forms to introduce appropriate development planning, target setting and performance monitoring;
- Establish Area Strategy Groups (in conjunction with the two LEAs) to develop 14-19 provision that meets the needs of local learners and employers, focus on quality improvement strategies, and promote structural change where possible and desirable. These developments should take place in line with the 14-19 White Paper launched in February 2005;
- Lead the review of education and training provision in Newark-on-Trent in order for new structural options to be fully considered;
- Engage with both Local Authorities to make the necessary improvements to the delivery and co-ordination of ACL. This engagement will follow the OfSTED inspections of both services and will be followed in 2006 with an analysis of improvements made and a revisiting of the structural options available to the LSC;
- Develop and lead action plans regarding provision for learners with learning difficulties including the establishment of strategic and provider groups for such provision;
- Promote the good practice that exists in e-learning provision and extend this through development planning processes, 14-19 Area Strategy Groups and direct engagement with umbrella organizations such as NTN and Enable;
- Work through Enable as an umbrella organisation for the voluntary and community sector and ensure that growth in the sector is achieved in priority areas identified such as Foundation and Level 1 provision.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report is a summary of all work that has taken place as part of the Strategic Area Review within Nottinghamshire between March 2003 and January 2005. It highlights the key themes that have emerged as a result of the individual reviews as well as outlining the steps that are being taken to implement the findings from each of these reviews.

1.2 Strategic Area Reviews were launched as part of the Government's strategy 'Success for All' in March 2003. Success for All sets out the Government's policy for reforming further education and training, with Strategic Area Reviews one of four key policy strands to raise standards within the sector. The overall aims of Strategic Area Reviews were to ensure that learner, employer and community needs are met, and to improve the choice and quality of post-16 education and skills provision. Within this overall aim, there is a need to ensure that the pattern and mix of provision meets the current needs and future priorities for all learners and communities; creates a more responsive infrastructure that directly engages employers, achieves better choice for young people and strengthens the links between 14-19 providers.

2 Methodology

2.1 The approach adopted in Nottinghamshire to undertake the Strategic Area Review has been to complete a range of individual reviews over the two-year timescale and consult regarding each of these. As such, this report presents information that is already in the public domain. Eight geographically based reviews of provision, nine sector skills studies and twelve reviews that can be described as being thematic in nature have taken place as part of the Strategic Area Review. The full range of reviews and the dates that they were completed is detailed in appendix 1 and these reports can be accessed via the LSCN website.

2.2 Structures have been put in place to support each of the reviews. These have included a 'Stakeholder Group' with representation from providers and partner organisations. The purpose of this group has been to ensure that the review process is followed appropriately. Communication with wider stakeholders has taken place through briefings to specific groups and the production of update newsletters. As each review has been completed, it has been circulated to a wide range of stakeholders for their comment. Consultation has therefore been established throughout the review cycle.

2.3 The decision-making criteria used for reviews can be grouped into three broad categories:

- Administrative criteria, including such elements as cost and financing and cost effectiveness.
- Results-oriented criteria, including consistency with mission; impact on users, and flexibility.
- Acceptability criteria, encompassing acceptability to key decisions makers and stakeholders, acceptance by the general public, and ethical and legal defensibility.

3 National Context

3.1 The StAR review has taken place within the context of a changing education and training landscape. The key national strategies that have emerged during the course of the StAR include:

3.2 Success for All

Success for All was launched in November 2002, with four themes aiming to improve the quality of further education and training. The Strategic Area Review process is outlined as part of theme 1, which considers meeting needs and improving choice. Themes 2 and 3 consider placing teaching, training and learning at the centre of the drive to improve standards. Finally, theme 4 outlines the need to develop a framework for quality and success.

3.3 The Skills Strategy / The Skills White Paper

The Skills White Paper, launched in March 2005, builds on the Skills Strategy published in July 2003 and outlines the need to ensure that, across the nation, employers have the right skills to support the success of their businesses and organisations, and individuals have the skills they need to be both employable and personally fulfilled. In comparison to the U.S and other European competitors, the UK has low productivity and low levels of the workforce with higher and intermediate level qualifications. The Skills Strategy aims to address these deep-rooted problems by placing employers' needs centre stage within a 'demand-led' system of education. It also outlines the need to help employers use skills to achieve more ambitious longer-term business success and to motivate and support learners by offering them a new entitlement to learning. The Skills White Paper describes the delivery of a new National Employer Training Programme and a national entitlement to free tuition for a first full Level 2 qualification and new extensive support for learning at Level 3 from 2006/07. The QCA's proposed Framework for Achievement will also be developed so that it supports the 14-19 and adult reforms.

3.4 14-19 Curriculum and Assessment Reform / 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper

The Working Group established by Ministers to advise on reform of curriculum and assessment arrangements for 14 to 19 year-olds reported its findings in October 2004 with the subsequent White Paper produced in February 2005. The need for reform is made clear, with the requirement for a high skill economy, social justice and ability to meet individual need all made clear. The proposals are designed to address disengagement at 14, failure at 16 and the lack of participation after compulsory education. The White Paper places emphasis on all young people being able to master 'functional' English and maths, with such achievement being central to the achievement of a diploma. Vocational reform, with sector-endorsed diplomas at levels 1, 2 and 3 is also outlined.

3.5 Every Child Matters / Youth Green Paper

The 2003 Paper 'Every Child Matters' recognised that radical change in the whole system of children's services is needed to achieve the outcomes for all children and young people. As a result of the changes proposed, Local Authorities have been charged with creating 'Children's Trusts', where all services (including those related to education and training) for children and young people in an area are brought together within one department. Further developments on these policies are expected during 2005, including clarification over the future role of the Connexions Service within these arrangements.

3.6 Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners

The 'Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners', launched in July 2004, outlined key reforms for secondary education nationally, which are:

- Guaranteed three-year budgets for every school from 2006;
- Universal specialist schools with improved standards;

- Freedom for all secondary schools to own their land and buildings, manage their assets, employ their staff, improve their governing bodies, and forge partnerships with outside sponsors and educational foundations;
- More places in popular schools by allowing them to propose to expand;
- Halving the existing inspection burden on schools;
- Creating 200 independently managed academies by 2010;
- Every secondary school to be refurbished or rebuilt to a modern standard over the next ten years.

3.7 Building Schools for the Future

The last commitment detailed in the synopsis of the 5-year strategy; that of refurbishing or rebuilding every secondary school to a modern standard; is outlined in the 'Building Schools for the Future' strategy. Building Schools for the Future (BSF) will provide £2.2 billion nationally per year for school refurbishment. Such physical developments will be led by innovative curriculum design and as such, BSF presents a unique opportunity to education planners. 2005/06 will be the first year of the programme and it has been announced that Nottingham City LEA will be one of ten Local Authorities receiving funding during 2006/07.

4 LSC Targets and Priorities

4.1 In December 2004, the LSC set out its priorities and key actions for 2005/06 to:

- Make learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers, young people and adults;
- Ensure that all 14-19 year olds have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities;
- Transform Further Education so that it attracts and stimulates more business investment in training and skills development;
- Strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development so that the skills needed to help all individuals into jobs are provided;
- Strengthen the LSC's capacity to work effectively at a regional level – particularly with Regional Development Agencies and Regional Skills Partnerships;
- Improve the skills of the workers who are delivering public services.

4.2 In supporting these national priorities, the LSC plans to deliver against the following targets:

For young people:

- Increase the proportion of 19 year olds who achieve at least a Level 2 (equivalent of 5 A*-C GCSEs) by three percentage points between 2004 and 2006, and a further two percentage points between 2006 and 2008. Contributing to this, the LSC aims to deliver 23,000 additional 19 year olds at / above Level 2 in 2006 compared to 2004.

For apprentices:

- By 2008, the number completing their apprenticeships will have risen by three quarters.

For adults:

- Improve the basic skills of 2.25 million adults between 2001 and 2010, with a milestone of 1.5 million in 2007 of which the LSC plans to fund at least 1.4 million directly.
- Reduce by at least 40 per cent the number of adults in the workforce who lack an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent qualifications by 2010. The LSC will lead on ensuring the delivery of this target through its own funding and contributions from others.

Work will also take place with key partners to improve their efforts to:

- Regionally set increases in the proportion of young people and adults achieving a Level 3 qualification.
- Reduce the proportion of young people not in education, training or employment by two percentage points by 2010.
- Increase participation in Higher Education towards 50 per cent of those aged 18 to 30 by 2010.

5 An Overview of Nottinghamshire

5.1 The Nottinghamshire LSC area comprises the local authority areas of Nottinghamshire County and the City of Nottingham. It is an area with a dynamic and growing economy and a vibrant regional city that is home to 'household name' companies, well-known higher education and further education providers, a wealth of leisure and recreational pursuits and cultural diversity. Nottingham is the main driver of economic growth in the East Midlands, with its significant proportion of higher level skills and greater enterprise resulting from the higher education institutions that are contained within the City.

5.2 The combined population of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County in 2001 was 1,015,498 (Census 2001), an increase of 1000 people from 1991. This growth took place in the County, where an increase of 13,400 people over the ten-year period contrasted with a decline of 12,400 in Nottingham City.

All People	Aged 0-14	Aged 15-29	Aged 30-44	Aged 45-59	Aged 60 and over	Totals
Nottingham City	49,649 (18.6%)	72,133 (27%)	57,292 (21.4%)	38,880 (14.6%)	49,034 (18.4%)	266,988
Nottinghamshire County	138,123 (18.5%)	124,897 (16.7%)	170,797 (22.8%)	152,764 (20.4%)	161,929 (21.6%)	748,510
Nottinghamshire LSC Area Total	187,772 (18.5%)	197,030 (19.4%)	228,089 (22.4%)	191,644 (18.9%)	210,963 (20.8%)	1,015,498
East Midlands	783,561 (18.8%)	759,572 (18.3%)	932,431 (22.3%)	818,583 (19.6%)	878,027 (21%)	4,172,174
England	9,277,814 (18.9%)	9,253,983 (18.8%)	11,127,511 (22.6%)	9,279,693 (18.9%)	10,199,830 (20.8%)	49,138,831

Source Census 2001

5.3 Nottinghamshire enjoys considerable prosperity but there are also areas of disadvantage and disaffection in both the City and County with the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 showing that it has 37 of the country's most educationally disadvantaged wards. Whilst employment has improved in recent times, it is often low-paid and in industries susceptible to global competition.

5.4 Differing rates of industrial re-structuring across Nottinghamshire have been a major influence on employment trends. The north of the county has failed to attract its share of service sector "business to business" employment opportunities and, although growth has occurred, it remains heavily reliant on manufacturing. According to the LSC's most recent Employers' Survey, the gulf in service sector employment between the conurbation and the rest of Nottinghamshire will continue to widen up to 2010. The sectoral differences in employment also impact on the differing occupations and earnings of Nottinghamshire residents.

5.5 The conurbation¹ of Greater Nottingham attracts a significant proportion of inward commuting, estimated to occupy around 30,000 jobs, a figure forecast to increase to 34,000 by 2009. In the north of the county, 29% of residents work outside their place of residence - 13% commuting to the City, 6% to South Yorkshire and the balance to Derbyshire and Lincolnshire. The status of Nottingham as the acknowledged regional capital is reflected in the numbers of students travelling to attend education and training provision in the City.

5.6 There is a Higher Education student population of around 50,000 in Nottinghamshire, which is predicted to gradually rise over the forthcoming years. Initiatives such as 'Bio City Nottingham', where both universities have joined forces to establish the UK's largest bio-medical science park incubation centre, have helped create growth in student numbers. 28

¹ The 'conurbation' refers to Nottingham City and its surrounding areas of population, which include the Local Authority Districts of Gedling, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe.

'spin-out' companies have formed as a result of technology transfer projects from the University of Nottingham, and more are expected. Nottingham Trent University is also exploring a number of start-ups in the area of science and technology.

5.7 Greater Nottingham has contrasting performance across a range of measures. New business formation is above the national average and a higher proportion of residents are in professional, associated professional and technical occupations than the English average. The Strelley ward however, has the worst educational performance out of 8414 wards nationally. SME employment for Greater Nottingham is also below the national average.

5.8 Workplace jobs in North Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire Coalfield Alliance Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership (Alliance SSP) area are dominated by education, health and social care, manufacture of food, clothes and printing with the area performing badly on all the significant indicators of social performances.

5.9 Over the past 20 years there has been a national increase in the economic inactivity rates² among young people, which is primarily due to an increased movement into Higher Education. 5.8% of the working age population in Nottinghamshire are economically inactive students, whilst 2.6% are economically active students.

5.10 Whilst unemployment has declined in varying rates across Nottinghamshire, exceptionally large numbers have been diverted from unemployment to sickness benefits³. This has happened predominantly in traditional industrial areas where many of the men on Incapacity Benefit were workers displaced from such industries during the last two decades. Indeed, the rising numbers on Incapacity Benefit represents the principal labour market response to industrial decline in the 1980s and 1990s. 14.4% of working age people in Nottinghamshire are retired; 6.3% stay to look after home/family and 6.4% are classed as permanently sick/disabled.

5.11 Nottingham is one of eight 'Core Cities', recognised by the Government as the most important potential drivers of the national economy outside London. The Greater Nottingham Partnership, formed in 1994 by the City and County Councils, is taking a leading role in Nottingham's development strategy by improving partnership working and attracting more Government money for regeneration activities. In 2002 it was accepted as the Sub-regional Strategic Partnership by the East Midlands Development Agency. As such, it is responsible for implementing EMDA's regional economic strategy in Greater Nottingham.

² The economically inactive group is defined as:

'People who are not in work, but who do not satisfy all the criteria for International Labour Organisation ILO unemployment (wanting a job, seeking in the last four weeks and available to start in the next two), such as those in retirement and those who are not actively seeking work'.

³ 'The Diversion from Unemployment to Sickness Across British Regions and Districts', Christina Beatty and Stephen Fothergill, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, April 2004

6 The Needs of Nottinghamshire Employers

6.1 The Labour Market Position in Nottinghamshire

Projections of Employment – Nottinghamshire 16 Primary Sectors						
	Employment Levels			Employment Levels		
	2002	2007	2012	2002-2007	2007-2012	2002-2012
Agriculture etc	3366	2900	2689	-466	-211	-677
Mining & Quarrying	3554	2884	2494	-670	-390	-1060
Food, Drink & Tobacco	10768	10687	10505	-81	-182	-263
Engineering	8207	7203	6913	-1004	-290	-1294
Rest of Manufacturing	50634	44239	41045	-6395	-3194	-9589
Electricity, Gas and Water	5104	5068	4782	-36	-286	-322
Construction	29579	30972	31464	1393	492	1885
Distribution	84527	87005	89595	2478	2590	5068
Hotels and Catering	28020	26651	26382	-1369	-269	-1638
Transport & Telecommunications	22019	22540	23495	521	955	1476
Banking & Insurance	7884	7776	7664	-108	-112	-220
Other Business Services	67965	71190	80396	3225	9206	12431
Public Admin and Defence	26014	25944	25637	-70	-307	-377
Education	41801	43893	44892	2092	999	3091
Health and Social Care	60148	62968	64805	2820	1837	4657
Miscellaneous Services	28487	30171	31399	1684	1228	2912
Total in Employment	478077	482091	494157	4014	12066	16080

Source: Working Futures: New Projections of Occupational Employment by Sector and Region, 2003, SSDA/LSC/IER/CE. Electronic Resource

6.1.1 The above table shows that 478,077 people were in employment in Nottinghamshire during 2002, with a predicted increase of 16,080 jobs by 2012. The largest overall sector in 2002 was retail distribution, whilst the largest increase in employment during that period is predicted to be the other business services sector, with 12,431 new jobs. Distribution, health & social work and education are the sectors with the next largest predicted increases. A further geographical breakdown of these figures reveals that the key feature of the Greater Nottingham area is the relatively high share of employment in private services (particularly in business services) and in the public services, whilst the Alliance SSP⁴ area is more reliant than the East Midlands average on manufacturing activities with a total of 36.3% of employment in these sectors. Business services is by far the most important sector for job creation in this SSP area, with around 13,600 FTEs forecast to be created during the next decade, more than twice as many as the next largest growth sector.

6.1.2 The breakdown of these projections by occupation reveals that the seven sub-major groups with the largest percentage share of the overall workforce are corporate managers, administrative occupations, elementary administrative services, process plant and machine operatives, sales occupations, caring personal occupations and skilled metal/electrical trades. These seven occupations alone accounted for 52% of the workforce in 2002. The following table shows the predicted change to these seven occupations in Nottinghamshire between 2002 and 2012.

⁴ The Alliance SSP refers to the Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership covering the Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire coalfield area.

Nottinghamshire – Trends in Occupational Employment 2002- 2012			
Occupation (SOC 2000 Sub-Major Groups)	2002 %	2012 %	Employment Change
Corporate Managers	10.6%	12.4%	40,663
Administrative Occupations	9.1%	8.3%	-7,385
Elementary: Admin/Services	7.6%	5.4%	-38,911
Process Plant and Mach Operatives.	6.2%	4.7%	-26,989
Sales Occupations	7.0%	7.5%	19,163
Caring Personal Service Occupations	7.1%	10.1%	67,730
Skilled Metal/Electrical Trades	4.4%	3.0%	-30,907

Source: Working Futures: New Projections of Occupational Employment by Sector and Region, 2003, SSDA/LSC/IER/CE. Electronic Resource

6.1.3 The figures captured in the above table highlight the large predicted increase in caring and personal service occupations and corporate managers, with reductions predicted for the elementary admin / services, skilled metal / electrical trades and process plant and machine operatives.

6.1.4 It is estimated that 80% of the workforce required for the next ten years is already in employment in Nottinghamshire, leaving a labour market already considered unable to meet employer demand for skills facing a 5% decline in 'primary age' workers (aged 25-44) between 2001-2006.

6.1.5 There are 33,092 businesses in Nottinghamshire, which break down in size as follows:

- 603 employers with 100+ employees
- 2,275 employers employing between 25 and 99 employees
- 9,581 employers employing between 5 and 24 employees
- 20,633 employers with 1 to 4 employees

9.2%.of the working population in Nottinghamshire is self-employed, the lowest rate in the East Midlands.

6.1.6 The sectors identified as priority by Nottinghamshire LSC in its 2005/06 Annual Plan are as follows:

- Retail, including Distribution, Transport & Storage (Logistics)
- Health & Social Care
- Construction
- Engineering & Manufacturing

The identification of these priorities enable LSCN to target these sectors and their related Sector Skills Councils for additional support and development.

6.2 What do Employers Require from the Workforce?

6.2.1 Reports from EMDA, LSC analysis of the work of NTOs/Sector Skills Councils and initial findings from the LSC Employer Survey indicate that skill requirements are increasing, with employers demanding multi skilled employees in many occupations with at least a basic level of competence in IT. Two factors create demand for skilled people: employment growth and replacement demand.

6.2.2 The survey shows that 48% of employers cite prior experience as the most important factor when recruiting, whilst only 9% suggest that qualifications are important. Failure to recruit results in companies reporting increased operating costs and difficulties in meeting customer service objectives and quality standards.

6.2.3 The main reasons for vacancies within certain sectors and occupational categories being difficult to fill are:

- The lack of suitable people with the appropriate skills;

- A lack of people with the appropriate work experience;
- A lack of people with the right qualifications;
- The level of pay and package offered deterring sufficient applicants and a low level of applicants.

6.2.4 Skills gaps occur where an employer considers their workforce does not possess the skills required to deliver business objectives. The National Employer Satisfaction Survey (NESS) identifies the primary causes of skills gaps as:

- Lack of experience 72%
- Staff lack of motivation 33%
- Failure to train staff 29%
- Not keeping up with change 27%
- Recruitment problems 25%
- High staff turnover 23%

6.3 Implications for the Education and Training Sector

6.3.1 The majority of new entrants to the labour market are the product of the post-16 education and training infrastructure. The '21st Century Skills – Competitiveness White Paper' outlines five clear messages for the post-16 education and training sector in relation to such needs, which are as follows:

- 1) Employers' skills needs are centre stage
- 2) A need to develop new partnerships to raise demand for skills
- 3) A need to motivate and support more learners to re-engage in learning
- 4) Colleges and providers to be more responsive to employers' and learners' needs
- 5) Better joint working

6.3.2 In terms of the levels of qualifications required by employers, level 1 occupations (i.e. those associated with the lower level qualifications) account for smaller percentage of skill-shortage vacancies than of total vacancies⁵. Level 1 qualifications are therefore more important as a progression rung to the level 2 and above qualifications that employers need, rather than directly filling any skills shortages. Level 2 occupations generally account for a higher percentage of skill-shortages vacancies and hard-to-fill vacancies than of total vacancies. Approximately half of all vacancies are in level 3 occupations and around one-quarter of hard-to-fill vacancies are also at level 3. Level 4 occupations account for around a quarter of total of vacancies, for over one-third of hard-to-fill vacancies and almost half of skill-shortage vacancies.

6.3.3 The demand for skilled, qualified and experienced labour within Nottinghamshire over the past three years has significantly exceeded supply in many sectors. Analysis of LSCN data highlights an apparent under-supply of learners for three of Nottinghamshire's priority sectors: engineering & manufacturing, construction and retail. Other sectors, such as sports & leisure, visual & performing arts and hairdressing & beauty therapy all appear to have more education and training provision than is required by the labour market.

6.3.4 Three main roles that employers can play in post-16 learning have been identified by the LSDA in recent research regarding employer engagement. They are as follows:

1. Employers as stakeholders - providing leadership through involvement in the design, development, management, delivery and assessment of learning.
2. Employers as consumers – purchasing diagnostic services and skills development from LSC funded providers.
3. Employers as strategic partners – with sustained interaction between employers and the planners and providers of learning.

⁵ 'Analysis of Qualifications in the East Midlands Life and Work Survey', Nottingham Research Observatory, August 2004

The adoption of such roles by employers will be important to improving the responsiveness of the education and training sector in reacting to the needs of employers.

6.3.5 Market forces and ignorance of provision by SMEs are often stated as being the main barriers to their engagement with education and training. However, there is a growing recognition that lower level of training take up reported by small businesses can also be attributed to how training is actually defined⁶. Broadening the definition to take into account less structured forms of training that take place on the job shows no significant variation between small and large enterprises. This calls for a more flexible approach by providers that recognises the heterogeneity of skills needed by SMEs. The sections detailing the provision offered by education and training providers highlights the need for some to develop more responsive employer engagement strategies that focus on such issues. The roll out of the Employer Training Programme will help in this respect and it should be recognised that the successful COVE developments within FE also provides a foundation for such improvements to continue.

⁶ 'Skills and Training in Nottinghamshire, SMEs Emerging Issues', Nottinghamshire Observatory, July 2002

7 The Needs of Learners in Nottinghamshire

7.1 One objective of the Strategic Area Review process is to achieve a closer match between employer and learner needs. The most robust method of understanding learner needs is to combine analysing learner choices in education and training with qualitative research of their perceived needs.

7.2 The level of qualifications achieved by learners helps us to understand the levels of provision required to enable them to participate and succeed in education and training. The following table shows the levels of qualifications achieved by the working age population in Nottinghamshire are generally lower than English averages, implying a higher need for lower level qualifications than other parts of the country.

Highest level of qualification (people aged 16-74)

Level	Nottingham City (%)	Nottinghamshire County (%)	England (%)
None	21.7	16.5	15.4
Below Level 2	19.2	19.7	20.1
Level 2	18.0	22.2	21.9
Level 3	21.7	20.6	18.7
Level 4+	19.4	20.9	23.9

Source: 'Qualifications and Participation in Learning at a Local Level: England 2002/03', Statistical First Release, May 2004

7.3 The following table shows that Nottinghamshire also has higher levels of need for basic literacy and numeracy skills than the English average. It is also the case that Nottinghamshire has higher levels of basic skill needs than the other sub-regions of the East Midlands.

Percentage Lacking Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills

	Poor Literacy	Poor Numeracy
Ashfield	27%	29.5%
Bassetlaw	24.4%	25.2%
Broxtowe	22.3%	22.4%
Gedling	22.2%	22.3%
Mansfield	26.6%	27.9%
Newark & Sherwood	24%	24.8%
Nottingham	28%	30.1%
Rushcliffe	18.5%	17.2%
Nottinghamshire	24.8%	25.8%
England	24%	24%

Source: Basic Skills Agency, 2001

7.4 One commonly used source of evidence to account for learner need is analysis of the qualification aims chosen. Analysis of FE college programme areas from 2002/03 (ILR FO5), appear to show a mismatch between learner and employer requirements. Humanities and sciences are the two programme areas in FE with the largest proportion of learners (29.4% and 18.9% respectively). Construction and Engineering, however, account for only 1.3% and 2.1% of the total FE learner population in the same year, despite both being priority sectors with significant unmet demand from employers and learners.

7.5 Analysis of 2004 data for the WBL sector shows that the areas with the highest take up are foundation programmes, Retail, Hospitality, Administration and Health & Social Care. There appears to be a closer match in WBL between the interests of learners and the needs of employers, although this is to be expected with provision that is primarily employer facing.

7.6 Two limitations to using take up of qualification aims as a method for analysing student requirements are as follows:

- i) the degree of choice that the learner has may be limited due to the qualification aims offered within a travel to learn area.
- ii) the role that both informal and formal advice and guidance plays in influencing learner choice may be significant and its absence will also affect choices made.

7.7 As a result of these factors it is important to supplement these figures with qualitative evidence. Such evidence⁷ suggests that people in Nottinghamshire feel the factors that influence whether they undertake education and training are as follows:

- Money/financial incentive 34%
- If I need to get a job 25%
- If I had more spare time 14%
- If I had to develop new/existing skills 8%

Just under a quarter (24%) of respondents stated that nothing would encourage them to develop their skills. These figures imply that motivational factors for learning are linked to personal circumstance rather than location. Only 2% reported that they would be encouraged to further develop their skills if training/learning opportunities were more accessible. In the same survey respondents were asked which factors were preventing them from developing skills. 52% felt that nothing was preventing them, whilst 20% felt that lack of time was the main barrier to learning and 13% cited family reasons. Since the study was conducted important policy initiatives have been launched such as Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMA) and 'Care to Learn'. There were 6,235 successful EMA applicants in Nottinghamshire during 2004, representing a significant proportion of young learners receiving additional funding to support their learning.

7.8 It can be concluded from the analysis presented in this section that significant numbers of learners in Nottinghamshire enter learning that does not directly prepare them for the local labour market. It is also clear that the post-16 curriculum should correlate with learner attainment levels, which in Nottinghamshire are lower than national and regional averages. The implications of these findings relate not only to the curriculum offer but also to the need for good quality impartial advice and guidance for young people and adults to enable them to make the connection between learning and employment opportunities. Appropriate guidance is an important aspect of the interface between learner interests and labour market demands and is also integral to resolving some of the issues faced by potential learners that present barriers to their participation in education and training. The analysis of what motivates people to undertake learning and potential barriers preventing them from doing so is important and should be continued by LSCN and providers. Reaching those learners who feel disengaged from learning, particularly those with poor basic skills is a key step to take and there are a number of successful local examples to draw upon.

⁷ BMG (2000) Nottinghamshire Household Survey

8 Equality and Diversity Issues within Nottinghamshire

8.1 This section presents a picture of the participation in further education and training for people in Nottinghamshire from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups and people with a disability. It also highlights any gender disparities and outlines potential barriers for these groups.

8.2 Background

50.9% of Nottinghamshire residents were female and 49.1% male in the 2001 census, with 94% classing themselves as White and 6% as from a Black and Minority Ethnic Group. Further analysis shows that the City of Nottingham has a Black and Minority Ethnic population of 18.5%, which is set to increase well into the 21st century.

8.3 Educational Achievement

Within Nottinghamshire there are marked differences in Key Stage 4 exam achievement and in the qualification levels held between all ethnic groups. Black young people recorded the lowest levels of Key Stage 4 Level 2 performance in 2003, with 30.4% and 32.4% achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C (or equivalent) in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County respectively. This compares with averages for white students of 34.5% for the City and 46.6% for the County. Within these figures, Black males can be seen to achieve significantly lower GCSE results than females. Only 24.5% of Black male students achieved 5 or more A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) in 2003, whilst the figure for Black female students in 2003 was 35.8% and 40.0% for City and County respectively.

The following table shows the qualifications held by different ethnic groups across Nottinghamshire and shows a slightly different picture, with many Black and Minority Ethnic Groups holding Level 2 qualifications than the overall average. The exception to this statement are those people who class themselves as Pakistani, with 42.7% of this population not holding any qualifications.

Highest Level of Qualifications by Ethnicity (for 16-74 Year Olds) %

	Total	White	Mixed	Black /Black British	Indian	Pakistani	Other Asian	Chinese	Other
No Qualifications	32.5	32.8	23.4	28.6	20.8	42.7	22.7	21.2	18.6
Level 2 and Above	43.5	42.9	55.4	46.4	65.5	40.8	65.5	67.5	7.8

% is a percentage of 16-74 year olds

Source: 2001 census

8.4 Participation and Achievement in Work Based Learning (WBL)

Data indicates that starts to WBL in 2003/04 across the LSCN area closely reflect the ethnic composition of the local population. From further analysis however, it is evident that starts from the Indian, Pakistani and Chinese communities present the largest variance from their representation within the City of Nottingham population. The Indian community represents 2.3% of the City of Nottingham population whereas the proportion starting WBL stands at 1.1%.

The 2001 Labour Force Survey was used to establish the incidence of disability (as described by the DDA) within the local population. Accordingly, the proportion of the working age population with a disability in Nottinghamshire and presented for comparison is 2.7%. As a result of this, WBL generally performs well in terms of recruiting young people with a disability. However, starts to higher-level programmes (previously known as Advanced Modern Apprenticeships) from young people with a disability stand at 3.4% and are below the overall start ratio of 9.1%.

Analysis of starts to WBL programmes by gender show that only 41.8% of the starts were male, therefore presenting an obvious gender imbalance.

The key area for equality and diversity development within the WBL sector concerns the poor achievement that almost all ethnic minority groups and, in particular, Black youngsters obtain from WBL. This issue also reinforces the general concern that higher proportions of Black and Minority Ethnic groups leave WBL without a 'positive' destination and subsequently become unemployed.

The Equality and Diversity Agenda Assessment Report for WBL, prepared in November 2003, recommended that providers need to work on translating equal opportunities policies into practice through enhanced recruitment activities, understanding of disabilities, health issues and additional social need requirements. Implications of this review also focused on the need for LSCN to support this agenda and this is further covered in the section relating to WBL.

8.5 Participation and Achievement in Further Education

Data indicates that participation in Further Education across the LSCN area closely reflects the ethnic composition of the local population. 16% of the 16-18 age group in FE classed themselves as from an ethnic minority group, whilst this figure is 13% for the 19+ age group.

Using the same comparator as WBL for incidence within the local population of people with a disability, participation in FE performs well. 2.9% of the 16-18 age group and 4.5% of the 19+ age group study in FE and class themselves as having a disability.

The gender split for FE learners in the 16-18 age group is 54% female / 46% male but within the 19+ age group there is an increased gender imbalance with 63% of participants being female.

There is evidence that the success rate of people from an ethnic minority group is 39% (16-18 age group) as opposed to 46% of people who class themselves as white. However the 19+ age group has no discernible difference; the success rate is 59% across all participants.

The assessment of equality and diversity issues within FE, prepared in May 2004 recommended as a result of these and other findings that there is a need for a more robust system of managing and monitoring the implementation of equality and diversity strategies across FE. Student services were felt to have an important role to play in ensuring that students' needs are met and it was felt that there are opportunities for colleges to be more proactive in collecting data around student performance to assess trends. It was also recommended that colleges tailor their equal opportunities training to meet the challenges and barriers of their own college. The assessment also recognised the positive work already undertaken by FE colleges in addressing equality and diversity issues.

8.6 Barriers to Education and Training

For people from a black or minority ethnic background, the following barriers to participation in learning and training were identified⁸:

Lack of time (17%) is the most frequent obstacle highlighted, with family commitments (12%), the cost of training (6%) and illness or disability (6%) all mentioned. Respondents in work are more likely to feel that they face no barriers to training than those not currently in work (52% and 43% respectively). There are only minor differences between most of the obstacles faced by men and women. The main exception is that more women feel obstructed by family commitments (female 21%, male 9%).

⁸ Learning and Skills Council Nottinghamshire Ethnic Minority Survey 2001/2002

9 14-19 Achievement in Nottinghamshire

9.1 14-19 Strategy

The 14-19 White Paper, launched in February 2005, outlines the Government's intentions to improve the 14-19 phase of education and training by further integrating vocational opportunities. Significant work has taken place in Nottinghamshire to develop a coherent 14-19 phase of education and training, which has both been informed by and directed by the reviews that have taken place. The LSC Nottinghamshire, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council LEA's joint 14-19 strategy outlines the need to develop area based delivery partnerships to enable a broad, responsive and cost effective curriculum to be offered. In response, 14-19 Area Strategy Groups have now been established across most of Nottinghamshire, with total coverage planned by the summer of 2005. These groups will plan provision to meet the needs of all 14-19 year old learners across a travel to learn area, commencing with further mapping of 14-19 provision as well as implementing the recommendations of the StAR findings as appropriate.

9.2 2004 School and College Results

	Results for students aged 15 at the start of the school year		GCE and VCE Results	
	Level 2 (5 or more A*-C GCSEs)	Level 1 (5 or more A*-G GCSEs)	Average Point Score Per Student	Average Point Score Per Exam Entry
Nottingham City LEA Average	37.7%	76.7%	279.4	77.2
Nottinghamshire County LEA Average	47.4%	88.9%	252.0	71.5
England Average	53.7%	88.8%	269.2	78.7
LSC Average	-	-	260.9	73.4

These results show that in all except two cases (Level 1 achievement in the County and average point score per student in the City), the general educational attainment of 14-19 year olds in the LSC Nottinghamshire area remains below the England average. This highlights the need for increased levels of high-quality foundation, level 1 and level 2 provision in order for young people to progress in learning post-16. This is particularly the case in Nottingham City where only 37.7% of the Year 11 students received qualifications such as 5 or more A*-C GCSEs equivalent to Level 2.

9.3 Significant improvements in achievement have taken place in both local authority areas between 2002/03 and 2003/04 however. The Level 2 performance for those aged 15 at the start of the school year has increased by 0.8 percentage points in Nottinghamshire County and 2.6 percentage points in City of Nottingham from the 2003 figures. Both of these are above the English average increase of 0.6 percentage points. Similarly, the Level 1 attainment for the same cohort of students has increased in both areas over the past year compared to a static situation for England, where 88.8% have achieved this level for the same two years.

9.4 Post-16 Level 3 performance shows the most dramatic improvements in results between 2003 and 2004, with 27.2 and 18.4 percentage point increases recorded in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County respectively during that period. This compares favourably with the English average increase of 10.3 percentage points. Nottingham City's post-16 Level 3 performance is now above the national average and can be considered as a strength within the overall analysis of provision.

9.5 The 2001 post-16 area wide OFSTED/ALI inspection of Nottingham is an important consideration in the analysis of 14-19 provision. The inspection identified a number of issues to be addressed in relation to post-16 education and training, including the wide variations in achievement, with most of those at levels 1 and 2 being unsatisfactory. Whilst the Nottingham City pre-16 Level 1 and 2 achievement is still below the national average, significant developments resulting from the inspection should be considered as part of the Strategic Area Review. These include:

- The development of a common prospectus detailing the range of shared Key Stage 4 provision across the conurbation and combining Increased Flexibility funds with those of the Action Plan.
- The development of the Greater Nottingham 14-19 strategy, which includes a timetable for action and structures to support further development. A joint LSCN / LEAs 14-19 strategy has also been developed.
- Significant progress in relation to specific inspection criticisms, such as data sharing.

9.6 The Increased Flexibility Project has been successful in enabling Key Stage 4 students to access vocational options in college and workplace settings. This has been complemented by other projects (such as Student Apprenticeships) and LSCN discretionary spend to further broaden the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Work has taken place to map this provision as part of the StAR, but this has not been included in this report due to the changing nature of some of the funding in place.

9.7 As students leave Year 11 across Nottinghamshire schools, their destinations are recorded annually by Connexions. The figures for 2004 reveal that the largest proportion of Year 11 leavers (36.9%) continued in full-time education within FE colleges, whilst 32.7% continued full time education within school sixth forms. 12.3% found employment with planned training upon leaving school whilst 4.2% entered non-employed Work Based Learning and 3.3% went into employment without planned training. It should be noted that these figures capture a snap-shot (taken between August and October of each year) of the cohort. This explains why the unemployed group in the destinations survey for 2004 totaled 3.3%, whilst the ongoing figure throughout the year fluctuated.

9.8 Nottinghamshire has low participation rates in Higher Education compared to the rest of the UK. The 2002 figures stand at 15% for Nottingham City and 27% for Nottinghamshire County, compared to a figure of 43% for England. Aim Higher Nottinghamshire intend to increase both figures by ten percentage points by 2010. Achieving these targets will depend on successfully tackling a range of objectives, but in particular extending the range of Foundation Degrees, some of which are now being delivered in Nottinghamshire FE colleges.

9.9 The Strategic Area Review process has reinforced the commitment made by LSCN and both LEAs to developing 14-19 Area Strategy Groups across Nottinghamshire. 14-19 Area Strategy Groups (ASGs) are the identified structures by which a broader, deeper and more appropriate learning offer can be made to 14-19 year olds within a geographical area. It is planned that this will take place through locality-based collaboration between schools, colleges and providers, with the ASG overseeing such developments. The majority of Nottinghamshire now has ASGs established and starting to operate, with total coverage of the LSCN area planned for summer 2005.

10 Further Education Colleges in Nottinghamshire

10.1 Within Nottinghamshire there are seven General FE Colleges and one Sixth Form College. The largest proportion of Year 11 leavers across Nottinghamshire continue their learning in FE colleges and the sector has taken a leading role in 14-19 developments locally. FE colleges also play a significant role in engaging adults and employers in learning through COVEs, ACL and Skills for Life. It is therefore unsurprising that a significant amount of attention has been focused on FE within the StAR process.

Reviews have been conducted that are geographically based, (concentrating on the Nottingham conurbation and the north of Nottinghamshire as separate areas) as well as focusing in more detail on particular aspects of FE provision.

10.2 FE Colleges in Greater Nottingham

There are four General FE colleges and one Sixth Form college within Greater Nottingham. Of the four General FE colleges, mergers during the late 1990s have made New College Nottingham (NCN) one of the largest colleges in the country, significantly larger than Broxtowe, South Nottingham and People's Colleges. NCN is also the sole/major provider in a range of specialisms inherited from its constituent parts. These are Construction from Basford Hall College, Hospitality & Catering and Performing Arts from Clarendon College.

The development of specialisms in other colleges within Greater Nottingham have all resulted without mergers and recognition of major provider/specialist status. Expansion of Bilborough Sixth Form College, with places for 400 new students being developed for summer 2005, is an important aspect of the post-16 education and training landscape. It should be recognised however, that Bilborough takes its students not only from Nottingham City and the neighbouring districts within the County, but also from Derbyshire.

10.2.1 Review of FE Provision in Greater Nottingham, March 2003

LSCN commissioned Tribal Education consultancy to conduct a review of the five FE colleges serving the City of Nottingham, which was completed in March 2003 and found the key issues for FE in Nottingham to be:

- Low participation levels in full-time education;
- Limited availability of provision below level 3;
- Teaching and Learning Effectiveness Benchmark performance below average overall;
- Weak core financial health of the colleges;
- Some poor accommodation and poor accommodation utilisation

The following needs were identified:

- An expansion in the range of provision to learners at Foundation, Level 1 and Level 2;
- Improvements in retention and achievement across most of the provision;
- Institutions to be more financially stable, have capacity to invest in the existing curriculum offer and able to invest in meeting the new agenda for FE in Nottingham.

The review recommended that more attention should be paid to progression routes at 16 to ensure that appropriate pathways are being developed. The recommendation that both the quantity and quality of foundation (or entry) and level 1 provision be improved is corroborated by the StAR review of this provision, which is covered in section 15 of this report.

The review analysed curriculum profile by college, and showed that there is a lack of critical mass for the three smaller general FE colleges across a wide range of areas of learning. This affects both the financial and educational viability of such provision, with success rates of 47% for long programmes and 72% for short programmes recorded in 2002/03. The review also

found that the Greater Nottingham colleges could develop more successful and proactive employer engagement strategies.

The review concluded that structural re-organisation is necessary to address the issues raised within the report and was followed by an in-depth assessment of the various structural options for change. These were felt to be as follows:

1. A one college model
2. Two colleges with provision distributed between the two on a geographic / curriculum basis. These would be New College (with some curriculum rationalisation) and a merged People's College, South Nottingham College and Broxtowe College.
3. Three colleges, where a variety of combinations for structural change are possible.

All of these options assume the continuation of Bilborough College with a curriculum profile remaining broadly as present. The review was followed by:

10.2.2 Mapping and Evaluation of the Current Offer of the Four General FE Colleges in Greater Nottingham, August 2004

The discussions regarding structural options for FE in the Greater Nottingham conurbation have been further informed by a review of the offer made in the four general FE colleges by curriculum area, course level and campus. This was carried out in August 2004 and reached the following conclusions:

- The colleges have all demonstrated their commitment to engage with schools on the 14-16 agenda, with models of both on-site and off-site provision. Sustained engagement has, however, been impeded by concerns as to the financial stability and viability of some colleges.
- Three of the four colleges have reviewed their Entry/Level 1 offer and expanded it with an improved offer from September 2004.
- Where colleges provide a Level 3 course, there has always been a relevant Level 2 course, even if there is not a Level 1. This provides clear progression pathways but has compounded the duplication of provision between the colleges.
- The duplication and over provision at Level 3 is a feature of FE in the Greater Nottingham conurbation. The whole full time offer for 16-19 year olds should be rationalised. Duplication and over provision is more pronounced in the City between NCN and People's College than between them and Broxtowe and South Nottingham Colleges.
- Duplication and over provision also exists at Level 4. Although not LSCN funded, this could be rationalised and a strategic view taken of HE in FE within the conurbation.
- The quality of Work Based Learning in several of colleges has been judged as unsatisfactory. The colleges need to agree strategies to ensure there is significant improvement in the quality of this provision and raise the profile of WBL as an option for young people.
- All of the colleges offer Skills for Life provision and the quality of this provision varies from good to very poor. South Nottingham College's proposed development of Skills for Life through its Trade Union Studies Centre (City Learning Centre) will add value to the Basic Skills work already taking place. The delivery of much of this work is expected to take place in the workplace. A reduction of provision made by others would be complementary to this expansion and this new approach.

10.2.3 Assessment of Further Education Assets in Greater Nottingham, March 2003

A thorough examination of the structural assets occupied by the five FE colleges in Greater Nottingham took place during 2004, which found that they occupy approximately 20,000m² more space than is necessary according to LSC criteria. The review also found that the quality of the properties in terms of condition, suitability and DDA compliance, was poor in at least

fifteen of the twenty-six properties reviewed. The review concluded that significant investment is required at a number of sites. The opportunities presented by the successful City of Nottingham LEA bid for Building Schools for the Future funds adds further potential to such plans.

10.2.4 Conclusions for Greater Nottingham FE Colleges

i) Since the start of the review process, a number of changes have taken place in Greater Nottingham FE Colleges. These have included:

- The inspection of all FE Colleges by OfSTED;
- The changes brought about in the curriculum as a result of the observations made during the review process, inspections, the three-year planning cycle and the move to reduce 'other provision'.
- Changes in financial forecasts and approaches towards franchising and partnership activity.

ii) Despite such generally positive changes, there remain issues that require resolution for the FE structure in Greater Nottingham to operate as effectively as possible. These are:

- The development of a more coherent and planned curriculum, establishing clearer progression pathways at lower levels and removing duplication at higher levels of study.
- The development of more effective employer engagement strategies that embrace the concept of FE as being demand-led.
- The more effective use of premises including the need to meet legislative requirements. Such developments should take account of the emerging plans for Nottingham City's 'Building Schools for the Future' development.
- The eradication of provision that has been found to be of poor quality.
- The achievement of reduced Franchise and Partnership activity expected by the LSC in a planned and financially viable way.
- Financial strategies that will provide a secure supplier base via medium-term viability.

iii) Whilst not all of these issues apply equally to all FE Colleges in Greater Nottingham, it is clear that the first three alone will require a solution that involves all five institutions. As a consequence of this, LSCN has led the process being undertaken to resolve such issues through structural change.

10.3 Reviews of FE Provision in North Nottinghamshire

There are three General FE Colleges in the northern half of Nottinghamshire. These are Newark & Sherwood, North Nottinghamshire and West Nottinghamshire Colleges. OfSTED inspections of all three colleges have recently taken place.

The relatively significant distances between the three main colleges in north Nottinghamshire means that the issues of duplication and competition found to exist in Greater Nottingham do not exist to the same extent in the north of the county. It should also be seen that issues relating to neighbouring Local Authority areas (Lincolnshire, Derbyshire and South Yorkshire) are significant for these colleges.

10.3.1 Review of Post-16 Provision in East, North and West Nottinghamshire, April 2004

Tribal Education Consultancy's review of the three FE colleges serving East, North and West Nottinghamshire was completed in April 2004. It found that the 14-16 educational achievement for the areas was below both national and LEA averages in 2002, with 41.29% achieving 5 or more A*-C grade GCSEs across Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Newark. This relative underachievement is repeated post-16 for level three qualifications, where only two of the 23 school sixth forms and none of the three colleges managed to exceed the national average of 76 points per examination entry in 2002.

The roles that the colleges play within their local communities and in developing 14-19 arrangements with schools and other local providers can be seen as a key strength. The strategic leadership offered through the COVEs at North and West Nottinghamshire colleges and the Newark Extended Learning Project from Newark & Sherwood College (in partnership with the North Nottinghamshire Learning Partnership and the Alliance SSP) is also evidence of the important work carried out.

The review found mixed practice in relation to employer engagement, with approaches developed by North and West Nottinghamshire Colleges working well whilst Newark and Sherwood College were seen to have been slow to respond to the changing employment base. The contribution of the three colleges to the growth targets in Apprenticeships was modest, whilst E2E growth has been restricted by the re-profiling of budgets since the publication of the report.

The review identified three main concerns with regards to post-19 education and training. These were the range of adult provision offered, the underdeveloped provision for Basic Skills in North Nottinghamshire and Newark & Sherwood; and the poor success rates for adult provision at Newark & Sherwood.

In response to these findings, the review recommended that collaboration during the 14-19 phase is increased, with all FE colleges highly involved in developments to extend the curriculum offering and improve standards of teaching and learning. Employer engagement was also seen as a key area for improvements, whilst it was felt that the Basic Skills agenda needed to be more evenly spread across East, West and North Nottinghamshire. The final set of recommendations regarded structural arrangements and stated that LSCN should explore the viability of Newark and Sherwood remaining an independent institution and continue detailed discussions with Nottinghamshire County Council LEA on how North Nottinghamshire College might collaborate with the proposed post-16 centres in Bassetlaw.

10.3.2 Review of Further Education Assets in North Nottinghamshire

The review of FE college assets found that North and West Nottinghamshire Colleges were operating with small amounts of excess space whilst Newark & Sherwood College is operating from a gross internal floor space appropriate for its level of Guided Learning Hours delivery.

10.3.3 Conclusions for FE Colleges in North Nottinghamshire

i) Due to the more straightforward inter-relationships between FE colleges and their communities in the north than those in Greater Nottingham, the conclusions of the Strategic Area Review would appear to show that there is no need for radical restructuring. However, the concerns raised by the Tribal review of Newark & Sherwood College remain. These centre on the quality of the outcomes gained by the college, the financial effect of the necessary reductions in franchise and partnership provision, and the ability of the College to raise its student numbers to secure the critical mass required. Such concerns need to be placed in the context of the overall education and training situation in Newark town, where learner attainment at all ages and levels post-11 is of concern. As such, the role of the College is an integral aspect of the review that is currently taking place of provision in Newark, due to conclude by July 2005.

ii) The conclusions of the Strategic Area Review regarding North Nottinghamshire and West Nottinghamshire colleges focus most notably on their involvement in the 14-19 agenda. It is acknowledged that both colleges face significant policy issues in relation to the appropriateness of their responses to this emerging agenda. West Nottinghamshire College's geographical coverage means that it is involved in a number of Area Strategy Groups. North Nottinghamshire College meanwhile, are heavily involved in the developing plans for two Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funded post-16 centres in Bassetlaw. The success of both

colleges in engaging appropriately with these emerging developments will be important to their long-term aims and will require support from LSCN.

10.4 Review of Franchise and Partnership Provision

10.4.1 Franchise and partnership activity describes the mechanism used by FE colleges to deliver provision by contracting with another organisation. When managed and delivered effectively, it can make a significant contribution to the college's ability to engage with hard-to-reach learners in specialist areas of learning. Such provision has been subject to much focus from the LSC, with the latest Funding Guidance of autumn 2004 steering colleges to make the activity account for no greater than 5% of total college income, whilst also ensuring that it is: local; of good priority; meets LSC priorities; and is conducted with partners for whom the college has a strong and sustained relationship.

10.4.2 The review of franchised and partnership provision in all of the general FE colleges within Nottinghamshire was completed in March 2005 and revealed the following findings:

- Although progress in reducing the volume of franchised and partnership provision has been made, by the end of the 2006/2007 period, three of the seven colleges are forecast to have franchising and particularly partnership provision at a level still above 5% of recurrent grant income.
- Overall, the franchised and partnership provision in Nottinghamshire colleges is not maximising its contribution to the LSC priority areas, There appear to be no plans to deliver Skills for Life programmes through franchised or partnership provision.
- The provision appears to meet the LSC requirements in some respects, but there are notable exceptions in the geographical coverage proposed in one college and there are quality concerns in another.

10.4.3 The review provides in-depth information on the situation regarding franchise and partnership activity within each college and will be a useful foundation for ongoing planning discussions between colleges and LSCN regarding the achievement of the Funding Guidance objectives.

11 Work Based Learning Provision in Nottinghamshire

11.1 Work Based Learning (WBL) has been subject to an ongoing review process during the Strategic Area Review timescale. The Provider Re-organisation Feasibility Study of 2003 was commissioned by LSCN to evaluate the options for developing and re-organising the provision of WBL in Nottinghamshire and to identify how the Training Network could improve the quality of WBL provision. The establishment of Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) resulted from this study and was founded on the lessons learnt by previous structural strategies employed in the sector. The quality, coverage and structure of WBL are detailed in this section of the report as well as the proposals for further development.

11.2 Work Based Learning (WBL) provides a variety of roll-on roll-off learning opportunities for young people. The academic year or any other specific start date does not define entry to the programme; however, the majority of young people enter WBL during the August – September period each year. Furthermore, the duration of learning within WBL is generally undefined and is dependent upon needs, how well the young person progresses and the sub-programme they are participating in. A total of 35 providers are contracted in 2004/05 to deliver WBL in Nottinghamshire. This number includes FE colleges but not national providers who hold contracts through the National Contracting Service. The achievement rates for local providers, derived from ILR data are as follows:

2002/03	35.6%
2003/04	37.5%

The most recent success rate figures for 2004/05 of 45.4% indicate a further improvement. Success rates within WBL are calculated by dividing achievement by the total number of learners. Within this overall total, there are wide variations in the success levels recorded by individual areas of learning.

The leaver destinations for WBL in 2003/04 show that most young people leaving WBL obtain or retain employment, with relatively few becoming unemployed. The overall figures are as follows:

Programme Type	Employment	FE / HE / FT Education	Other	Unemployment	Unknown
WBL	60.3%	2.6%	15%	10.3%	11.7%

Source: ILR 2003/04

The figures for E2E are less impressive, but it should be remembered that E2E represents a more challenging client group.

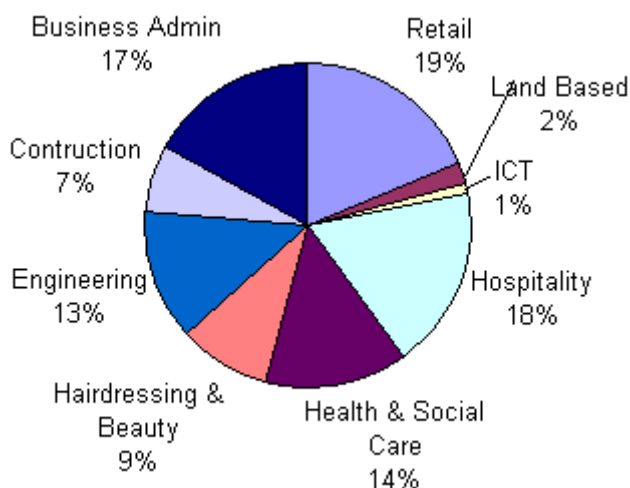
Programme Type	Employment	FE	WBL	Transfer	Other	Unknown
E2E	25.8%	7.9%	5.0%	2.7%	46.8%	11.6%

Source: ILR 2003/04

11.3 LSCN concerns regarding the quality of WBL have been founded on poor levels of participation, modest achievement levels and disappointing ALI inspections. The advent of funding changes and a recognition that other support would be required to build provider capacity and develop the infrastructure has resulted in improvements in quality over the last two years however, evidenced by the increased levels of satisfactory grades for providers in performance reviews and the improved outcomes for learners. The average overall ALI inspection grade for providers in Nottinghamshire is 2.8, with 58.5% scoring higher than the mean grade (satisfactory to unsatisfactory) and 41.5% either on 2.8% or better (satisfactory to good).

11.4 Analysis of the occupational split of WBL across Nottinghamshire and its subsequent comparison to the other East Midlands sub-regions enables some judgement to be made regarding the suitability of the mix of provision in meeting the priorities of the Nottinghamshire labour market. The following graph demonstrates the current occupational split across the LSCN area:

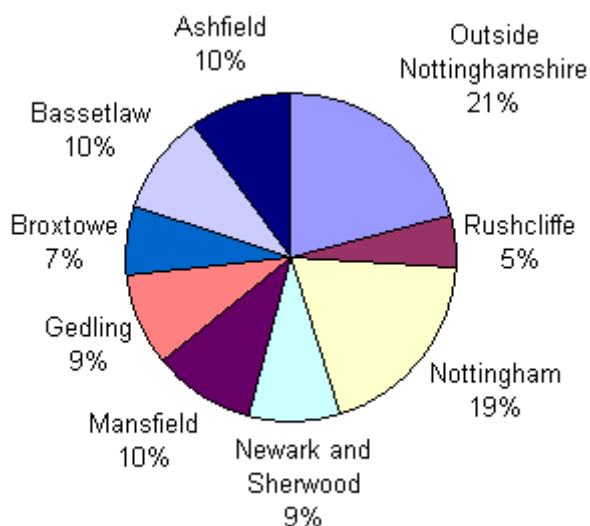
WBL Provision by Occupational Area (Source ILR 03/04 Period 12)



Regional comparisons show that Nottinghamshire has relatively high amounts of retail, hospitality and foundation (E2E) provision, but has relatively low amounts of construction and engineering WBL provision. Given the high level of predicted demand for construction in particular⁹, this potential lack of provision needs to be addressed. In the case of engineering, employer demands are further raised by the general decline of FE based provision in Nottinghamshire. The LSC intends to examine the possibilities of developing new provision in both of these areas. One specific issue to address is whether this expansion is in partnership with the FE sector (where similar shortfalls exist) or independently of it.

11.5 Further analysis of the coverage of WBL by geographical area reveals a split demonstrated by the following graph:

Provision Breakdown by Local Authority District (Source ILR 03/04 Period 12)



⁹ Construction Sector Skills Report, B.Peto, 2004

Comparisons between individual areas reveal that Ashfield and Mansfield have relatively low levels of learners undertaking hospitality, sports and leisure WBL, whilst Broxtowe, Mansfield and Nottingham are the Local Authority areas with the least amount of WBL construction learners (in proportion to the overall share of WBL provision by Local Authority area). From the information presented in this section it can be concluded that strategies to increase WBL's overall share of post-16 participation should focus at specific occupations in particular geographical areas. Construction and engineering are highlighted as the two occupational areas with the least proportion of learners in relation to the rest of the East Midlands. The further analysis of geographical areas within Nottinghamshire shows that there are disparities between area coverage and this further informs potential strategies for future growth of WBL.

11.6 With regards to the structural organisation of WBL in Nottinghamshire, the development of Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) during 2004 has been seen to play a significant role in the successful delivery of WBL in the area. The proposals developed in the 2003 Feasibility Study to develop NTN as a central contracting and planning mechanism for WBL have not been adopted by LSCN. The principal reasons for this are:

- Risk arising from a lack of control over the process;
- Difficulty in acquiring new, alternative, providers;
- Concerns over lack of options should this solution fail to deliver expected results;
- Recent improvements in quality and participation questioning the need for such radical action;
- Significant operating overheads, drawing funding away from front line delivery.

At the same time, LSCN has reorganised its own structure, creating a dedicated WBL team. This is in response to perceived lack of focus in previous arrangements and places the responsibility for delivering expected outcomes and improvements within the management structure of the organisation. It is anticipated that this will mean a closer and more supportive contract management with a stronger alignment between individual provider contracts and overall LSC objectives. LSCN believes that there remains a significant role for NTN in the successful delivery of Work Based Learning in Nottinghamshire. It will negotiate a formal agreement with NTN specifying the areas it wishes NTN to focus on. These are likely to include:

- Quality development, including sharing good practice;
- Staff development;
- Promoting WBL to employers and young people;
- Celebrating success in WBL;
- Attracting additional funds into the sector, from LSC sources and elsewhere.

The option of using NTN as a contracting mechanism has not been entirely rejected and current arrangements will be reviewed in the Spring of 2006.

11.7 It is therefore recommended that a number of developments take place in relation to WBL in Nottinghamshire, which are as follows:

i) For Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) to be recognised by the Learning and Skills Council Nottinghamshire and external stakeholders as the single organisation representing the whole of the Work Based Learning sector in Nottinghamshire. For Nottinghamshire Training Network to lead in:

- Identifying local, regional and national strengths in delivery;
- Gaining efficiency through dissemination and implementation of good practice;
- To develop a supporting role within the WBL inspection cycle;
- Staff Development;
- Develop a framework for WBL provider succession planning;
- Promotion to young people;
- Developing WBL provider capacity to deliver IAG;
- Develop enhanced links to employers to promote apprenticeships;
- Attracting additional funds.

ii) That any additional funding or development activity for WBL is targeted at addressing the issues of quality and success highlighted within this review and delivered in partnership with NTN, which will include:

- The creation of a NTN learner support service to increase learner achievement.
- The development of a programme of continuous professional development for WBL providers.

iii) That the scope to expand WBL provision in the two occupational areas of engineering and construction are further explored. The extent of provision in the retail and hospitality sectors, as well as the levels of learners from outside Nottinghamshire needs to be reviewed. For further analysis of provision to be undertaken upon the completion of LSCN's sector skills reports.

iv) Geographical issues uncovered should be addressed, with special consideration given to extending learner choice in Bassetlaw in line with the current and emerging demands of the local labour market. These are:

- Early years care and education as a priority sector.
- Engineering, aviation and logistics training for Finningly.
- Development of additional retail and warehousing provision.

v) LSCN and its partners should produce a strategy to encourage better participation from Black young people in Nottingham. This will be achieved through the partnership response to the recommendations from the current joint research into the barriers to securing better outcomes for BME young people.

vi) That LSCN strengthens the case for young people to enter WBL by promoting the sector through its emerging 14-19 Area Strategy Groups and to secure targets within each area strategy group delivery plan for the promotion of Apprenticeships to individuals and employers.

12 School Sixth Forms in Nottinghamshire

12.1 There are 48 school sixth forms in Nottinghamshire. The range of learner numbers for these sixth forms is captured below:

Sixth Form Learner Count 2004	
Numbers of Learners	Number of Sixth Forms
350+	1
300-350	1
250-300	3
200-250	8
150-200	13
100-150	13
-100	9

12.2 For each school with post-16 offerings, OfSTED judge the quality of the sixth form provision as part of their inspection of the whole school. Using this principle, many schools are particularly keen to be viewed by external organisations as single 11-18 institutions rather than as two separate pre- and post-16 environments. Whilst this perspective is problematic in relation to post-16 funding, target setting and performance monitoring; it does present an opportunity for local areas to benefit from the specialist knowledge and infrastructure that schools in Nottinghamshire are increasingly obtaining as part of the Specialist School agenda.

12.3 The area reviews of provision have revealed that much of the curriculum offered by school sixth forms remains 'traditional' Level 3 (AS / A2) subjects. School sixth forms have been engaged in Area Strategy Groups however and there is some evidence of collaboration in local areas to broaden the curriculum offer. The 14-19 offer is being extended across Nottinghamshire, although the pace and extent to which this has been achieved has varied between localities. In areas such as Mansfield, this work can be seen to result from the Strategic Area Review and developments taking place appear to be addressing the recommendations made in the report. However, the question of how the curriculum is being broadened is also of importance to the Strategic Area Review. A starting point for many areas is to extend the offer of minority Level 3 subjects to all learners from across the locality. Such efforts are laudable, but the review process has recommended that the curriculum is deepened as well as broadened. This involves extending the offer below Level 3 and establishing new progression pathways to increase post-16 participation. Extending the vocational offer made by school sixth forms in collaboration with FE colleges and work based learning providers is also part of the national and local vision for the 14-19 curriculum.

12.4 The range of educational achievement gained by learners studying in Nottinghamshire state school sixth forms can be seen below:

	Highest Average Score per Institution	Lowest Average Score per Institution	LSCN Average	Nottinghamshire County Average	Nottingham City Average	England Average
2004 GCE & VCE Average Point Score	381.3	140.3	260.9	252.0	279.4	269.2
2004 GCE & VCE Average Point Score per Examination Entry	92.3	52.9	73.4	71.5	77.2	78.7

Within these ranges, the performance of the majority of the schools is close to the mean average. For the average point score per student, 6 of the 48 school sixth forms are within the bottom quartile for performance whilst 3 sit with the top quartile.

12.5 There are difficulties in judging the retention rates of school sixth forms, as the current method used to calculate the rates are based on head counts at the start and end of the academic cycle. This is significantly different to the FE and Work Based Learning sectors where retention rates are based on whether individual learners have remained on the provision they started. It is because of this method of calculating school sixth form retention rates that some schools in Nottinghamshire have figures above 100%, peaking at 102.56% for one institution in 2004.

12.6 There has not been a separate thematic review of school sixth forms as part of the Strategic Area Review process as they have been an integral feature of the many area reviews conducted and detailed in the following section. It can be concluded from this section that, whilst overall performance in the sector is strong, the type of scrutiny that has been applied by the Strategic Area Review and Area Strategy Group process to the curriculum offer now needs to be applied consistently to retention and achievement within school sixth forms. The three-year planning and review cycle that is being implemented with other providers can also be seen to be lacking for school sixth forms, although efforts within Nottingham City to address this should be recognised.

12.7 It is the intention of LSCN to develop targets with school sixth forms and monitor their performance in a more robust way than currently. This process will take place through ongoing consultation with sixth forms and LEAs. It should also take into account the developments that are taking place as part of the 14-19 Area Strategy Groups.

13 Summary of Area Reviews

13.1 Background

Although the Strategic Area Review process was formally launched as one aspect of the 'Success for All' strategy in March 2003, Nottinghamshire LSC had already undertaken reviews of some areas of the county in conjunction with Nottinghamshire County Council LEA. These reviews were as follows:

- Review of Post-16 Provision in Ashfield and North Broxtowe, completed by the Responsive College Unit in May 2002;
- Review of 16-19 Provision in Newark, completed by KPMG in December 2002;
- Local Area Review of 14-19 Education and Training Provision in Gedling, completed by the Responsive College Unit in January 2003;
- Local Area Post-16 Review of South Broxtowe, completed by KPMG in February 2003.

Reviews conducted by LSCN staff during the two years of the official StAR timescale are as follows:

- Review of Years 12-14 Education within City of Nottingham Schools, completed in October 2003.
- Review of Post-16 Education in Rushcliffe Schools, completed in February 2004.
- Review of Post-16 Education in Mansfield Schools, completed in May 2004.

13.2 General Findings from the Area Reviews

13.2.1 Although the reviews took place over a two year period and addressed issues within local areas, a number of common themes can be seen to emerge in terms of conclusions and findings. These are as follows:

- Key Stage 4 and 5 performance was highlighted in several area reviews where it was seen to be significantly below national averages. This has been detailed separately within the 14-19 section of the report, with the need for increased lower levels of provision being one of the major implications of this situation.
- School sixth form sizes vary considerably, but there remain a number of County-based school sixth forms that could be described as small. The implications of the small sizes on the breadth of curriculum offer are highlighted within reviews and seen to be a significant issue within Nottinghamshire.
- The lack of a broad lower level curriculum is also a common concern raised through the area reviews.
- The need for good quality, impartial advice and guidance is increasing in-line with the range of 14-19 pathways developing within institutions and through collaborative approaches.
- The opportunity to utilise the specialist status of schools within collaborative approaches in local areas is significant and this should also take place with links to Centres of Vocational Excellence in FE colleges as appropriate.

13.2.2 In order to resolve the issues identified through the reviews, a mixture of collaborative and structural options have been explored. The policy of developing Area Strategy Groups (ASGs), outlined in the 14-19 section of this report, is common to all areas and aims to develop coherent and comprehensive provision for the age group. Positive developments have taken place in each area, as detailed below:

- In Ashfield, many stakeholders favoured the creation of a new post-16 centre. This has not developed; primarily as a result of the inability to secure appropriate capital funding; although restructuring remains a medium to long-term option. This will be considered in relation to the 14-19 academy development led by West Nottinghamshire College and the vocational centre developed by Ashfield Comprehensive School. The ASG is

currently exploring the opportunities for both new provision and rationalisation of duplicated provision in order to better meet learner need.

- In Bassetlaw, the key recommendation that shared institution post-16 centres should be established has led to significant plans for two Private Finance Initiative centres in Worksop and Retford, planned to open in 2007. The Area Strategy Group has focused on quality assurance issues, in-line with local priorities.
- Gedling has a well-established Area Strategy Group, with developments in e-learning providing a lead for other areas of Nottinghamshire to follow. The ASG has also investigated the provision of careers education and guidance in more depth, which is also being picked up in other areas of the county.
- In Mansfield, significant work has taken place to develop a shared Level 3 curriculum offer across the town's schools for students entering Year 12 in 2005/06. This has taken place alongside an ambitious visioning for the future of 14-19 provision in Mansfield, which is partly a response to the area review conducted.
- In Newark, structural options are still being explored through the ongoing review of education and training provision in the town, which is due to report in July 2005. The development of a cross-institutional post-16 curriculum is currently providing an enhanced offer to learners within Newark and the ASG has now been established which covers the whole of the Newark and Sherwood district.
- The secondary schools in North Broxtowe have been meeting to plan 14-19 developments for a considerable period of time already, and have produced a joint sixth form offer, in collaboration with Broxtowe College. The inclusion of this work into an ASG will help to further develop 14-19 provision and it should also be recognised that the proximity this area has to Derbyshire also requires cross-border planning.
- In Nottingham City, the development of two 14-19 vocational centres is taking place to improve post-16 retention rates and to broaden the curriculum offer available to learners. This is taking place in the context of the area review finding that the current sixth form offer within the city is appropriate to the needs of learners. These centres and possible sector specific training centres are also being developed in line with the Building Schools for the Future proposals that are developing in the City of Nottingham. Two ASGs have already been formed in the City and these build on the strong relationships developed between schools as part of the clustering exercise initiated by the City LEA. The creation of links between these groups and the ongoing review of FE college structures in the conurbation will be an important aspect of their development.
- Rushcliffe established an ASG in response to the area review completed in February 2004. The rural nature of much of the geographical area is likely to limit high levels of collaborative provision, but there is an acceptance amongst Rushcliffe schools that despite generally good quality provision being made available, there is a need to broaden the curriculum offer. A comprehensive mapping of current provision is taking place that will further inform the areas of curriculum that need to be further developed.
- In South Broxtowe, the ASG has been formed and is producing an action plan that includes auditing current provision to highlight areas for collaborative development. The implications of the City's Building Schools for the Future proposals are particularly important for the South Broxtowe area and will be considered by the ASG on an ongoing basis.

14 Adult and Community Learning in Nottinghamshire

14.1 Adult and Community Learning (ACL) provided through the two council-based services in the LSCN area was reviewed in autumn / winter 2004 and launched as part of a consultation exercise in January 2005. The review takes account of a previous review of ACL completed for LSCN by the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) in April 2003 and current national proposals recommending changes to the funding structure for ACL.

14.2 Funding for ACL in Nottinghamshire is sub-contracted from the two Councils to a variety of learning providers, with most provision delivered by Further Education colleges, External Institutions (formerly LEA, also known as community colleges) and the voluntary and community sector. The majority of these organisations also deliver other forms of adult learning, funded through direct LSC contracts and / or other sources such as ESF and Ufl / Learndirect. Due to budget restraints and policy decisions, it is concluded that such non-ACL adult provision is likely to decline over the next few years.

14.3 In relation to the structures currently in place for ACL, the perceived lack of added value achieved by delivering ACL through the Nottingham City Council based service was felt to be a serious concern. This is based on qualitative responses during the review process as well as the current lack of additional funding provided by the City Council, which contrasts with the County Council who meet the administrative costs of managing the service. The Adult Learning Inspectorate is due to inspect both ACL Services in 2005 and it is anticipated that this process will provide a further prompt for improvements to ACL across Nottinghamshire. Further improvements are also predicted to result from implementation of the City Council's commitment to funding the administrative costs of running its ACL Service. In relation to the delivery of ACL, a variety of provision is funded through this route, which is predominately 'first steps' in nature. The definition of 'first steps learning' outlined in the national funding proposals is of provision tailored for learners who have not yet achieved a level 2 qualification.

14.4 The review also found that a number of strategic relationships and processes within ACL should be improved. These were:

- The capacity of the voluntary and community sector to deliver ACL should be strengthened in line with the recommendations of the national LSC 'Working Together' strategy.
- The overall level of cohesion with other adult provision delivered by FE colleges should be improved by and linked to the more general requirement to improve progression pathways from ACL provision.
- That External Institutions occupy a potentially difficult position within the structure of ACL. This results from issues regarding the co-ordination of their provision with neighbouring FE colleges and their inherent links to the City / County Councils. The lack of current capacity within the two smaller External Institutions was also felt to be a significant issue that requires further LSC attention.
- The administrative burden within ACL appears to be too great and should be reduced to improve the efficiency of the services.
- That structures to co-ordinate ACL delivery vary in quality and should be improved based on existing good practice.

14.5 As a result of these findings, the review recommends a series of practical improvements to be made by LSCN, ACL Services and providers. These are as follows:

- That the administrative demands on providers are reviewed by ACL Services in conjunction with LSCN and providers;
- That the consistency of quality of the Community Operations Groups and Local Learning Partnerships is improved, building on the good practice that does exist;
- That relevant sections of the FE college's three-year development plans are shared with ACL Services;

- That the implementation of the national funding proposals be used to clarify definitions of first steps engagement and for LSCN to work with both ACL Services to ensure that more consistent and accurate targeting of learners in line with LSC priorities.

14.6 A number of structural options for change were also considered. Different contracting routes, such as directly with colleges and the voluntary sector, were fully explored. The review recommends, however, that the existing system of contracting with the two council-based ACLS should be preserved whilst the necessary improvements are made. A significant development will take place with the implementation of the commitment made by the City Council ACL Service to providing an appropriate level of funding to cover its administrative costs. The review also recommends that all funding for the voluntary and community sector should be routed through the umbrella organisation Enable wherever practicable.

14.7 The report concludes that this situation should be reviewed during 2006 so that the results of the two inspections (including any post-inspection action plans) can be considered; the implications of the new funding structure can be assessed and the recommendations made in the review implemented.

14.8 A separate review of the Information, Advice and Guidance service (or 'Nextstep' as it is now referred to) was concluded in March 2005 and found that the approach taken by the service in Nottinghamshire has been extremely successful in meeting LSC targets to engage with 'first steps'¹⁰ learners. This has primarily been achieved by the service working through organisations who have a purpose to engage with this client group, such as voluntary and community sector providers. A number of suggestions for improving internal processes were made through the review and these will be considered jointly by LSCN and Nextstep.

¹⁰ 'First Steps' refers to those learners without a Level 2 qualification.

15 Foundation / Level 1 Provision and Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

15.1 This section combines the findings of three reviews that have analysed the level and suitability of provision for those learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learners studying below level 2. The three reviews are as follows:

- Mapping of provision for the 14 to 19 cohort of Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disability (LLDD).
- Mapping the provision of learning and the learning needs of people aged 19 and over with learning disabilities and/or physical disability in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in 2004.
- Strategic Area Review of Foundation/Entry and Level 1 Provision for Post 16 Learners in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

15.2 Mapping of Provision for the 14 to 19 Cohort of Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disability (LLDD).

15.2.1 The main findings of the report were as follows:

- The predicted number of LLDD aged 14-19 that providers expect to be receiving education and training in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in 2004/2005 is 12,970, representing an increase of 26% from July 2002. Indications are that the cohort will continue to increase in size beyond 2006. This is in part due to the improved identification, assessment and diagnosis processes employed in education and health for learning difficulties and / or disabilities.
- As a result of the above finding, the volume and scope of FE and School link courses requires increasing.
- The overall choice of learning opportunities within FE colleges is limited and there are insufficient Work Based Learning opportunities for LLDD.
- Learners want to be listened to, and properly consulted, about their programmes and the transitional support they get at school and college.
- Learners and parents want to be able to access provision in their local area.
- Parents say that their children should be better prepared for transition and that current arrangements do not help inform, or plan for, the next stage.
- Data collection criteria are completely different between all partners.

15.2.2 The report recommended that with partners, FE colleges and WBL providers, LSCN needs to plan to meet projected volume, and to increase the diversity of provision to increase post 16 choice. Improvements for learners in accessing vocational courses and employment should take place. Local choice and access to learning balanced with the need for specialism should also be improved, as well as the development of provision to meet the needs of learners in the autism spectrum. Feedback from partner organisations has indicated the need for the establishment of closer links between schools and Work Based Learning providers to facilitate LLDD progression to Apprenticeship level learning where possible. The implementation of a staff development programme across the 14 – 19 sector and the agreement of common data collection criteria with Connexions, LEAs, FE and WBL were also recommended.

15.3 Mapping the Provision of Learning and the Learning Needs of People Aged 19 and Over with Learning Disabilities and/or Physical Disability in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in 2004

15.3.1 The main findings of the report were that:

- There are potentially 41,356 adults living in the City and County area with some disability, who will require access to education / training at some time or other. 43% of people with a disability/learning difficulty aged 16 – 74 are Nottingham City residents.
- Currently there are 6,103 people with learning difficulties and/or disability within Further Education, 231 in WBL and a further 1,552 in Social services funded Day Centre provision, with learner demand continuing to grow.

- Accurate data is not available to cover all areas of activity – however a total of 9,136 people are estimated to be receiving some form of education and training across Nottinghamshire.
- This leaves a total of 36,220 people who may be seeking access to education and/or training (although not all will actively seeking support).

15.3.2 Common themes in the reports findings are that effective learner centred provision development, personal care support, and transport planning all require improvement. Further Education, Work Based Learning, Day Centres and Job Centre Plus provision were not seen to offer the choice of academic or vocational programmes (particularly vocational) for people to access work experience or to realise other fulfilling opportunities to which they aspire. Information, Advice and Guidance is variable in quality, content and consistency. A significant but confusing volume of printed information is available, some of which is not presented in accessible formats.

15.3.3 Specific comments on aspects of post 16 education and training are:

- FE colleges offer a wide range of programmes and courses. However the choice at Foundation Level needs to offer clearer progression pathways into work and Level 1 learning so that “discrete” provision offers mainstream progression wherever possible.
- The Work Based Learning sector has the potential to offer people with learning difficulties and/or disability access to a range of vocational/work opportunities. Currently the sector does not have the capacity to support LLDD to access vocational programmes.
- Adult and Community Learning can provide access to taster courses, Basic Skills, and creative pursuits that provide an ideal pathway to get people with learning difficulties and/or disability back into education, training or employment. However community providers do not have the staff capacity or training resources to support these learners.

15.3.4 At a strategic level the report concludes that developing provision for learners requires a multi-level, multi agency strategy. It also needs a task force to work together to agree strategic plans for provision improvement that all are committed to and are able to carry forward. The plans should be ‘joined up’ and implemented progressively to cover Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire. To maximise the chances of success for the new strategy, the implementation should be prioritised, clearly focussed, and planned over the medium term to allow agencies/partners to deliver the agreed outcomes with maximum impact and minimum fatigue.

15.3.5 In respect of transition planning, the report concludes that processes will be made more effective by the exchange of information and knowledge about people’s disabilities, needs and expectations for learning and of work. Person centred planning processes are key, and all agencies must work together to make this happen, and to ensure that the information always “follows the learner”. To achieve this, common templates for collecting, classifying, and sharing information on learner disability and the tracking of learner progress is required, and the barriers to effective data sharing removed between agencies and providers.

15.3.6 With regards to provision development, the report concludes that the vocational and “access to work” capacity of provision needs to be developed at a Nottinghamshire wide (and cross border) and local (local borough/community) level to improve the choice of programme and work opportunities available and suitable to the learner. Increasing the scope of voluntary sector work opportunities should be a key feature of this development. Some learners require an extra year within Foundation, Level 1, or Level 2 provision to achieve their qualifications and to help secure progression to the next stage of their development. Programmes and funding must be structured to facilitate this. There is also a requirement to embed a mainstream vocational and/or academic ‘taster’ element within discrete programmes to aid the transition of learners into inclusive provision and movement into specific vocational courses where learners want these. FE colleges and WBL providers must engage in effective collaboration to develop provision and the capacity of staff to better meet learners needs and ambitions. The expertise that exists in Specialist colleges could be used to develop staff and provision, perhaps leading to the development of “centres of excellence” in areas such as challenging behaviour and

opening up provision to the severely disabled. Providers should collaborate with industry, and particularly small firms, to double the capacity and choice of work placement/employment options in Work Based Learning, Further Education and Supported Employment.

15.4 Strategic Area Review of Foundation/Entry and Level 1 Provision for Post 16 Learners in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

15.4.1 The findings of this report were split between north Nottinghamshire and the Greater Nottingham conurbation, with the exception of E2E (Entry to Employment programme in Work Based Learning). The report concludes that in specific areas of learning the offer is not appropriate, and that the overall offer is confused, resulting in duplication as well as significant gaps.

The findings relating to the curriculum offer for north Nottinghamshire are as follows:

- There is acceptable overlap in provision between the three colleges, as Entry and Level 1 learners are unlikely to travel long distances for provision.
- The take up of provision at Entry level is concentrated in three main areas of learning, Foundation programmes, English, Languages & Communication and Health & Social Care, with Skills for Working Life offered in several areas of learning. At level 1 there are learners across all areas of learning, though the range in Retail, Customer Service and Transport and Land based is limited, with Construction and Engineering also limited to specific institutions.

15.4.2 For the Greater Nottingham area, the curriculum findings are:

- There is evidence of competition for learners and duplication in the learning offer between the four colleges. The volume and variety of provision is also confusing.
- There is significant overlap in ICT, Visual & Performing Arts & Media, Modern Foreign Languages and Health & Social Care.
- There is overlap in Business Administration, Hospitality and Sport & Leisure. It is difficult to differentiate between the wide variety of qualifications offered.

15.4.3 With regards to provision in north Nottinghamshire, the review concludes that:

- The three colleges have 45,000 learners between them and 11,000 FTEs. The proportion of Entry and Level 1 FTEs within that total has grown from 32% to 35%.
- At Entry level, FTE numbers increased overall between 02/03 and 03/04, but the increase was in Foundation programmes at the expense of many vocational areas.
- At level 1, FTE numbers increased overall, but, by area of learning, numbers declined in Foundation programmes and increased in ICT, Construction, Engineering and Retail, Customer Service and Transport.

15.4.4 For Greater Nottingham the conclusions are:

- The four colleges have over 75,000 learners and nearly 20,000 FTEs. In 02/03 Entry and Level 1 accounted for 34% of FTEs but in 03/04 this had fallen to 30% of FTEs.
- At Entry level, FTE numbers have fallen between 02/03 and 03/04 overall with a dramatic drop in Foundation Programmes.
- At Level 1, there is an overall reduction in FTEs, with a big reduction in ICT.

15.4.5 E2E is a particularly popular programme in Nottinghamshire due in part to low GCSE attainment at 16. During 04/05, E2E providers report a significant reduction in core LSC funded places. The LSC and providers are seeking alternative funding, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF), to support provision. There remain concerns in the provider network regarding the current programme's capacity to meet the needs of learners.

15.4.6 The report concluded that provision needs to offer for a broad range of horizontal pathways to allow for the diversity of learner interests and to provide the 'test ground' before learners find the direction they wish to take. Learner progression should not be seen as distinct to the learner's individual characteristics, situation and motivations. Outcomes such as

increased learner confidence and self-esteem are as much a part of the progression pathway as the achievement of accredited qualifications, as these help to reduce or remove personal barriers to progression either into employment or into other or higher levels of learning.

15.4.7 The report recommended that:

- Providers need to pay closer attention to the requirements of the local employer base.
- There is potential for cross-college progression routes. However, it may be more relevant for individual colleges to look across LSC boundaries for partnering arrangements to ensure access to provision for local learners. Progression routes should be easily traversable by the learner in practice as well as in theory.
- Providers, and particularly FE colleges, must implement a genuine desire to deliver collaborative provision, supported by effective information sharing mechanisms, to create a co-ordinated approach to planning and development work. A learner centred approach needs to be shared across providers, and funding mechanisms must support collaboration and progression. Senior management of the colleges should collaborate at a strategic level to build a more consistent and cohesive approach to first rung provision in FE.
- There is no consistency in what a general foundation course should comprise i.e. a core curriculum. An improvement would be to hold tutor/practitioner level meetings, for those running foundation courses to discuss structure and best practice.
- Additional learning support must continue as the learner progresses or changes their learning pathway.
- The LSC needs to work with providers to develop data collection mechanisms that meet the needs of institutions and enable the LLSC to plan effectively and to monitor provision including destinations. At national level, it is time to review the ILR fundamentally as the basis of this management information.
- There is limited sheltered employment available as a progression route for learners with LDD. Currently some learners are rotating around provision, as a way of being kept engaged. Colleges are debating whether this is appropriate and where funding should come from. This debate must be nurtured and resolved.
- LSCN needs to continue to work with Connexions and providers to provide evidence of unmet demand for E2E and to see if suitable alternative provision exists, or needs developing, in FE colleges. The report concludes that there is a shortfall in flexible, learner centred provision for disaffected and hard to reach young people.

15.5 Overall Conclusions

15.5.1 All three reports share common recommendations that are centred upon delivering improvement through partnership and collaboration. The reports identify the need for strategic responses to ensure that real and meaningful collaboration is implemented between agencies and providers that will deliver:

- Provision that is more learner centred, more effectively meets the skills needs of employers, and meets the locally delivered design principles.
- The removal of duplication.
- Increases the choice of academic and vocational courses on offer, and in particular for LLDD.
- Strong improvements in terms of learner progression and achievement.
- Significant increases in the direct connection of education and training to work opportunities.
- Coherent data collection.
- Effective learner tracking mechanisms for LLDD in FE colleges and training providers.
- The coherence and effectiveness of information, advice and guidance at entry and during progression in learning.

15.5.2 The above list might have been written 10 years ago and still would have had resonance with learners and employers. This has been further supported by the Area Wide Inspection; review of FE in the conurbation and sector skills studies all highlighting such needs. Additionally, the reports identify a priority-planning task for the LSC to ensure that FE funds for

16–18 year olds, and the 19–24 year old cohort, more closely complement the E2E programme and the new Apprenticeship structure to ensure that learners access the right programmes for their learning needs. This will include planning to increase the capacity of the E2E and the WBL Apprenticeship programmes to offer vocational learning to LLDD.

15.6 Overall Recommendations

15.6.1 The findings and recommendations of the three reports, supported elsewhere by other reviews, provide all of the information that the LSC, its partners, and the providers need to deliver improvement. These report outcomes must be incorporated into the LSC Business Cycle, and provider 3-year Development Planning processes starting with planning for the 05/06 academic year. As a result the LSC will:

Strategic Planning.

- Implement a Nottinghamshire multi agency protocol that clarifies roles and responsibilities, including the joint funding of provision and support services.
- Lead the process to bring strategic coherence to the delivery of improvements in provision, data collection and Information, Advice and Guidance.
- Provide linkage between local development and national policy and regional development priorities.

Provider Collaboration

- Lead and drive forward true collaboration between FE Colleges, Specialist Colleges and the WBL sector.
- Establish a provider group that devises and monitors the delivery of an Action Plan to improve the coherence and scope of Foundation/Level 1 provision, and the capacity of all provision to meet the needs of LLDD.

Planning and Funding Provision.

- With partners and providers, determine the level of support required to deliver innovation and development.
- Ensure that providers take forward development activities as a meaningful and truly collaborative response.
- Assist providers to interpret the LSC's national strategy on "Other" provision. In particular balancing the need to rationalise the scope of "Other" provision whilst recognising the key role that it delivers in progressing priority groups of learners (e.g. LLDD) into further learning.

16 E- Learning

16.1 The E-Learning review was completed in September 2004 and encompassed an appraisal of the national position across each of the LSC's main funding blocks as a basis for comparing the state of development of organisations funded by LSCN.

16.2 Different levels of government investment into the various education and training sectors has led to an expectation that a degree of variability will exist in the application of e-learning between these sectors, with FE colleges and schools significantly more advanced in their adoption than ACL and WBL providers. The review found this to in fact be true.

16.3 Within the FE sector, there is an aspect of maturity creeping in to the concept of utilising ICT in the learning environment, which means that to have a position of peripheral investment in ILT in our colleges would rightly be considered disappointing. Nottinghamshire colleges do not fall into this category, as all have invested to a greater or lesser extent, and as a consequence whilst there is variability, there is also some excellent practice when measured against the national norms. As a general statement, the most significant barrier to the wider adoption of ILT by the FE sector is one of staff competence and confidence rather than hardware or software constraints – although hardware investment is now considerable and maintaining it at optimum specification will prove challenging.

16.4 Nottinghamshire secondary schools reflect the findings of "The Ofsted Report ICT in Schools – The impact of government initiatives five years on". The competence of staff in ICT has increased dramatically and steadily and schools' ICT resources now stand at record levels. However, this overall positive picture at both national and Nottinghamshire levels conceals wide variations in both the impact of staff training programmes and the provision of hardware. In particular, whole-school computer-pupil ratios in secondary schools often mask continuing difficulties of access for individual departments and the outcomes of the initiatives are more evident in improvements in pupils' achievements in ICT capability rather than in their application of this learning in other subjects.

16.5 WBL provision, as a sector, has not as yet been in receipt of public funding to support capacity building in the field of e-learning. Consequently there have been no nationally focused surveys which could provide an insight into what might be considered the norm. As a general statement, the use of e-learning by WBL providers can be considered to be in its infancy, with providers exhibiting a mixed awareness of the potential of e-learning to both improve the learning experience and of ICT to improve the efficiency of their operations. Encouragingly, in Nottinghamshire 43% of WBL respondents claim to be exploring the possibilities of e-learning with a further 27% integrating it into some areas of delivery. Where providers are using e-learning it tends to be during the induction/assessment processes, for Internet access to learning materials and for tracking learner activity. Of these providers, half consider the use "common place" indicating the practice is well embedded.

16.6 Growth in volume of learndirect delivery in Nottinghamshire has been rapid since the two original geographic hubs were merged in 2002. At the end of the 2003/4 budget year, contracted expenditure will have reached £7m but this will be the last year when significant year on year budget growth will be available. The main task for the network is to maximise the impact of the funding in terms of accessing the hard to reach learner and contributing to LLSC targets, specifically in the areas of employer engagement and key skill countable outcomes. The review identified that mismatches between learndirect provision and areas of social and educational need do currently exist and need to be rectified. Although the focus of learndirect has never been on delivering qualifications, even the current product offer has scope to contribute to LLSC Level 2 (and to a lesser extent Level 3) qualifications and this needs to be maximised, particularly to the employed workforce.

16.7 The amorphous nature of the ACL sector means that it is the least developed with respect to the use of e-learning, an issue that has been recognised nationally and is beginning to be addressed. Notwithstanding the previous statement, the City and County ACL services benefit from sub-contracting the majority of their delivery to the college sector, which is comparatively well advanced in its application of e-learning.

16.8 The conclusions reached in the report for FE colleges are as follows:

- Include ILT as a normal component in all institutions processes, in particular those concerning quality, such as self assessment and teaching observation.
- Colleges should consider collaborative approaches when selecting virtual learning environments and gaining assistance in compiling a catalogue of resources.
- Colleges should be setting formal targets for the use of ILT across curriculum areas and programmes.

16.9 The conclusions for the secondary school sector centre on prioritising the development of staff e-learning skills. There are also implications for the 14-19 Area Strategy Groups in mapping e-learning infrastructure within their localities. The review also recommended that provision be made for a dedicated resource to assist teachers with material acquisition and adoption into lesson plans.

16.10 For Ufi / Learndirect, it is recommended that the Learning Partnerships and Enable (representing the community and voluntary sectors) maintain a formal dialogue with the hub operator to provide detailed input as to areas of need in Nottinghamshire.

16.11 The conclusion from the review of e-learning in WBL provision is the fundamental need for awareness raising and capacity building. The report therefore recommends that a collective, supportive approach to e-learning capacity building within the sector is developed, with Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) as the focal point for raising the awareness of member organisations and informing them of the benefits of adopting technology. The report also recommended that NTN should host the shared managed learning environment for the sector and release NLN materials.

16.12 As the sector with the least developed approaches towards ILT, the report recommended that both ACL Services ensure that they take maximum advantage of the Regional Support Centre service of JISC, which has recently been given the additional remit of providing support to this sector.

16.12 In March 2005, the DfES published the e-Strategy 'Harnessing Technology: Transforming Learning & Children's Services'. This strategy describes the use of digital and interactive technologies to achieve a more personalised approach within all areas of education and children's services. The strategy sets out the following six priorities:

- An integrated online information service for all citizens;
- Integrated online personal support for children and learners;
- A collaborative approach to transforming teaching and learning;
- A good quality training and support package for practitioners;
- A leadership and development package for organisational capability in ICT;
- A common digital infrastructure to support transformation and reform.

These are underpinned by a number of system-wide and sector specific actions applying to the schools, 14-19 and lifelong learning, HE and Children's services sectors.

17 Conclusions and Recommendations

17.1 This report summarises the general findings of all of the reviews that have taken place through the StAR process. Implementation of the detailed recommendations made in each review is taking place through the following mechanisms:

- i) Recommendations from reports that have a specific implication for providers are being addressed through three-year development plans. This applies particularly to the analysis undertaken for the skills sectors, the assessment of equality and diversity impact measures and to the review of franchise / partnership provision in FE colleges.
- ii) Area Strategy Groups are the joint LSC / LEAs mechanism for developing collaborative 14-19 provision in local areas. They are tasked with addressing the findings of the area reviews.
- iii) Action plans have been developed with providers and stakeholders for several of the reviews undertaken. These have included the reviews of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities, the review of foundation and level one provision, and the ACL review.

A document outlining progress against actions will be released in the summer of 2005. The major findings and related recommendations of the reviews can be summarised as follows:

17.2 The demand for skilled, qualified and experienced labour within Nottinghamshire over the last three years has significantly exceeded supply in many sectors. Inadequate supply is most apparent for the engineering & manufacturing, construction and retail sectors, which form three of the priority sectors for the region. **LSCN will prioritise funding of education and training provision that meets the skills shortages and key sectors highlighted in this report and identified by the LSC at a regional level.**

17.3 The general educational attainment of 14-19 year olds in Nottinghamshire is below national averages, with Key Stage 4 Level 2 achievement, sixteen percentage points below the national average in the City and six in the County. This has a number of implications for Nottinghamshire, the most significant of which is the ongoing need for more Foundation, Level 1 and Level 2 provision to enable young people to participate in learning post-16 and to progress to Level 3 qualifications, required by many employers. There also remain distinctions in achievement within Nottinghamshire between ethnic groups and by gender. **LSCN will improve the breadth and depth of provision to better match the needs of individuals in Nottinghamshire not currently engaged in post-16 learning.**

17.4 The structure of FE in the conurbation does not adequately meet the needs of learners or employers because of: duplication of provision, gaps in provision below Level 2, some poor accommodation, a lack of co-ordinated employer engagement activity, financial instability and poor quality provision in some areas. **LSCN will restructure FE provision in Greater Nottingham to better meet the needs of learners and employers and improve their financial viability.**

17.5 Franchise and Partnership activity in some Nottinghamshire FE colleges remains at too high a level and does not conform to the criteria of being local, of good quality and in-line with LSC priorities. **LSCN will reduce high levels of franchise and partnership activity in FE colleges, ensuring that remaining provision is for local learners, meets LSC priorities and is of high quality.**

17.6 There are improving trends in the quality of Work Based Learning (WBL) and the outcomes for learners undertaking this provision. These have in part been prompted by the development of the Nottinghamshire Training Network. There remain concerns, however, about the overall standard of WBL in Nottinghamshire and the perception of it from potential learners,

parents and stakeholders. There is a need to increase the amount of construction and engineering WBL provision in Nottinghamshire to meet the skills needs of the sectors. **LSCN will work with Nottinghamshire Training Network to resolve the current skills gaps in engineering and construction provision and to continue to improve the overall quality of WBL.**

17.7 School sixth forms in Nottinghamshire vary considerably in size and performance. There is a lack of reliable information gathered by LSCN regarding retention, cost effectiveness and curriculum planning for the sector. **LSCN will work with school sixth forms to introduce appropriate development planning, target setting and performance monitoring.**

17.8 Whilst the findings of area reviews of 16-19 provision differ in individual detail, some common themes can be seen to emerge from them, which are as follows:

- No one institution is able to provide the breadth of curriculum offer required by learners and employers on its own. Collaborative work is therefore required. In some cases, such as Bassetlaw, collaboration should be accompanied with structural change.
- Impartial advice and guidance is a key component in enabling learners to choose the most appropriate options and to link employer and learner demands.
- Improvements to Key Stage 4 performance is required in many areas of Nottinghamshire to further encourage post-16 participation in education and training. Engagement of schools with the vocational agenda and with other providers / support agencies will enable some of these improvements to take place.

As a result of these common themes, **LSCN will establish Area Strategy Groups (in conjunction with the two LEAs) to develop 14-19 provision that meets the needs of local learners and employers, focus on quality improvement strategies, and promote structural change where possible and desirable.**

17.9 The reviews that have taken place of education and training in Newark have revealed that there are significant issues relating to participation and achievement in the town. A review of provision is currently taking place and expected to be completed in July 2005. **For LSCN to progress the review of education and training provision in Newark-on-Trent in order for new structural options to be fully considered.**

17.10 The review of Adult and Community Learning found that the Nottingham City based service was not currently providing any funding for the service and achieving less successful co-ordination of activity than the County Council based service. The review also found that the capacity of the voluntary and community sector should be strengthened, that administrative burdens on providers are too high, and that further efforts to co-ordinate ACL with other adult provision should take place. It is therefore recommended that **LSCN will engage with both Local Authorities following their forthcoming OfSTED inspections to make the necessary quality improvements. This will be followed in 2006 by an analysis of improvements made and a revisiting of the structural options available to LSCN.**

17.11 The reviews of provision for learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities concluded that such provision should become more learner centred and more closely aligned to the attainment of vocational skills. Duplication should be removed with strong improvements required in terms of learner progression and achievement. As a result of this, significant increases in the connection of education and training to work opportunities should take place with more coherent data collection enabling effective learner tracking mechanisms for LLDD to develop. The coherence and effectiveness of information, advice and guidance at entry and during progression in learning should also be improved. **LSCN to develop and lead related action plans, including the creation of strategic and operational groups to ensure that providers and stakeholder organisations take these recommendations on board.**

17.12 The E-Learning review found that good practice exists within both the school and FE sectors locally. More work is required to extend this practice across all provision, in particular WBL

and ACL. It is therefore recommended that **LSCN promotes such practice and the extension of e-learning through the development planning process, 14-19 Area Strategy Groups and direct engagement with umbrella organisations such as NTN and Enable.**

17.13 Although not covered by one single review, the role of the voluntary and community sector features within a number of the individual StAR reviews; most notably those of ACL, Information Advice & Guidance, and franchise / partnership provision. It is clear from these reviews that the role the sector has to play within education and training in Nottinghamshire is significant. **LSCN will continue to work through Enable as an umbrella organisation for the sector and ensure that growth in voluntary and community sector provision is achieved in priority areas such as that at Foundation and Level 1.**

Acknowledgements

The co-operation and support given by a large number of organisations and individuals to conduct the Strategic Area Review is placed on record and acknowledged.

The support of all those involved in this review is greatly appreciated.

Appendix 1 - List of Reviews Undertaken as Part of the StAR

Review of Post-16 Provision in Bassetlaw, (Nottinghamshire County Council)	October 2001
Review of Post-16 Provision in Ashfield and North Broxtowe (Nottinghamshire County Council)	May 2002
Review of 16-19 Provision in Newark	December 2002
Local Area Review of 14-19 Education and Training Provision in Gedling	January 2003
Local Area Post-16 Review, South Broxtowe	February 2003
Mapping the Provision of Learning for Learners with Learning Disabilities in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire	February 2003
Review of FE Provision in Greater Nottingham	March 2003
Review of Post-16 School Provision in Nottingham City	October 2003
Equality and Diversity Agenda Assessment for WBL Providers	November 2003
Review of Post-16 Education in Rushcliffe Schools	February 2004
Assessment of Further Education Assets in Greater Nottingham and North Nottinghamshire	March 2004
Review of Post-16 Provision in East, West and North Nottinghamshire	April 2004
Review of Post-16 School Provision in Mansfield	May 2004
Equality and Diversity Assessment Report for FE Colleges	July 2004
Mapping the Provision of Learning and the Learning Needs of People Aged 19 and Over with Learning Difficulties and / or Disability (LLDD) in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	July 2004
The Use of E-Learning in Post-16 Education	September 2004
Employer Skills Needs Analysis of:	November 2004
Engineering Industry	November 2004
Food, Drink and Tobacco Manufacturing	November 2004
Hotel and Catering Sector	November 2004
Agriculture, Mining and Quarrying Industries	November 2004
Construction Industries	November 2004
Health and Social Care Sectors	November 2004

Manufacturing	November 2004
Electricity, Gas and Water	November 2004
Retail Distribution	November 2004
Review of Foundation / Entry and Level 1 Provision for Post 16 Learners in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	December 2004
Review of Adult and Community Learning	January 2005
Review of Work Based Learning	February 2005
Review of Franchise and Partnership Activity in FE Colleges in Nottinghamshire	February 2005