

 For information

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Leading learning and skills

**Learning and
Skills Council
Essex
Annual Plan
2007-08**

March 2007

Of interest to National, Regional and
Local Learning and Skills Colleagues

Local Annual Plan 2007/08

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is the national organisation with responsibility for the planning, funding and quality assurance of post-16 education outside the university sector, in England. The LSC is organised into nine regional teams, each of which produces an annual commissioning plan identifying the priorities for the Learning and Skills sector in its region for the forthcoming year. This is the plan for the Essex area for 2007/08.

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Foreword

Without doubt, tackling the learning and skills agenda for the people of Essex is a top priority. We know that only innovative solutions to the challenges of learning and skills provision will provide the long term answers. These will need to be both employer driven and market led if they really are to secure a new era of wealth and job creation for young people and employers in Essex.

The ambitious plans we have for the county are for the long term - but they have to begin right now. We need to be bold and imaginative in our approach to learning and skills because the needs of the area's young people are urgent.

We have to be ambitious about the future because, in light of the proposed developments in the Thames Gateway, Haven Gateway and the Stansted Growth area, the plans for these areas are in themselves ambitious. We need to generate ambition in more people so that they will grab the opportunities now unfolding. We will increase the capacity of provision to address the demands of the local economy and develop choice for the learner and employer.

The opportunities for this generation have never been greater with the Olympics 2012 on their doorstep, a key economic driver in the area, and one which will leave a huge skills legacy for the future.

LSC Essex will be investing millions of pounds into exciting 21st century buildings for 21st Century learning; we will be working collaboratively with all our partners, especially with our local employers and businesses, to bring about real and effective change in the learning sector in Essex. We will free up and create a new learning and skills market.

We are committed to raising our game in Essex, looking for action now and action that will make a difference on the ground. We will work with Ofsted and the QIA to eliminate inadequate or unsatisfactory provision across the learning and skills sector by 2008. With new tools at our disposal, such as Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP), we will drive up the quality of provision to the levels that our communities deserve.

We are in no doubt as to the size of the challenges - but we will be working with all our partners to deliver relevant, high quality skills to every learner in our communities.

Our plan for 2007/08 establishes our local actions in response to our national and Regional priorities and to the linked priorities of the East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership (EESCP). It also shows how we will tackle some of the challenges identified in our local strategic analysis (see section 2). We hope you will find this document clear, informative and ambitious.

Janice Logie
Area Director

Chris Paveley
Chair of Council

Local Context

Essex in Profile

Essex, including the Unitary Authorities of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, is a large and diverse growth area with a mixed urban and rural landscape. It has a population of 1.6 million, mostly concentrated in the largely urban south and around the towns of Chelmsford and Colchester. The area accounts for the largest proportion of the East of England population, with 30% of the people in the region living in Essex. Population projections indicate that between 2003 and 2016 the overall population is set to increase by more than 115,000 people.

Essex is perceived as affluent but the true socio-economic structure is more complex. The economy is buoyant, but extremes of wealth and deprivation exist within the area. Parts of Tendring, Southend, Basildon and Thurrock are amongst the most deprived areas nationally, whilst areas in Uttlesford and Chelmsford are amongst the least deprived in the country. Distribution of employment is in line with the regional picture, however the planned developments in the Thames Gateway sub region will have a significant impact on employment in the next few years. The close proximity to London is also significant, with 17% of workers living in Essex commuting to London.

Table 1: Key Statistics for Essex

Population	
Population	1,614,400
Population as a % of the East of England	30%
Population of working age	1,020,600
Population density (persons per sq km)	446
% of the population under 16	20%
% of the population aged 16 to pensionable age	63%
% of the population above pension age	17%
Education	
%16 year olds achieving 5+ GCSEs grade A* to C	57%
% of (working age) population qualified to level 2	19%
% of (working age) population qualified to level 3	14%
% of (working age) population qualified to level 4 or above	21%
Economy	
Employment Rate (%)	78.00%
Unemployment Rate (%)	2.00%

Priority 1: Learning Opportunities for Young People

Within the cohorts of young people in Essex, 75% of students were participating in some form of education and learning, which is 4% less than the regional average (79%); and along with Norfolk, the lowest participation rate in the region. The non participation of this cohort amounts to over 10,000 young people. However greater success in this area will also mean greater demand for LSC-funded learning opportunities, and potentially raise capacity issues with current providers.

Of particular interest is the drop in participation rate between the ages of 16 and 17. There is a considerable reduction in the participation of young people between these years, suggesting there are challenges in keeping young people engaged for longer.

The latest information we have for NEET (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training) shows that for Essex that the number of young people in this category is increasing, in line with the regional and national picture.

Essex had over 3,600 NEETs at March 2006, a considerable number not entering any form of structured learning. This also represents 34% of all NEET in the region. LSC Essex is working with key partners to address this issue by revitalising the Work Based Learning (WBL) offer, by further growing the Further Education (FE) colleges and by driving through key initiatives such as the Learning Agreement Pilot, "Train for Your Future".

In Essex, young people's attainment represents a significant challenge, as current data shows that 43% of young people leaving statutory education, and entering the LSC's funding areas do not have a Level 2 achievement, equating to over 8,300 young people in 2005. LSC Essex will be driving up the quality of its funded provision to ensure the increase in attainment. One key driver will be the introduction of Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP), which builds on the LSC's commitment to not purchasing sub-standard provision from 2008.

In February 2007, LSC Essex launched two 16-19 competitions in Basildon and Thurrock to address the shortfalls in the local further education offer and to introduce new, innovative provision in the areas. The winners of these competitions will be announced in September 2007. Along with the new MLPs and revised tendering arrangements for WBL, this provides a clear statement on how LSC Essex will purchase provision for young people in the future.

Priority 2: Raising skills

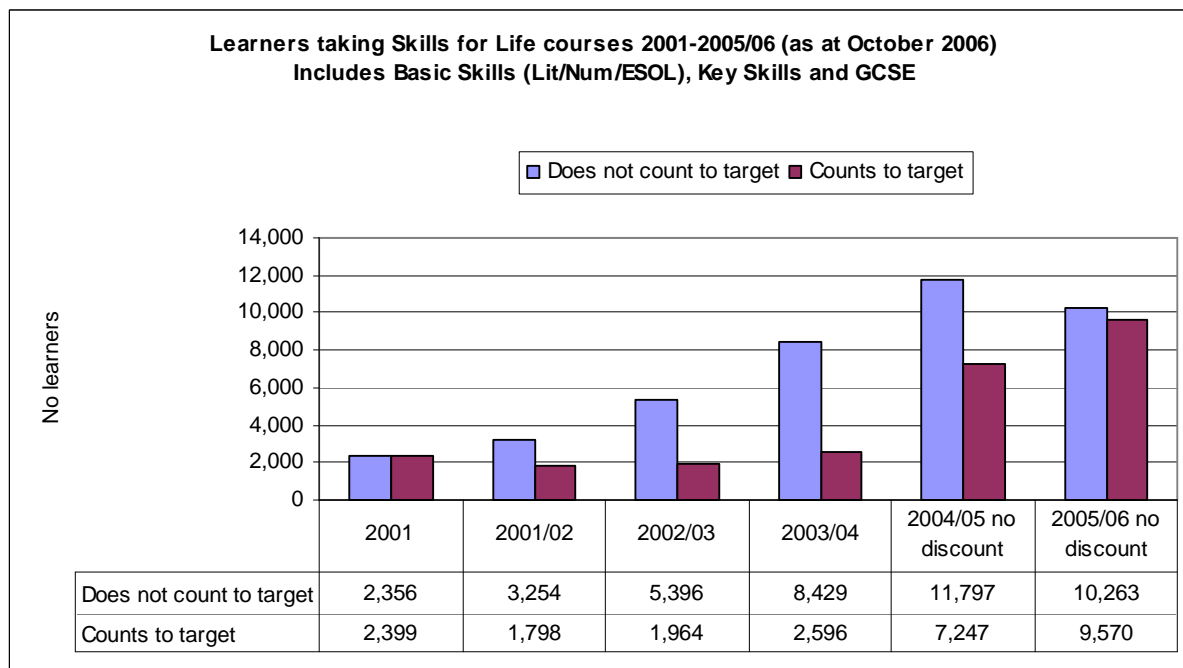
Essex performs behind the regional average where adult qualification levels are concerned. It also has the second highest rate of adults with no qualifications in the region.

While the pattern is mixed among the districts in Essex, there remain over 324,000 adults who are not qualified to Level 2 standard in the county. Increasing and continuing pressure upon finance and resources means FE purchasing will be focused at priority areas for adults into the future, namely: First full Level 2, First full Level 3 and Skills for Life.

To support learners studying for the First full Level 2 and 3 targets, the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) is being launched. Events to support the launch of ALG are planned for early 2007.

Despite the significant contribution from Train-to-Gain provision, mainstream FE provision is still expected to make a notable contribution to Level 2 and Level 3 adult need. In addition to FE and Train to Gain, the LSC is launching Adult Apprenticeships from September 2007. This gives learners and employers alike a full, coherent suite of programmes to suit all.

In Essex it is clear there is considerable need generally to improve basic skills at all levels. However, there are some interesting distinctions between Literacy and Numeracy. The need for entry-level literacy, for example, is relatively low across both Essex and the region as a whole, whilst the need for entry-level basic skills in numeracy is considerably greater (around four and a half times greater than that of literacy need). The issues this raises for Essex LSC are firstly the causes of such a gap; and secondly what future emphasis can be placed upon entry-level numeracy to meet the need.



The above graph indicates the rebalancing of target-bearing Skills for Life courses for adults. Skills for Life is still recognised as one of the key priorities for the LSC in Essex and will continue to drive up the number of accredited qualifications that count towards the Government's targets delivered in the county, particularly in light of recently taking over the planning and funding of former Jobcentre Plus Skills for Life provision.

There are over 65,000 businesses in Essex, the majority of which are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) employing 1-10 people (in line with the regional picture). The distribution between districts of those with 1 – 10 employees shows that Harlow and Thurrock have the lowest proportions in this area and 8 of the 14 districts in Essex having a greater proportion than the regional average.

In conjunction with the East of England Skills and Competitive Partnership, the LSC East of England region has identified seven key priority sectors: Construction (The Built Environment); Health and Social Care (includes Early Years and Play Work); Hospitality; Logistics; Retail; Land-based industries; and Manufacturing & Engineering. The Essex distribution of these industries is in line with that of the region. Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants and Banking, Finance and Insurance are by far the dominant industries within Essex.

LSC Essex is working closely with partner organisations to target learning provision in line with local economic needs, via an increasingly demand-led approach to commissioning.

Essex LSC has a history of success with the Employer Training Pilot, “Profit from Learning”, and is looking to build on this success with the employer demand-led “Train to Gain”. This programme is the key vehicle to support businesses improve their productivity and competitiveness by ensuring that staff have the right skills to do the best job.

LSC Essex will grow the existing Train to Gain offer to support regeneration in the Thames and Haven Gateways, and the Stansted Growth Area, as well as continuing to upskill the SMEs in the county.

We will work closely with employers and their staff to support workforce development which will raise employee skills and improve organisational effectiveness and productivity.

In particular, we will seek to reach detailed agreements with four key sectors on the availability and funding of high quality learning to enhance Skills for Life and secure the achievement of qualifications at levels 2 and 3 through programmes designed to meet the express requirements of the workplace. An important element of our approach will be to maximise the benefit to Essex of Train To Gain and to integrate the application of this important funding into each of our key sector agreements.

Priority 3: Economic Development

We will be dynamic in our approach using skills as a driver for economic development. We will work with the Regeneration Agencies to ensure opportunities are realised for individuals and local communities, and that low skilled individuals are supported with the flexible and accessible learning provision they need to exploit those opportunities. This involves us working with a large number of partners including Job Centre Plus, the East of England Development Agency, Government Office – East, Local Authorities, Urban Regeneration Companies, Local Strategic Partnerships, and Sub-Regional Economic Partnerships (SREPs), to ensure the adequacy and quality of provision for all adult learners across the region.

We will align a proportion of our investment in skills development with the region’s gateways, growth areas, Regional Cities East and initiatives in rural and deprived urban areas, to encourage economic development and growth.

LSC Essex will further develop links to the voluntary and community sector, particularly in relation to engaging with the hardest to reach learners and developments relating to the forthcoming 2012 Olympics.

The catalytic effect of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games can be seen as potentially beneficial in six thematic areas, across the county of Essex but with specific significance within the different SREPs. The thematic areas are: Tourism, Business and economy, Skills, Sport, Culture, Education and Infrastructure.

In the Thames Gateway, it is envisaged that the effect will be realised through involvement within the sport, leisure and tourism sectors, with the attraction of Southend as an important tourism destination in particular.

The East of England and especially the County of Essex, is well situated to benefit from and take advantage of significant inward investment and economic development, supported and complemented by a range of agencies providing funded opportunities. Following the recent re-structure into Area-based Partnership Teams, LSC Essex has strengthened its links with external partners, particularly in relation to regeneration. LSC Essex is working with regeneration lead bodies to secure diverse funding streams such

as Investing in Communities to support the learning and skills development required for such growth.

Growth Areas and Growth Points

The Sustainable Communities Plan published in February 2003 recommended that radical action was required to provide additional homes in England above previously planned levels by 2016 to keep pace with the projected number of new households. One of these measures was the creation of four growth areas, based on proposals identified in regional planning guidance for London and the rest of the South East in 2001. Two of the four growth areas are wholly or partly in the Essex:

- the Thames Gateway;
- London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough.

Together, these areas represent significant economic and social change in the region - which if realised, will provide huge economic and development opportunities. The challenge will be to ensure that local people and businesses derive maximum benefit from these opportunities.

The Thames Gateway sub region spans an area 40 miles long and 20 miles wide, with a population of 1.6 million people and covers parts of 3 LSC offices - Essex, London East and Kent. The Thames Gateway in the East of England region includes some of the most deprived areas in the region, notably in parts of Basildon and Thurrock. The Thames Gateway is projected to see enormous growth over the next ten years as the regeneration plans gather pace, with an overall aim to build 120,000 new homes and the opportunity of 194,000 new jobs by 2016. Taken with normal job turnover in the area, this is likely to mean that over three million jobs will need to be filled over the next ten years.

Job creation is expected to be concentrated in a number of sectors. Most employment opportunities between 2004 and 2016 are likely to be in offices (126,700), retail and leisure (37,800), industrial and distribution (21,700) and community services (7,500). Furthermore, a large proportion of these jobs will require degree level qualifications or higher education qualifications. Given the projected skill mix requirement, it is vital that low participation rates are addressed. Sustained programmes of skill acquisition will be necessary to ensure that the Thames Gateway creates a long lasting sustainable community with high levels of local employment.

Stansted Airport is a key transport gateway and a major economic driver for the region as a whole. The airport is the third largest handler of airfreight in the UK, and passenger numbers have increased by 75% since 2000 to reach just under 21 million. In the Stansted/M11 Corridor linked with Mid Essex, LSC Essex will work in partnership with the regional and sub regional groups to address the skills challenges to progress economic development and opportunity for all.

Clearly, the presence of London Stansted Airport presents opportunities and challenges in respect of employment, skills development of the workforce and increasingly, the relationship and development opportunities that flow from an expanding airport, which in itself is an important gateway to the United Kingdom.

In December 2005, the Government announced the New Growth Point initiative. This is designed to provide support to local communities who wish to pursue large scale and sustainable growth, including new housing, through a partnership with Government. Within Essex, the New Growth Point is the Haven Gateway. This special status will help deliver critical funding for vital infrastructure and development projects.

The Haven Gateway New Growth Point covers parts of two LSC offices in the East of England – Essex and Suffolk and is one of the fastest growing areas of the UK. Its success extends beyond the maritime world to a wide number of industries including financial services, technology, print and publishing, food and research. The five Haven ports of Felixstowe, Harwich International, Harwich Navyard, Ipswich and Mistley represent the single most important cluster of ports in the UK.

LSC Essex will continue to work with Job Centre Plus to develop the joint delivery plans and establish a range of new provision for those not in work and for disadvantaged groups across the region. This work will span rurally isolated communities, the declining coastal areas and urban areas of most deprivation.

Priority 4: Raising the Performance of the system

Significant improvements have been made in the quality of post-16 provision in Essex. Overall success rates for 16-18 FE provision have increased by 7 percentage points between 2003/04 and 2005/06, in line with the regional figure, whilst for the adult priority areas of Level 2 and Level 3 provision, success rates for both have increased by 6 percentage points.

Similarly, overall WBL Success Rates have increased year-on-year from 36% to 47%.

Central to LSC action will be the use of Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP) to drive improvements in the FE and WBL sectors. The use of data will also underpin our approach to the commissioning and funding of provision across the FE, ACL and WBL sectors; success and quality rather than historical reputation, will determine our purchasing. Specifically in 2007/08 we will:

- End contracts with Apprenticeship providers currently below the minimum acceptable level of performance from 1 August 2007.
- Issue a “Notice to Improve”, and agree an improvement strategy with all colleges where provision is below the minimum threshold.
- Commission, by means of open and competitive tendering, new WBL provision to address shortfalls in offer due to removal of contracts and/or significant potential growth.

Commissioning Principles

By ‘commissioning’ we mean all our planning and purchasing activity across the sector, including purchasing through both negotiation and competitive tendering. It applies equally to grant in aid agreements and contracts as we move toward a ‘provider neutral’ approach to tendering for provision.

We are committed to ensuring that our allocated resource is targeted towards provision of the highest quality, contributes to government targets and priorities; and is delivered at an appropriate unit cost.

We will work with our existing college and provider base, and also open up provision to competition where there is poor quality, significant gaps or new funds available. We will apply a light touch approach where providers are excellent.

We want to introduce more competition to drive up quality and responsiveness, so we will commission provision in two main ways:

- Negotiated commissioning – agreeing plans with colleges and providers that currently deliver LSC funded provision
- Tendered commissioning – competitive tendering for adult and skills provision and 16-19 competitions. This will be open to any new providers wanting to enter the market and to existing colleges or providers wanting to extend their provision or enter new markets or geographical areas.

When will we use competition?

We will use competitions in the following circumstances:

- New investment
- Restructuring of provision or a new delivery model such as the Offender Learning and Skills Service in custody and the community
- Significant gaps in provision including 16-19 competitions or where the market is not making provision available to meet the demands of learners and employers
- Poor quality – where colleges, providers or elements of provision are not meeting the minimum levels of performance and/or are deemed inadequate by Inspection

Local Priorities and Key Actions

LSC Essex, in partnership with key partners and stakeholders will contribute to the targets as specified in the LSC East of England Regional Commissioning Plan as detailed below:

Priority 1: We will fund plans and activities which drive up participation and attainment in education and training for all the 16-18 age group, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Linked EESCP strategic goal 2: Develop a culture of lifelong learning; and strategic goal 3: Create opportunities for disadvantaged groups and communities.

The following actions identify how will achieve Priority 1 in 2007/08:

Action		Success indicators
1.	<p>Increase the total number of 16-18 places available and the percentage of young people in learning across all LSC provision.</p> <p>16-19 Competitions in Basildon and Thurrock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number of places available increases to 29,622 (07/08.) Participation increased: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at age 16 from 81% to 83% at age 17 from 68% to 70% <p>Innovative new provision phased into both areas commencing in late 2007, equating to initial learner numbers of circa 200 places for 07/08.</p>
2.	<p>Increase the numbers of young people who achieve a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 2 achievement at 19 in Essex increases from 69% to 72% Apprenticeship framework completion (16-18) increases from 49% to 55%
3.	<p>Increase the numbers of young people who achieve a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 3 achievement at 19 in Essex increases from 45% to 49% Advanced Apprenticeship framework completion (16-18) increases from 35% to 55%
4.	<p>Support the 14-19 Partnerships across the region in developing the 14-19 curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each of the three Local Authority areas has an overarching 14-19 strategy in place, delivered through a robust formalised partnership, directing and supporting an increased range of 14-19 curriculum opportunities delivered via collaboration The StepOn online 14-19 prospectus is fully populated by all participating providers by September 07.

Action		Success indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The “September Guarantee” is in place in Essex, Southend and Thurrock The progression rate from Entry to Employment (e2e) is increased from 50% to 55%, with a higher proportion of outcomes into structured learning.
5.	Build the capacity of regional LLDD provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure those FE capital plans in the early stages of development take due consideration of LLDD need.
6.	Reduce the number of NEET/NET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is reduced from 6.2% to 6% in Essex, 7.4% to 7.2% in Southend and 9% to 8.8% in Thurrock. Refocused e2e offer prioritising progression into structured learning Convert proportion of “employment only” e2e outcomes into LAP or mainstream offer. Reduce the number of young people in NET through Learner Agreement Pilot “Train for the Future”, by brokering 2930 starts. Plan strategic use of ESF to develop sustainable, innovative provision that engages “hard-core” NEET and encourages progression into mainstream offer Develop a wider offer of Sector Subject Areas available through WBL (with increased collaboration with FE)

Priority 2: We will strengthen our partnership with employers and continue to encourage the responsiveness of the Learning and Skills sector in order to raise the skills and productivity of the region's workforce. Linked EESCP strategic goal 1: Strengthen the East of England's business base

The following actions identify how will achieve Priority 2:

Action		Success indicators
1.	Increase the numbers of adults in work in Essex who have a full Level 2 qualification.	Percentage of adults without a full Level 2 or above decreases from 40% to 37% FE 19+ full Level 2 success rates increase from 68% to 70% Apprenticeship framework completion (19+) increases from 49% to 60%
2.	Increase the numbers of adults in work in Essex who have a full Level 3 qualification.	Percentage of adults without a Level 3 qualification or above decreases from 61% to 58% FE 19+ full Level 3 success rates increase from 60% to 65% Advanced Apprenticeship framework completion (19+) increases from 40% to 60%
3.	Increase the number of adults in Essex who have literacy or numeracy skills.	6,905 19+ learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to the PSA target. 5598 adults achieving a Skills for Life qualification that is target bearing representing a target 81% achievement rate.
4.	Target the skills necessary to support employers in the region, with a particular focus on the seven priority sectors and on higher level skills.	Ensure that growth in Level 2 and Level 3 (both FE and WBL) provision is mindful of priority sector need Develop a Train to Gain Local Management Group as a means to promote and drive T2G provision in Essex. Develop a geographic "cluster" model for T2G delivery in Essex to enhance focus on local employers' needs
5.	Roll-out new Adult Learning Grant (ALG)	ALG to be operational in all Essex FE providers from August '07
6.	Roll-out 19-25 Level 3 Entitlement	Launch of entitlement, leading to increased participation and success rates. Projected numbers to be finalised
7.	Roll-out Adult Apprenticeships	Launch of Adult Apprenticeships – learner numbers to be finalised

Action		Success indicators
8.	Reform of PCDL including formation of PCDL Partnerships	Commission study to investigate appropriate models for PCDL Partnerships. Partnerships in place by December 2007

Priority 3: We will align a proportion of our investment in skills development with the region's Gateways, Growth Areas and initiatives in rural and coastal areas to encourage economic development and growth. Linked EESCP strategic goals 3 and 4: Invest in sustainable economic growth and Create opportunities for disadvantaged groups and communities.

The following actions identify how will achieve Priority 3:

Action		Success indicators
1.	The "added value" of partnership working with Jobcentre Plus is reflected in Joint Delivery plans with measurable objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality tailored provision is commissioned to equip those not in work with the skills needed to enter, remain and progress in employment LSC and Jobcentre Plus achieve at least the expected outcomes for lower skilled adults in rural and "deprived" areas.-
2.	Robust specific regional and or local plans are in place to align our funding with that of economic development partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding opportunities are maximised with e.g. the Gateways and Growth Areas to ensure the development of skills matches the availability of jobs Plans are established in relation to other major investments (e.g. the Olympics and Paralympics) as they develop Local responses to economic development opportunities are developed within the LAA framework and LAA target achievement is assisted by LSC.
3.	Work with non-statutory partners to enhance the development of skills and entry to the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A refreshed Working Together Strategy is in place and the contribution of the Voluntary, Community and Social (VCS) sector as partners and providers is on an upward trend Effective joint planning arrangements are in place with Trades Union (TU) partnerships and participation in TU Learning Programmes is on an upward trend Funding opportunities via the Investing in Communities programme are maximised to support the development of the region's learning infrastructure.
4.	Ensure good quality Information, Advice and Guidance is available to all offenders and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offenders have one ILP tailored to individual need which identifies the support and skills development required for them to access employment and further training More offenders have access to a range of education, training and employment opportunities helping to reduce re-offending.

Priority 4: We will invest to accelerate improvements in the quality of provision, in order to achieve higher success rates, increases in learner and employer satisfaction and better value for money.

The following actions identify how will achieve Priority 4:

Action		Success indicators
1.	Support the East of England Quality Improvement Strategy 2007/10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement indicators agreed in all Provider Development Plans. • Work collaboratively with our provider base to successfully implement the Framework for Excellence. • Support for Success (S4S) allocations aligned to commissioning plan (by March 07)
2.	Improve FE Success Rates at the headline and priority qualification level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretching success rate targets agreed with all colleges. • Notices to Improve issued to FE providers whose success rates are below the published Minimum Levels of Performance (MLPs). • Success Rates for 16-18 Long qualifications increases from 76% in 2005/06 to 78% in 2007/08. • Success Rates for 19+ Long qualifications increases from 69% in 2005/06 to 73% in 2007/08. • Success Rates in 16-18 Full Level 2 qualifications increases from 69% in 2005/06 to 74% in 2007/08 • Success Rates in 19+ Full Level 2 qualifications increases from 68% in 2005/06 to 75% in 2007/08.
3.	Improve the quality of WBL and E2E provision in Essex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts not renewed with WBL providers where their success rates are below the required MLPs. • The progression rate from e2e is increased from 50% in 2005/06 to 55% in 2007/08 • Apprenticeship framework completion (16-18) increases from 49% in 2005/06 to 55% in 2007/08 • Advanced Apprenticeship framework completion (16-18) increases from 35% in 2005/06 to 55% in 2007/08 • Apprenticeship framework completion (19+) increases from 49% in 2005/06 to 60% in 2007/08 • Advanced Apprenticeship framework completion (19+) increases from 40% in 2005/06 to 60% in 2007/08

Action		Success indicators
3.	Improve the reputation of the Learning and Skills Sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Positive take-up of the Framework for Excellence by all Essex providers during the trial period, so that bench marks for Effectiveness, Responsiveness and Finance will be in place early for future development. •Promote amongst providers involvement in the RQIP Awards. • Ensure at least two Centres for Excellence for HE in FE are established in Essex.
4.	Increase the value for money of our investment in specific programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No providers remain below the 50% and 40% MLP threshold and 100% of providers in “poor” to “satisfactory” categories improve their position year on year • A three year regional Level 2 action plan setting out how much each funding stream will contribute towards the 2010 Level 2 PSA targets agreed with partners • The Essex capital strategy is reviewed, agreed and published. •Expand the 16-18 FE investment in Basildon and Thurrock through the successful completion of the two local competitions launched in Jan 07. •Contract with new providers that have successful track records of delivery in the priority sectors identified in the competitions. •Increase the proportion of the provision purchased that contributes to the PSA targets, and national and regional priorities. • Reduce the number of programmes leading to non-NQF qualifications by 15%.

Aggregate Volumes

Provider Summary Statement of Activity	Year 1	
	16-18 (Learner Volumes)	Adult (Learner Volumes)
LSC Funded Participation		
Number of FE learners (total)	26,767	35,312
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 4 and above	29	808
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 3	16,372	6,131
<i>of which:</i> Full Level 3 Learners	13,424	2,437
<i>of which:</i> First Full Level 3 Learners	12,553	1,335
Number of Train to Gain learners undertaking Level 3		25
Number of learners undertaking an Advanced Apprenticeship (Average in Learning)	468	754
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 2	11,367	12,653
<i>of which:</i> Full Level 2 Learners	5,775	3,489
<i>of which:</i> First Full Level 2 Learners	4,074	939
Number of Train to Gain learners undertaking Level 2		7,883
Number of learners undertaking an Apprenticeship at Level 2 (Average in Learning)	2387	1160
Number of FE learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target	10,190	5,995
Number of Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target	2517	724
Number of Train to Gain learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target		1,297
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 1 and Entry	5,171	12,565
Number of learners undertaking Entry to Employment (starts)	1284	
Number of learners undertaking Safeguarded Adult Learning (Total)		27,352
<i>of which:</i> Number of learners undertaking Family learning, literacy and numeracy		2,300
<i>of which:</i> Number of learners undertaking Neighbourhood learning in deprived communities		1,588
<i>of which:</i> Number of learners undertaking Wider Family Learning		1,397
<i>of which:</i> Number of learners undertaking Personal / Leisure Learning		22,057
ESF Funded Participation		
Number of ESF Learners undertaking any ESF Activity	172	726
Number of ESF Learners not included in LSC Funded Participation table above	32	385
<i>Of which:</i>		
Level 4 and above	0	0
Full Level 3	66	108
Full Level 2	0	105
Skills for life that directly contributes towards the PSA target	0	20
Level 1 and Entry	0	175
Other ESF activity	32	33

LSC Funded Outcomes	16-18 (Learner achievements)	Adult (Learner achievements)	16-18 Success Rate (%)	Adult Success Rate (%)
Number of FE Learners achieving a Full Level 3 qualification	8,321	1,889		
Number of FE Learners achieving a First Full Level 3 qualification	7,843	991		
Number of Train to Gain learners achieving a Full Level 3		84		
Number of Learners achieving an Advanced Apprenticeship Framework	229	346		
Number of FE Learners achieving a Full Level 2 qualification	5,394	2,330		
Number of FE Learners achieving a First Full Level 2 qualification	2,980	654		
Number of Train to Gain Learners achieving a Full Level 2 qualification		2,387		
Number of Learners achieving an Apprenticeship Framework (at Level 2)	1070	642		
Number of FE learners achieving a Skills for Life qualification (s) that directly contribute to PSA target	5,437	4,391		
Number of Advanced Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship learners achieving a Skills for Life qualification(s) that directly contribute to PSA target	933	489		
Number of Train to Gain learners achieving a Skills for Life qualification(s) that directly contribute to PSA target		178		
Number of learners progressing to a positive destination from Entry to Employment	860			
ESF Funded Outcomes				
Number of ESF Learners not included in LSC Funded Outcomes table above achieving a qualification at:				
Full Level 3	66	72		
Full Level 2	28	340		
Skills for life qualification that directly contributes to the PSA target	0	0		

Funding summary	Funding (£)
FE 16 – 18	105,398,861
FE Adult	25,583,047
FE Additional Learning Support	9,357,920
Train to Gain	2,767,802
Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships 16-18	11,212,209
Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships (Adult)	3,824,058
Entry to Employment	5,260,447
WBL additional learner / learning support	802,892
Safeguarded Adult Learning	7,341,166
ESF	282,400
Total	169,085,835

Fee Income and Other Activity Summary	Fee Income (£)	% of LSC funded activity Fee Income	Number of Learners
LSC Funded provision	6,653,598		
Not publicly subsidised / full cost	3,356,207		7,064

4. Other Information

Partnership working

LSC Essex engages actively with the Local Strategic Partnerships to assist in the achievement of targets within the Local Area Agreements and will also seek to ensure alignment with the Investing in Communities Plans wherever possible. We will work with key partners and stakeholders to lever in additional revenue to support our joint working.

14-19 Partnership working

Strong partnerships are critical to our success in addressing this priority. Plans for 14-19 year olds in each Local Area are driven by partnerships between the LSC, Local Authorities and the Connexions Service; some are longstanding and highly successful, others are in the earlier stages of development. LSC Essex will continue to foster and support 14-19 Partnerships which are key to broadening the 14-19 offer for young people, including the introduction of the new Diplomas and the development of new vocational provision and clear employer engagement strategies and action plans. In support of this activity, there will be further development of the web based Area Prospectus (stepon) to better inform young people of the local learning opportunities that are available and development of a pan Essex web based system for Individual Learning Plans to support learners moving between institutions.

One of the challenges will come as we move to the longer term vision where there will be a single flow of money for off-site vocational provision for 14-16 year olds. In partnership, we will need to ensure that arrangements move towards a configuration that works for the locality and includes all learners and participation of every provider and partner, congruent with Every Child Matters/Children's Trust structures.

PCDL

LSC Essex will continue to recognise the importance of the Personal & Community Development Learning (PCDL) sector by safeguarding funding and reforming the function of PCDL to encompass a wider remit, with partnership working at its very core.

Partnerships at local level are the foundation of the reform of PCDL. Such partnerships (built from public, private, voluntary, community, faith organisations or Takepart networks as they come on stream) should lever in other sources of funding or services and identify providers who can reach under-represented groups of learners.

A centrepiece of the partnerships is that they will not just be discussing and co-ordinating LSC funded provision. They need to include round the table those with related budgets in, for example health, sports and recreation and the cultural sector. The aim is to ensure a co-ordinated approach to maximise the effective use of all public funding.

LSC Essex will be working closely with all three Local Authorities and wider partners to progress these from May '07.

Sub Regional Economic Partnerships

We will explore opportunities to develop skills training and educational investment through our engagement with the county's three Sub Regional Economic Partnerships (SREPs);

- Thames Gateway South Essex,
- Haven Gateway, and
- Stansted/M11 Corridor.

This is supported through close working with Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership (TGSEP), the Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP) and the Essex Regeneration and Development Agency (ExDRA) who are the agencies through which the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) manages the respective SREP and accordingly, the *Investing in Communities*. The detail included within each Gateway section is not mutually exclusive or limiting, and there is opportunity for engaging in similar activities across the wider social and economic landscape whilst acknowledging local issues.

WBL Consortia

LSC Essex will continue to support and develop the Work Based Learning consortia in the county. In partnership with the consortia and FE colleges we will revitalise WBL, by creating more synergy between sectors in order to create a wider and more coherent offer.

Learner Health and Safety

The health, safety and welfare of learners are fundamental values of the Learning and Skills Council. All learners are entitled to learning that takes place in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. In addition, we consider health and safety to be an integral part of quality; and that safe learning is essential to maximise learners' experience and achievement.

We expect all those we fund to meet fully their legal obligations and will seek assurance that they have suitable and sufficient arrangements for learner health and safety. We will take appropriate actions when standards are not met.

The 'safe learner' concept is central to our policy and we will promote risk education and awareness of health and safety, and positively engage all those that can contribute to preparing young people to be safe and healthy workers.

We will encourage and support the raising of standards and 'best practice' approaches, working in partnership with key stakeholders.

Equality and Diversity

The Council will ensure that planned activities take account of its duty to promote equality of opportunity in relation to race, gender, age and disability and our responsibilities under other equality legislation including the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and European regulations relating to sexual orientation, religion or faith and age. Actions plans for the Race Equality Scheme and the Disability Equality Scheme are in place. We will also work with our providers to address equality and diversity issues. As an employer we will continue to monitor the staff profile in terms of gender, ethnicity and employment band levels.

Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 the Council has a specific responsibility to consider the needs of young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are robust arrangements in place to ensure that this group of learners have access to suitable provision that meets their needs and where appropriate the additional support required. We will work with the region to implement the regional strategy in response to “Learning for Living and Work”, the LSC’s national strategy.