

Learning and Skills Council Local Area Statement of Need

Bury

2008/09

February 2008

Of interest to everyone involved in improving skills and learning opportunities
across Bury

Introduction

I am delighted on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Greater Manchester to present our Bury Annual Statement of Need for 2008/09. This plan outlines the key priorities and challenges for Bury and sets out how we intend to focus our efforts and resources over the forthcoming year.

The transformation of the learning and skills sector in Bury has accelerated over the last 12 months and we are very proud of the effective partnership work which has been taking place. Together we have worked to tackle the issues we face that impact on sub-regional economic growth and the results are clear.

More young people are now participating in learning with two outstanding colleges in the borough.

We are working hard to improve the responsiveness of the sector to learners and employers and have increased the proportion of our adult provision which is focused on the delivery of priority provision at Level 2, Level 3 and Skills for Life. Train to Gain volumes are increasing and we have achieved greater alignment with sector skills needs through effective planning informed by our partners.

The success we have had to date has only been possible due to the commitment and support of key partners within Bury. Partnership working has featured strongly in our approach to driving forward the learning and skills agenda and collaboration will continue to be fundamental to addressing the key issues we face. We will strengthen our relationships locally to ensure that learning and skills are positioned at the heart of local economic development and community regeneration through effective neighbourhood targeting. This will ensure that the people of Bury are equipped with the skills that will enable them to access the opportunities that will emerge over the next ten years.

[Insert Signature]

Ruth Wheatley
Partnership Director, Bury
Greater Manchester
Learning & Skills Council

Challenges, key actions and measures of success for Bury

As we move forward through 2008/09 we will need to ensure that we have an infrastructure of learning provision that reflects the changing policy landscape. The challenges and actions for Bury are based on the local Strategic Analysis, a robust review of supply, demand and need; as well as ongoing dialogue with key partner organisations. The analysis can be accessed at

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/NorthWest/NorthWestStrategicAnalysis.htm>

Priority 1: Creating Demand for Skills

Key Challenges:

- Addressing high levels of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Too many young people are in employment without any formalised learning
- Increasing the range of vocational opportunities for young people through apprenticeships and diplomas

To increase the demand for learning we need to drive forward a cultural shift in the perception of vocational learning within Bury and ensure the benefits of skills acquisition are clear. In addition for 2008/09 we will:

- Plan, through the Bury 14-19 Partnership, a **comprehensive 14-19 offer**, maximising the utilisation and impact of ESF to provide pathways for young people to progress into mainstream learning within the borough.
- Pilot a common application procedure and an electronic individual learning plan for 14-19 learners in the summer term.
- Increase the participation of young people through the **Bury NEET reduction strategy** with a clear focus on vulnerable learners and through the development of a Bury LLDD strategy, the needs of this group of learners will be a priority.
- Provide an increased focus on **engaging employers in learning** with a view to reducing the high numbers of young people who are in employment without any formalised learning.
- Work with partners, including Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, Bury Chamber, the Bury Learning and Skills Partnership and the brokerage service, to **promote the Skills Pledge** and increase the take up of Train to Gain and Apprenticeships.

Priority 2: Transforming FE

Key Challenges:

- The need to increase capacity for level 2 and 3 learning through flexible learning opportunities
- Align the renewal of the FE capital infrastructure within Bury with the Local Authority's developing BSF programme for schools

Whilst the journey to self regulation has begun, we will support the continued transformation of the FE system as a whole with a clear focus on the areas where we believe we can add the greatest value. These include:

- Supporting the Bury WBL Network to **promote apprenticeship provision** to young people and increase employer engagement in vocational learning.
- Through strategic investment, expanding the **apprenticeship programme** including the expansion of Programme Led Apprenticeships and additional volumes of adult apprenticeships.
- Working with the Local Authority on the borough's BSF **Strategy for Change** to ensure a coherent approach to capital developments in Bury.
- Ensuring **effective local commissioning processes** that match provision in Bury to the needs of learners and employers, building on strong performance and minimising poor performance.

Priority 3: Better Skills, Better jobs, Better Lives

Key Challenges:

- High need for Skills for Life learning with a focus on numeracy provision
- Too many people of working age with low or no skills

We will focus our efforts and resources to engage more people from disadvantaged groups to increase overall participation and achievement levels. We will drive forward the integration of skills and employment and focus training on addressing skills shortages in local labour markets. In addition we will:

- Contribute to **Bury LAA targets** through effective procurement and programme management to ensure the integration of employment and skills.
- Ensure equality of opportunity, **targeting areas of disadvantage**, which result in improved success rates for minority groups, increased participation of under-represented groups and reduced imbalances in learning and skills acquisition.
- Work with further education providers and partners to target the learning offer to **adults without a Level 2 qualification**, focusing on those who are disengaged from learning and furthest away from the labour market.

Partnership Working

Over the last twelve months the LSC has developed new and effective relationships with providers, partners and stakeholders and we will continue to embed these throughout our work in 2008/09. The impact of the Bury Partnership Teams has been positive and resulted in a clearer understanding of the key issues within the borough and supported our ability to align funding and resources to address borough needs.

If we are to maximise the contribution of the learning and skills sector locally then we need to continue to drive forward partnership working. We will do this through the development of a shared understanding with partners of our joint agendas and targets; and in particular we will:

- Strengthen the relationship between the Bury Partnership Team and the Regeneration and Economic Development Department of Bury MBC to develop a clear understanding of skills needs and to stimulate demand for learning by employers.
- Participate in the Bury Public Services Commissioners' Co-ordinating Board to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure in the borough and oversee the effective delivery of Bury's LAA.
- Develop close working arrangements with Bury's Children and Young People Services Department to ensure coherent infrastructure planning, aligning the emerging BSF programme to the current FE investment plans.
- Work with Bury Connexions to raise participation levels of young people and reduce the number of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training.
- Work closely with the Children's Trust and the 14-19 Partnership to enhance and extend the development of 14-19 opportunities including supporting the Diploma submissions to ensure Bury is successful in securing four Diploma lines for delivery in 2009.
- Continue to develop our relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector in the borough to help capacity build the sector as part of our commitment to widening learner choice.
- Develop closer working with Jobcentre Plus to integrate skills and employment agendas, promote Local Employment Partnerships and increase take up of the Skills Pledge.
- Work closely with our providers, schools and colleges to provide high quality choice for all learners and encourage cross-sector collaboration.
- Strengthen our work with local employers and Sector Skills Councils to better understand the local demand for skills and qualifications, working in partnership to take forward skills development in key sectors for Bury.