

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) - Basildon and Thurrock 16-19 Competitions**

### **What is a 16-19 Competition?**

Competition is the means by which the Learning & Skills Council Essex (LSCE) purchases learning and training provision for 16-19 year olds where it has been identified that two hundred or more additional places are required locally.

Previously the LSCE was able to negotiate additional places with the existing local college but new National LSC guidance means LSCE has to procure two hundred or more additional places through open and competitive tendering – a Competition.

### **Why is the Learning and Skills Council launching the Competitions?**

During 2004 LSC Essex conducted a Strategic Area Review of the post-16 learning and training provision available throughout the county. One of the findings from the Strategic Area Review was that Further Education Colleges in the south of the county were not adequately meeting the needs of both learners and employers, mainly due to insufficient capacity in a period of rapid economic and population growth.

In Autumn 2005 the three further education colleges in south Essex and Thurrock – Palmer's College, SEEVIC College and Thurrock & Basildon College – undertook a further review. Although the need for change was agreed, there was no consensus on how it could be achieved and, therefore, the LSC decided to run two 16-19 Competitions – one in Basildon and the other in Thurrock – to expand the FE sector.

### **Is the present FE offer within the local areas fit for purpose?**

There is a wide range of courses available to 16-18 year olds in the local areas.

In the most recent OFSTED inspections of the local colleges many good practices were identified with no failing areas of learning.

However, the LSC must run a Competition where the need for 200 or more new learning places has been identified locally.

### **How much is the Competition worth to the successful bidder?**

The funding depends upon what the successful bidder is offering and subsequently delivers. A full-time 16-18 year old Further Education student attracts around £4,000.00 in funding per year. This may be more in high cost areas of learning such as Construction or Engineering.

Within 12 months of winning the Competition LSCE would expect successful bidders to have enrolled 300 additional students in Thurrock and 400 in Basildon. It is anticipated that the number of new learners will then continue to grow, possibly doubling within three years.

It is likely that the Competition winner will also want to deliver learning to a wider age range and there will possibly be opportunities to secure funding for adults and 14-16 year olds.

There may also be an opportunity to apply for LSC capital funding to help towards the costs of building or refurbishing premises.

**What does the LSC expect to achieve from the Competitions?**

We will have new providers delivering much needed vocational learning.

We would expect that the winning bid to outline new and innovative approaches to the delivery of learning, particularly through new technologies.

Having a “new kid on the block” will encourage all providers to “raise their game”.