

All bids now in for Basildon and Thurrock Competition

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Summaries of the bids received in two unique Competitions in Basildon and in Thurrock to attract potential bidders for new learning contracts worth millions of pounds will be published on line from Monday June 25.

Both Competitions are managed by the Learning and Skills Council, Essex (LSC Essex) which is committed to transforming further education provision in the Thames Gateway South Essex.

The Competition is focused on supporting young people aged 16-19 in Basildon and Thurrock who will need to gain relevant skills to make the most of the booming economy that is set to generate tens of thousand of new highly-skilled jobs over the next few years.

The two Competitions are to find new ways of providing top quality local learning and training opportunities for young people and to equip them to take advantage of the area's regeneration.

It is estimated that by 2021 more than 43,000 new homes will be built and 55,000 new jobs created within the Thames Gateway South Essex area, of which two-thirds will be in knowledge-driven industries.

It is envisaged that a minimum of 400 Further Education funded vocational learning places in specified areas will be required in Basildon and 300 in Thurrock. These figures are expected to grow significantly over the first three years of delivery to meet the needs of learners and employers.

LSC Essex is now undertaking a period of consultation and inviting comments on the proposals. All comments of support, objection or other comments must be sent to LSC Essex and received by 5.00pm on Friday 3rd August 2007.

After this date, LSC Essex will convene two separate Stakeholder Panels, one for each competition. Each Panel will be held in August and will consider and assess each proposals received taking account of any comments made in the representation period and make recommendations to LSC Essex.

LSC Essex will make the final decisions based on the Panels' recommendation and external comments from the representation period.

LSC Essex will communicate the outcome of the Competitions to key local stakeholders within one week of the decisions being made.

Full guidance can be found on the LSC Essex website, including the criteria against which the proposals will be judged. LSC Essex's priorities for assessing proposals will be the extent to which they can demonstrate how they propose to

work together to deliver new and innovative approaches which will increase the quality and number of opportunities in post-16 learning.

LSC Essex will also consider innovation, extended choice, high quality, and widening participation as well as how they contribute to raising achievement at Levels 2 and 3 by age 19.

LSC Essex Area Director Janice Logie explains: “The Competitions are just one way in which the LSC is working to address those needs. We are looking to this new and exciting process to bring significant investment into local communities and to enhance the quality of learning, particularly in specific skills sectors. “

In Thurrock the specific growth sectors involved in the Competition are creative and cultural skills; retail and customer service; construction and built environment. In Basildon the sectors are sport and recreation; business administration and financial services; health, social care and medical technologies; advanced engineering.

Chairman of LSC Essex, Chris Paveley said the Competition’s aim is to better meet the needs of learners and of employers:

He added: “ We're looking to set up exciting learning opportunities within a network of world class buildings and facilities.

The summary of the bids is on line now at

http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Regions/EastofEngland/whatwedo/16-19_essexcompetition.htm

Copies of the full proposals can be obtained from the same date from Rachel Dawson, Learning and Skills Council, Essex, Redwing House, Hedgerows Business Park, Colchester Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 5PB **Email:** - essexcompetition@lsc.gov.uk **Telephone:** - 01245 550146

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The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.