

Learning & Skills Council
Greater Merseyside

Co-financing Plan for Halton 2004 – 2006



Learning+Skills Council
Greater Merseyside

Final – October 2003

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Plan Overview

Geographic Coverage

The geographic coverage of this plan is the borough of Halton in the County of Cheshire. This borough falls within Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council's (GMLSC) geographical boundaries, and any co-financed activity will be delivered within this area unless otherwise stated.

Plan Objectives

The key objectives of the plan are: -

- To identify the needs and opportunities of Halton;
- To set out areas where we can invest in Halton's available workforce by adding value and/or augmenting mainstream provision, so that we can help to encourage new investment in Halton, promote business growth and retention, and generally be more responsive to the specific skills needs of employers and individuals in Halton.
- Enhance activity underway and ensure linkage with the Regional Development Plan, and to Halton's key strategic documents i.e. Economic Development Strategy, Community Strategy and Objective 2 Action Plans.

Period the Plan Covers

This plan covers activities for a 36-month period from January 2004 – December 2006.

Outline of Activities Covered by the Plan

Table 1 (page 4) sets out our proposed activities to co-finance under the North West RDP five policy fields. Table 2 (pg 6) sets out our proposed monetary commitment.

Policy Field	Measures	Actions
1. Active Labour Markets	<p>1.1 Provides advice guidance and support to enable people to develop active and continuous job search strategies and prevent them from moving into long term unemployment</p> <p>1.2 Provides substantive support for vocational and key skills training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase basic skills and vocational skills training ➤ Intensive guidance and support
2. Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion	<p>2.1 Provides substantive support for basic and key skills training</p> <p>2.2 Provides substantive support to those suffering from multiple disadvantages, particularly those neighbourhoods and communities that are characterised by high levels of social exclusion (low educational achievement, crime, high levels of unemployment and poor housing). Support is also available for other target groups who are less likely to be spatially concentrated, but which require intensive and integrated support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide intensive support to enable disadvantaged groups to re-enter the labour market ➤ Pre-vocational training and upgrading of basic skills, including literacy and Numeracy ➤ Intensive guidance to the multiple disadvantaged ➤ Break down the barriers to learning and participation in the economy by marginalized groups ➤ Develop the capacity of providers to meet the needs of the 'hard to help' ➤ Train the trainer
3. Lifelong Learning	<p>3.1 Provides substantive support for those groups least likely to take up learning and training opportunities, including disaffected young people</p> <p>3.2 Provides substantive support to encourage lifelong learning in areas that increase employability and meet the changing needs of employers, particularly with regard to ICT, management and the environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Higher Workforce Skills Programme ➤ Update and upgrade skills of workers in key sectors. ➤ Provision of advice and guidance, training trainers and managers. ➤ Extending access through more innovative means, through community initiatives and family centred activities, including actions to help individuals develop and manage their own learning. ➤ The identification and promotion of means that open up access to learning for those adults currently least engaged with the education system. ➤ Promoting effective use of ICT in SMEs. ➤ Equipping workers threatened with redundancy with training. ➤ Identify skill needs, including new skills emerging from the knowledge driven economy. ➤ Providing training to meet identified skills shortages. ➤ Promote effective training investment by employers. ➤ Encourage entrepreneurship within existing companies, the education and training sector and individuals.

<p>4. Adaptability and Entrepreneurship</p>	<p>4.1 Provides support to companies to update and upgrade the skills of their workforce, including those affected by industrial change and/or threatened by redundancy. 4.2 Provides support to undertake research to identify emerging skills shortages. Support is also available for follow up actions to train people to meet these skills needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Skill Works Programme ➤ Update and upgrade skills of workers in key sectors ➤ Train the trainer activity ➤ Supporting SME's to expand and create new employment opportunities ➤ Support SME development and innovation. ➤ Research into new forms of work organisation, for example flexible working practices and family friendly policies, education-business links especially in science & technology
<p>5. Improving Women's Participation in the Labour Market</p>	<p>5.1 Provides support to help women overcome barriers, which limits access to the labour market, and other barriers, which affect those already in work in terms of career advancement. Support is available to women working in areas where they are under-represented, as well as female part time workers, managers and entrepreneurs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Higher Workforce Skills Programme – Gender Mainstreaming ➤ Improving the quality and flexibility of local training including participation in lifelong learning partnerships. ➤ Improving the relevance of skills training to local employment needs and opportunities. ➤ Tackling barriers such as childcare and other caring responsibilities, raising awareness, and promoting family friendly policies. ➤ Provide those seeking to enter non-traditional occupations with appropriate skills. ➤ Improve access to learning and employment opportunities

Table 2 - ESF Funding Applied for by Measure ¹

POLICY FIELD / MEASURE	DESCRIPTION	2004 - 2006		
		ESF GRANT £	MATCH FUNDING £	TOTAL £
1.1	Guidance & Support	46,893	57,313	104,206
1.2	Vocational & Key Skills	150,879	184,407	335,286
2.1	Widening Access to Basic Skills	166,158	203,082	369,240
2.2	Local & Area Based Responses	238,830	291,903	530,733
2.3	Combating Discrimination	0	0	0
3.1	Promoting Wider Access	994,747	1,215,801	2,210,548
3.2	Improving Employability	935,333	1,143,184	2,078,517
4.1	Updating/grading Basic & Key Skills	161,991	197,989	359,980
4.2	Identifying Skills Shortages	88,980	108,753	197,733
4.3	Encouraging Entrepreneurship	0	0	0
5.1	Improving Access to Learning	250,652	275,894	557,004
5.2	Improving the Participation of Women in the Labour Market	0	0	0
	TOTAL	3,034,463	3,678,326	6,743,247

¹ Population related indicative benchmarks set in relation to Objective 3 as a whole, by GONW in relation to population and the needs of Halton residents.

2. Consultation

Prior to the writing of this plan Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside met with representatives from the Halton Vale Royal Partnership. This was to gain the views of the partnership and for them to provide input into the plan pre-consultation stage, and to ensure that we had greater cohesion with the Objective 2 Partnership. Now that we have our strategy aligned with that of Objective 2 we will now be looking towards the implementation practicalities. We have membership on the O2 Action Plan Partnership and this will help in taking this forward and developing the necessary consultation processes. Regionally we are also developing this agenda in order to obtain synergy throughout the region and meetings will take place between the North West CFO's and the North West O2APP's to progress this.

In conjunction with this, colleagues for Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside attended events at both Halton College and an event with the Association of Colleges with the intention of informing partners of future plans and processes.

Throughout the preparation of this plan, Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside have been fully engaged in discussions and negotiations between the North West LSC's and Job Centre Plus. We have also been involved in discussions with representatives from the Higher Education sector. These discussions were to ensure that there is no overlap of activities.

The main external consultation exercise took place in July 2003 for a period of 20 working days and was by means of a questionnaire. This was emailed with the plan to Halton's Learning Partnership, Halton's Local Strategic Partnership, the Halton Vale Royal Partnership and also Government Office for the North West. This targeted a wide range of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Halton Borough Council co-ordinated responses on behalf of the Partnership and one final questionnaire was received back from Halton's Local Strategic Partnership, Halton's Learning Partnership and Halton Vale Royal Partnership with all comments encompassed within this one questionnaire. Learning and Skills Council Greater Merseyside then reviewed this and a response was issued in the same manner to the partnerships via Halton Borough Council.

Where possible, the plan has been amended to reflect the views of the Partnership and where we felt unable to reflect the partnerships view we provided detailed feedback detailing our reasoning.

Running parallel with the external consultation has been an internal process. Within Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside there is a Halton District Development Manager who sits on the Partnership boards within Halton and also a specific Halton area team. The Area Wide Inspection for Halton has been completed and a specific Action Plan has been developed. Both these documents and the knowledge and experience of the internal team were used to inform the plan.

3. Links with Government Programmes & Initiatives

The secretary of state has charged the LSC with:

- Raising participation and achievement by young people
- Increasing demand for learning by adults and equalising opportunities through better access to Learning
- Raising skill levels for national competitiveness
- Improving the quality of education and training delivery
- Improving effectiveness and efficiency

Our mission is to raise participation and attainment through high-quality education and training, which puts learners first.

Our vision is, that by 2010, young people and adults in England will have the knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.

The third strand of our remit, to raise skill levels for national competitiveness, is a driver for this Co-financing Plan. Co-financing and ESF are vital to delivering on this agenda and will allow us to extend the scale and scope of our workforce development provision, in a way that we would otherwise not be able to.

Estelle Morris has previously said, “Only by raising the skill levels of our workforce and investing in training and development can we begin to match the levels of the best of the world”. Her comments reflect a now universally accepted view that workforce development holds the key to business improvement and success. Nowhere is this more applicable than in Halton.

Our workforce development portfolio embraces activity provided by Further Education colleges, Work Based Learning providers and private sector providers, which includes support for learning in the workplace including liP, support for the workforce of small business (contracted to SBS) support for the union learning fund, capacity building of the voluntary sector and social enterprise and other activities. (see [Annex 2](#) for overview of our main programmes).

4. Demonstration of Need

The aim of this section is to support that decision with more objective justification, i.e. Local Labour Market information, and to articulate our understanding of the needs of individuals and companies in line with the findings of the Regional Development Plan for the North West. The main sources of information include the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Basic Skills Agency, the GMLSC Employer Skills Survey, the Halton SRB 5 Workforce Development Project, and intelligence provided by our Halton staff. This information will be enhanced by the findings a further survey commissioned by GMLSC - the Learner Survey, which is currently in the development stages. The results will be made available mid year and will inform future procurement strategies.

Overview of the Halton Economy

Demographics

There are approximately 118,200 people living in Halton. This represents approximately 7.9% of the Greater Merseyside Population. Like other older urban and industrial areas, Halton has experienced a fall in population. The Census of Population indicates that between 1991- 2001, Halton lost 5% of its population. (Source: 2003 Skills Assessment).

People Living in Areas of Multiple Deprivation

Table 3 (pg 10) shows each Halton ward, against the rank index of multiple deprivation, together with rank in education. The index is based on a number of indicators, which provide information about the quality of life of local people. Halton wards range between 145th (Castlefields) to 6,259th (Birchfield). The education indicator takes into account:

- Working age adults with no qualifications
- Young people aged 16 + not in full time education
- The proportion of 17+ population, unsuccessful in applying to Higher Education
- Key stage 2 primary school performance data
- Absenteeism at primary level.

Table 3 - Indices of Deprivation

Ward Name	Rank of Index of Multiple Deprivation (Out of 8414)	Rank of Education Domain (Out of 8414)
Castlefields	145	543
Riverside	227	982
Kingsway	275	904
Murdishaw	412	684
Palace Field	487	1301
Grange	602	1167
Brookvale	623	905
Halton Brook	624	1279
Norton	760	863
Mersey	772	2342
Broadheath	952	2600
Hough Green	1160	3247
Ditton	1252	1673
Appleton	1395	3072
Halton	1412	4394
Hale	2640	3598
Beechwood	3020	5875
Farnworth	3117	4738
Heath	3591	4295
Daresbury	3723	5222
Birchfield	6259	4599
Source: Indices Of Deprivation 2000		

Education, Training and Economic Activity

Table 4 (pg 11) shows Halton's ranking against key performance indicators in the three areas of Education, Training, and Economic Activity, compared to 42 Local Authority Districts (LADs) in the North West. Economic Activity and Training indicators are most alarming. In economic activity the most significant indicator is the unemployed benefit claimants count, for which Halton ranks 37 out of 43 LADs; and for the number of claimants under the age of 24, Halton ranks third from bottom. It is particularly high at 34.9% of the population, compared to the North West average of 29.1%. In training, Halton's ranking for the percentage of the population of working age that are in employment and possess a qualification of NVQ Level 3 or above, is also third from bottom, at only 36.9% compared to the NW average of 46.6%. Also significant, is Halton's ranking for the percentage of the working age population that possess a qualification of NVQ Level 3 or above, for which Halton ranks fourth from bottom at 36.9%, compared to the NW average of 46.6%.

Table 4 - Halton Performance Indicators											
	EDUCATION			ECONOMIC ACTIVITY					TRAINING		
	% of 15 year olds achieving GCSE/GNVQ 5 A*-C grade passes	% of 15 year olds achieving GCSE/GNVQ 5 A*-G grade passes	% of 15 year olds achieving GCSE/GNVQ no passes	% economically active (population all working age)	% economically inactive (population all working age)	Total unemployed claimant count (October 2001)	Unemployed claimants- over 12 months unemployed (October 2001)	Unemployed claimants - aged 24 and under (October 2001)	% all work aged population receiving job related training (1999)	% all work aged population with NVQ level 3+ (1999)	% all work aged population in employment with NVQ level 3+ (1999)
RANK (out of 43 Local Authority Districts in the North West - 1 is best, 43 worst)	16	8	5	40	34	37	30	41	5	40	41
% population of Halton	42.7	88.7	5.0	71.8	28.2	4.2	12.4	35.3	N/a	38	45.1
North West average %	48.0	89.5	5.3	77.2	22.8	3.1	14.4	31.5	13.4	42	47.9

Sources: DfES Secondary School & Schools & College Performance Tables 2002, Labour Force Survey Quarterly, February 2003.

People with No/Low Basic Skills

GMLSC has produced a Basic Skills delivery plan, which identifies objectives and targets for tackling the basic skills needs of local people. Based on data from the Basic Skills Agency [Tables 5 & 6](#) (below & pg 13) show the estimates of the working age population with poor literacy and numeracy skills, down to ward level. Nearly one third (29%) of Halton's working age population, equivalent to 21,517 people, have poor literacy skills. This is higher than the national average of 24%. Nearly one third of Halton's working age population also have poor numeracy skills (31%), equivalent to 23,000 people. This compares to the national average of 24%.

Table 5 - Estimates of Population 16-60 with Poor Literacy Skills as a Count

Ward Name	Population 16-60	Low Literacy	Lower Literacy	Very Low Literacy	Total with Poor Literacy
Appleton	3,578	608	192	210	1,009
Broadheath	3,686	631	247	229	1,106
Brookfields	4,925	912	402	373	1,688
Castlefields	4,522	750	345	347	1,442
Clough	3,433	519	172	122	813
Daresbury	1,268	207	37	33	277
Ditton	3,530	589	236	226	1,052
Farnworth	5,470	692	195	109	996
Grange	3,892	703	300	301	1,304
Hale	1,141	144	40	23	207
Halton	3,566	621	191	215	1,027
Halton Brook	4,613	815	349	327	1,492
Heath	3,622	495	146	89	730
Hough Green	5,559	879	245	247	1,371
Kingsway	3,985	764	336	307	1,407
Mersey	3,860	625	211	217	1,054
Murdishaw	3,788	810	377	318	1,505
Norton	5,277	1,038	408	318	1,764
Riverside	3,967	714	292	267	1,273
Total	73,682	12,516	4,721	4,278	21,517

Source: Basic Skills Agency 2001

Table 6 - Estimates of Population 16-60 with Poor Numeracy Skills as a Count

Ward Name	Population 16-60	Low Numeracy	Lower Numeracy	Very Low Numeracy	Total with Poor Numeracy
Appleton	3,578	536	296	272	1,103
Broadheath	3,686	569	351	296	1,216
Brookfields	4,925	810	567	477	1,854
Castlefields	4,522	700	464	437	1,602
Clough	3,433	401	218	146	765
Daresbury	1,268	106	76	49	232
Ditton	3,530	539	345	282	1,166
Farnworth	5,470	537	266	133	937
Grange	3,892	656	433	383	1,471
Hale	1,141	97	52	23	172
Halton	3,566	418	308	228	955
Halton Brook	4,613	769	489	429	1,687
Heath	3,622	387	210	115	711
Hough Green	5,559	709	344	292	1,345
Kingsway	3,985	708	470	418	1,596
Mersey	3,860	586	302	292	1,181
Murdishaw	3,788	758	501	475	1,735
Norton	5,277	930	502	498	1,929
Riverside	3,967	658	408	362	1,428
Total	73,682	10,874	6,602	5,607	23,085
Source: Basic Skills Agency 2001					

Lone Parents

Table 7 below shows the proportion of lone parent families in Halton to be approximately of 5.9% of households, equivalent to 2,700 people. This compares to the English average of 3.7%. The majority of Halton's lone parents are female (94.2%). Research suggests that there is a causal relationship between high levels of unemployment and high levels of single parenting. National trends also suggest that there will continue to be an expansion in the number of single parents. There is strong evidence that qualifications are the key determinant of economic activity amongst single mothers, not the parental status. Part of the reason for lower economic activity amongst lone parents therefore is simply that they have lower qualifications, and would be less likely to work whatever their parental status. (Source: Greater Merseyside Skills Assessment 2002).

Table 7 - Lone Parent Profile

Area	Total	Male	Female
England	734,301	54,461	679,840
North West	120,843	8,280	112,563
Halton	2,700	157	2,543
Appleton	95	3	92
Broadheath	189	6	183
Brookfields	189	7	182
Castlefields	240	15	225
Clough	109	8	101
Daresbury	4	1	3
Ditton	118	7	111
Farnworth	34	2	32
Grange	176	19	157
Hale	15	1	14
Halton	98	7	91
Halton Brook	213	11	202
Heath	41	10	31
Hough Green	219	11	208
Kingsway	164	8	156
Mersey	173	10	163
Murdishaw	247	15	232
Norton	181	11	170
Riverside	195	5	190
Total	860,544	63,055	797,489

Source: 1991 Census of Population, Office for National Statistics (Nomis March 2002)

People of Minority Ethnic Background

Table 8 (pg 16) shows the profile of Halton's ethnic population to be approximately 0.6% based on the total population count (89,472), down to ward level. This compares to the North-West and English averages of 5.9% & 3.7% respectively. Source: 1991 Census of Population, Office for National Statistics (Nomis March 2002).

Research shows there are marked differences between the economic activity and employment patterns of different ethnic groups, but both men and women from ethnic minority groups are less likely to be economically active than those in the white group. Both participation and attainment in education is higher amongst ethnic minorities than the white population, although this of course varies between different ethnic minority groups. Ethnic minorities have an unemployment rate twice that of the white population and unemployment is particularly high amongst black populations. Evidence suggests that many people from ethnic minority groups are disadvantaged in the labour market. For example, people belonging to an ethnic minority group are less likely to be in managerial positions than white people, although to some extent this is linked to the younger age profiles of many ethnic minority groups. In addition, ethnic minority groups are disproportionately affected by unemployment; all groups have higher unemployment rates than the white population. The average pay levels of ethnic minority groups are lower than the white group, and the higher levels of income support and council tax benefits are paid to ethnic minority households. (Source: Greater Merseyside Skills Assessment 2002).

Table 8 – Ethnicity in Halton

Ward	White	Black Groups	Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi	Chinese and other groups
Appleton	5,206	3	2	3
Broadheath	4,964	14	2	10
Brookvale	5,624	28	17	47
Castlefields	5,779	9	5	22
Daresbury	1,324	0	0	2
Ditton	4,818	2	2	13
Farnworth	6,421	4	22	6
Grange	5,496	7	13	25
Hale	1,605	2	3	5
Halton	5,151	11	5	11
Halton Brook	5,953	3	2	26
Heath	5,200	0	9	12
Hough Green	6,092	13	28	21
Kingsway	4,978	6	1	8
Mersey	5,297	6	9	29
Murdishaw	4,466	13	4	12
Norton	5,129	17	13	16
Riverside	5,382	16	6	22
TOTAL	88,885	154	143	290
Source: 1991 Census of Population, Office for National Statistics (Nomis March 2002)				

Unemployed

In February 2003, there were approximately 2,399 people in Halton out of work and claiming unemployment benefit. This equates to an unemployment rate of 3.2% of the population, which is higher than the north west average of 2.7%. (Source: Halton Unemployment Bulletin, February 2003).

Table 9 (pg 17) shows an analysis of unemployment at ward level. Variations across the borough range from the highest – Castlefields (8.6%), followed by the next ‘top three’ – Grange (6.9%), Mersey (6.8%), Kingsway (6.7%), to the lowest - Daresbury (1.5%). Male unemployment is much higher than female unemployment, 77% compared to 23%.

Table 10 (pg 18) shows the length of unemployment and age profile of unemployed claimants, down to ward level, and compared to the North-West and English averages. It is broken down into the under 18s, 18 – 24 yr olds & 25+. It shows that the greatest concentration of unemployment is

in the 25+ age band, and is also useful for looking at the structure of unemployment in the borough.

Table 9 – Unemployment in Halton

Ward	Male	Female	Total	Total Rate
Appleton	88	30	118	4.3
Broadheath	117	28	145	4.9
Brookvale	154	42	196	5.3
Castlefields	207	49	256	8.6
Daresbury	14	9	23	1.5
Ditton	86	27	113	6.1
Farnworth	77	36	113	6.1
Grange	152	37	189	6.9
Hale	24	10	34	3.2
Halton	79	32	111	3.7
Halton Brook	131	31	162	4.5
Heath	49	22	71	2.2
Hough Green	139	40	179	4.9
Kingsway	131	32	163	6.7
Mersey	153	49	202	6.8
Murdishaw	131	38	169	6.0
Norton	129	53	182	4.9
Riverside	140	45	185	5.0
Source: Neighbourhood Statistics 2002				

Table 10 – Unemployed Profile	under 18, < 6 months	under 18, 6-12 months	under 18, over 1 year	18-24, < 6 months	18-24, 6-12 months	18-24, over 1 year	25 plus, < 6 months	25 plus, 6-12 months	25 plus, over 1 year
England	7,762	448	45	168,792	26,936	3,510	368,613	100,063	130,668
North West	1,583	91	9	30,834	5,238	623	55,565	14,782	20,758
Halton	33	10	1	730	153	20	1,255	337	458
Appleton	1	0	0	39	6	1	53	21	14
Broadheath	1	1	0	37	7	0	59	16	21
Brookfields	1	0	0	49	9	0	86	29	38
Castlefields	3	1	0	66	26	3	123	39	53
Clough	1	0	0	40	6	0	62	15	16
Daresbury	0	0	0	2	1	0	13	5	1
Ditton	1	0	1	32	9	1	62	12	11
Farnworth	0	1	0	24	2	0	65	9	15
Grange	3	0	0	54	17	2	63	26	31
Hale	0	0	0	5	0	0	11	3	8
Halton	1	0	0	29	4	3	63	13	16
Halton Brook	2	2	0	46	8	1	78	23	26
Heath	1	0	0	22	1	0	35	9	10
Hough Green	1	0	0	46	7	1	85	17	27
Kingsway	2	0	0	36	12	2	69	16	33
Mersey	8	2	0	38	13	1	72	18	46
Murdishaw	1	1	0	56	8	2	62	18	36
Norton	4	0	0	63	9	1	89	25	25
Riverside	2	2	0	46	8	2	105	23	31
Total	9,411	559	56	201,086	32,480	4,173	426,688	115,519	152,342

Source: Office for National Statistics (Nomis March 2002)

Employed

Table 11 shows the total number of employed in Halton to be 53,600 people. The variance between the total number men/women in employment is not that great - 55/45 per cent, but there exist vast differences in the borough between the nature of men and women's employment. Of the full time jobs available, men hold two thirds (67%), and the converse is true of the part time jobs, of which women hold over two thirds (79%).

Table 11 - Employment Profile	Halton	Greater Merseyside	North West	GB/UK
Total employees in employment	53,600	570,700	2,887,000	25,456,400
Male employees in employment	30,400	575,900	1,479,400	12,996,300
Female employees in employment	23,100	294,900	1,407,600	12,460,100
Full-time employees in employment	40,000	382,300	2,000,600	17,628,600
Part-time employees in employment	13,500	188,400	886,400	7,827,700
Male full-time employees in employment	27,800	236,100	1,272,800	11,148,100
Female full-time employees in employment	12,300	146,200	727,800	6,480,500
Male part-time employees in employment	2,700	39,700	206,600	1,848,200
Female part-time employees in employment	10,800	148,700	679,800	5,979,500

Source: Annual Business Inquiry, National Statistics, 2001

Halton Businesses

There are 1,950 Businesses in Halton, with the largest concentrations of employees working in Manufacturing (23.9%), Wholesale/Retail Trade (18.1%), and Real Estate/Renting Business activities (14.1%). Source: Labour Force Survey, National Statistics, 1999. Table 12 below shows a breakdown of Halton businesses by size.

Table 12 – Halton Businesses	Halton	Greater Merseyside	North West	GB/UK	
Total number of firms (VAT reg.)	3,128	41,209	226,748	2,168,711	UK
Percentage of firms with 1-4 employees	58.2	63.0	65.3	68.1	GB
Percentage of firms with 5-10 employees	16.9	16.9	16.3	15.1	GB
Percentage of firms with 11-24 employees	11.5	10.3	9.5	8.8	GB
Percentage of firms with 25-99 employees	10.2	7.9	7.1	6.3	GB
Percentage of firms with 100 employees and over	3.1	2.0	1.8	1.7	GB

Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001, National Statistics

*Data Units

Data units do not readily correspond to the commonly used terms firms, companies or businesses by which employers are sometimes identified. They are roughly equivalent to workplaces but because of the way the data are collected two or more units can be present in the same workplace.

For example, a bank may have several branches and offices in a city, each one of these would be counted as a separate data unit.

A single workplace can be counted as two data units where there are two distinct business activities at the same site. Each business activity will be coded to a separate SIC code and therefore counted as a separate data unit. With size analyses, the size bands refer to the number of employees at each data unit, not to the size of the parent company.

Large Firms

The Halton economy is dominated by larger employers, particularly in the Chemicals sector, and many of these businesses particularly those in Manufacturing, are continuing to downsize their workforces as a result of external factors, namely restructuring in the global economy. Whilst the focus is on supporting SMEs, we recognise the importance of assisting large companies with SMEs in their supply chain. It remains vital to assist the competitiveness of these large firms through continuous up-skilling, with an emphasis on recognized qualifications, and basic and core skills training. Source: Individual NTO Workforce Development Plans April 2001. Table 13 shows the largest employers in Halton.

Table 13 – Halton’s Largest Employers

Company Name	Number of Employees	Line of Business
Community Integrated Care	2,586	Registered charity, to relieve sickness and homelessness in Halton
Lumina Holdings Ltd	1,888	Holding company for those engaged in distribution of mobile communications
Ineos Chlor Ltd	1,800	Chemical manufacturers
Lumina Ltd	1,600	Mobile communications network air time & equipment wholesalers
Cearns & Brown Ltd	1,231	Catering and vending supplies distributors
Source: KBE 2000		

SMEs

93% of Halton companies employ less than 50 staff with a mean average of 7 employees per organization. The local economy demands that SMEs are stimulated to grow, and management and workforce skills are a key factor in achievement of this objective.

Employer Skills Survey

In Autumn 2001, LSCGM commissioned IFF Research to carry out a survey of Greater Merseyside employers to establish the nature and extent of skills shortages and skills gaps in local businesses and the most effective mechanisms organisations use to overcome them.

2,005 employers were contacted as part of the survey, 199 of these were Halton based. The results of the survey are presented under the following key headings.

- Skills Gaps – internal skills gaps (defined as occurring where a significant proportion of existing staff in a particular occupation lack full proficiency at their current jobs).
- Skills Shortages – external recruitment difficulties, focusing in particular on those that the employer perceives to be ‘hard to fill’ vacancies and what are referred to as ‘skill shortage’ vacancies, (external recruitment difficulties explicitly attributed to a lack of job applicants with the required skills, qualifications, or work experience) i.e. hard to fill vacancies which can be attributed to a shortage of skills.
- Future Skills Needs – skills identified by employers that they expect to be important in the next 2 or 3 years for a particular occupation.

What follows are the key points of the survey that pertain to this plan:

Skill Gaps within the Existing Halton Workforce

- Over a quarter (27%) of Halton employers have got skills gaps
 - The key gaps identified are generic skills
 - Nearly one half cited customer handling skills as the main gap (43%)
 - Advanced IT or software skills (26%)
 - Oral or verbal communication skills (26%)
 - Basic computer literacy skills (21%)
- Almost one third (32%) believed the cause of the skill gaps to be new staff that had only been in the job for a short while. The other main causes identified were;
 - Recruitment problems (32%)
 - Failure by the employer to train and develop staff (24%)
- Skill gaps have a direct impact on the competitiveness of employers. The key impacts identified by Halton employers were:
 - Increased operating costs (29%)
 - Difficulties meeting customer service objectives (27%)
 - Difficulties introducing technological change (27%)
- A significant number of employers have taken action to overcome skills gaps:
 - Over two thirds utilised training (77%)
 - Nearly half changed working practices (47%)

- Over a third increased/expanded trainee programmes (36%)
- A small per cent (10%) said they had not used training as a way of dealing with gaps in their employees' skills. Reasons given were that employers thought:
 - It was a recent problem, which would solve itself over time (14%)
 - That they could not afford to have people taken out of the workplace (6%)
 - That the cost was a barrier (4%)
 - That there was no/not much training available (3%)

Skills Shortages Within the Labour Pool

- One fifth (21%) of Halton businesses had vacancies at the time of the survey,
- The skills characteristics of the vacancies were identified as
 - Technical and practical skills
 - Customer handling skills
 - Oral and verbal communication skills
 - Experience
- 11 % were 'hard to fill' vacancies
- 10% were 'skill-shortage' vacancies
- Nearly one third of vacancies were in sales and customer service occupations (31%)
- Two thirds (66%) identified the main cause of 'skills shortage' vacancies to be a low number of applicants with required skills (66%). The other main causes identified were;
 - Lack of work experience that the company demands (39%)
 - Low number of applicants in general (23%)
- Over half (55%) Employers identified the main causes of 'hard to fill' vacancies as being lack of work experience the company demands. The other main causes were;
 - Low number of applicants with required skills (35%)
 - Low number of applicants in general (23%)
- Like skills gaps, skill shortages impact directly on companies, compromising business development and competitiveness. The key impact identified by Halton employers were;
 - Delays in developing new products or services
 - Difficulties meeting customer service objectives
 - Difficulties meeting required quality standards
- To try to attract applicants with the right skills, employers have expanded the recruitment channels, increased advertising or recruitment spend, and increased the training given to the existing workforce in order to fill the vacancies

Future Skills Needs

- One fifth (20%) of employers regard Advanced IT or software skills as the type of skills their staff are likely to need in the future followed by;

- Customer handling skills (19%)
- Basic computer literacy skills (16%).

Table 14 shows the broad occupational areas within companies:

Table 14: Skill needs by operational areas

Occupational Area	Skill Need
Managers/Professional and Associate Professional and Technical Staff	Advanced IT or software skills (12%)
	Basic computer literacy (11%)
	Customer handling skills (10%)
Administrative and secretarial staff	Advanced IT or software skills (18%)
	Basic computer literacy (11%)
	Customer handling skills (8%)
Personal service occupations	Other technical and practical skills (16%)
	Management skills (11%)
	Customer handling skills (11%)
Sales and service staff	Customer handling skills (26%)
	Basic computer literacy (10%)
	Advanced IT or software skills (9%)
Skilled trade, operations and elementary staff	Other technical and practical skills (17%)
	Customer handling skills (8%)
	Advanced IT or software skills (5%)

Barriers to Developing/Maintaining a fully proficient team

- Barriers to maintaining a fully proficient team vary amongst the occupational groups. The main barriers included;
 - Lack of time for training (33%)
 - Lack of funding for training (23%)
 - Lack of cover for training (21%)

When considering the provision of training for personal service; skilled trade, operatives and elementary staff, the lack of courses both locally and in terms of relevancy is seen as a bigger barrier than the lack of cover for training.

Company Size

There is a clear correlation between the number of employees within a company and the size of the skills gap. The survey reveals that for companies with less than 100 employees, the smaller the company, and the smaller the skills gap. So of those companies with 1-10 employees, 19 per cent felt there were skills gaps in the organisation. This percentage increases with company size, so of those companies with 50-99 employees, 88% felt there were skills gaps. In the 100–200 category, 81% cent perceived skills gaps, and in the 200+ company category, the figure falls dramatically, with 29% cent perceiving a skills gap.

Workforce Development

In addition to the Employer Skills Survey the following intelligence has been extracted from the Halton SRB 5 Workforce Development Project, which itself compiled a range of information from a variety of sources including - Chesterton Report – The future of Workforce Development in Halton, (January 2001, commissioned by North & Mid Cheshire TEC on behalf of the Halton Partnership), Addendum to above - Employer training activity and needs analysis, (August 2000), Addendum to above – Skills and training Audit, (September 2000).

Major weaknesses were identified in the borough in both the provision and take-up of learning in the local workforce. These weaknesses can be summarised as: -

- Low skills base and lower than average participation in learning, therefore more challenging target - 25 per cent of Halton workforce currently without a qualification
- Below average positive feelings towards learning (but an above average interest in improving skills – suggesting recognition of need but not desire for learning)
- Poor culture of Lifelong Learning - Majority of post-16 learning confined to 16-18 year olds, very limited learning activity among people aged 45+
- Employers concerned at skills base of local population. High level of recruitment from outside the borough and high proportion of training sourced from outside the borough
- Lack of awareness/confidence/enthusiasm by employers and employees of the benefits to be derived from learning/that learning activities will make a real difference to business performance
- Poor perception of the attractiveness of the training available in terms of location, quality and cost/lack of awareness and understanding of courses and training available
- Gaps in local availability of suitable training
- Lack of focus and co-ordination by training providers and intermediaries in their approach to local employers.

A number of key findings were identified by consultants Chestertons in their report dated January 2001: -

- **The range of provision is too narrow.**

Often employers are obliged to source their training out-of-area and incur significant additional costs as a result. Similarly many individuals have to travel out of area, or alternatively make (often significant) compromises to their choice of study. Whilst no area of the scale of Halton is ever likely to be self-sufficient in all its training needs, there is little evidence to suggest employers or individuals from elsewhere travel to Halton to seek training. Clearly the borough is a 'net importer' of training services.

- **Mismatch between need and provision**

A strategic analysis of provision (and learning activity) confirms that there is a significant mismatch between the provision that is available in the Halton area and the learning profile of Halton people. This is both in terms of the vocational areas of provision and the skill level.

- **Concerns over quality**

These concerns were strongly voiced by trainees and supported by observations, analysis of data and informed comment by others. Due to the limited use of local provision by employers they were, as a group, less able to comment. Nevertheless, there was evidence of concern and indeed suggestions that use of local provision was undertaken often grudgingly.

- **Limited employer involvement**

The participation of local employers in influencing the range and nature of provision was a weakness identified both by stakeholders (typically providers and public sector agencies) and employers. Employers also expressed views about the difficulty in identifying what provision was actually available to them. They also demonstrated a desire to collaborate, and to share facilities and knowledge, but needed help and facilitation to achieve this more effectively.

Together with the Employer Skill Survey, these findings form the basis for prioritising the aims of the Business Plan. The focus of the plan is the current workforce in organisations of all sizes, including large companies, new business starts, and SMEs with the potential to grow. Companies and individuals, including employees at risk of redundancy will be the main beneficiaries. Provision should be demand led and not supplier driven. Furthermore, the provision will be complimentary to the priorities being delivered under the SRB 5 Workforce Development Project and the GME demand led Programme known as “Growing Business Halton”.

In terms of the type of type of skills development required, there is a need for a step-change in learning activities in three key areas: management skills in both large and small & medium sized firms; technical, process, and basic skills of the entire workforce; and basic/employability skills. The findings of the recently released PIU report on Workforce Development is consistent with our assessment of Halton’s needs and the recommended approach, namely that support should be demand led, the focus should be on raising the demand for workforce development; increasing the supply of high quality workforce development; and helping employers develop business strategies for workforce development.

5. Co-Financed Provision

Added Value

Additionality is the core principle to this plan and this plan reflects outcomes that would not emerge in the absence of the interventions described below.

The rationale for Objective 3 is based on interventions to support the unemployed, the disadvantaged, non-learners and individuals who are least able to cope with change or for whom change is involuntary and that rationale is at the heart of this plan.

This plan ensures that those activities funded will add value to mainstream activities or allow access to disadvantaged groups unable to access mainstream provision.

Clear added value of this plan will be therefore show the following:

- moving beneficiaries towards the labour market
- demonstration of clear skills progression in terms of helping individuals onto/up the skills escalator
- result in beneficiaries gaining employment or qualifications
- support for adaptability in industries/areas/sectors subject to change
- support for new, developing and growth businesses

Description by Measure and Activities

This is a focused plan aimed at developing the individual for both school age and adults (employed and unemployed) in order to improve the employability/transferable skills of individuals through Lifelong Learning provision that is responsive to the ever-changing needs of employers.

A core theme of this plan will be to utilise a variety of approaches to stimulate demand. It will therefore concentrate on 2 strands:

- Individuals
- Employers

At the heart of this plan is a programme encouraging SME's to do business a different way. This requires a workforce development programme which supports the 'inspiring' of managers, the stimulating of demand for learning and an approach which embraces a wide range of learning, not exclusively those geared to the achievement of qualifications.

Detailed below is a description of the activities in each of the measures that we are proposing to co-finance in and an indication of the proposed client group.

Measure 1.1

This measure will be aimed at the following activities:

- Intensive Guidance and Support – aimed at adults. Funding is not presently available for the delivery of in-depth guidance for adults under IAG provision. We would therefore be using this measure to add value to the activities currently offered under IAG provision by offering in depth guidance opportunities. This would be an in-depth interview or other activity offered by a trained adviser which helps clients to explore a range of options, to relate information to their own needs and circumstances and make decisions about their career (i.e. their progression in learning and work). It may or may not include psychometric assessment.

Provision will meet Guidance Council standards and will be contracted for through the IAG partnership. ESF will resource explicit, targeted enhancement. We will work closely with the IAG partnerships and other relevant bodies to ensure that added value is achieved, through particular emphasis on guidance. The LSC will be working together with Job Centre Plus to ensure that the provision through our own plans are complementary of those from Job Centre Plus and that beneficiaries will have access to a broad range of provision.

Measure 1.2

In this measure we will look to deliver the following activities:

- Increasing Vocational and Basic Skills training – the client group we would seek to help would be economically inactive persons focussing on the following groups:
 - Disadvantaged groups
 - Low – skilled

Given the diverse nature of this client group, it will be vital that the providers can offer the type of support required to meet the preferred learning style of the individual.

Measure 2.1

This measure will look to procure the following activities:

- Pre vocational training and upgrading of basic skills, including Literacy and Numeracy. The client group would feature the following:
 - Disadvantaged groups
 - Unemployed
 - Those at risk of long term unemployment

We would look upon this measure as taking preventative measures to decrease the risk of long-term unemployment, and so therefore those groups that have been out of work for a short period of time, but have been identified as being at risk of long term unemployed. For adults (aged 25 and over) they will have been unemployed for less than a year, for young people aged 16 and under 25 they will have been unemployed for less than 6 months.

Measure 2.2

This measure will focus on the following activities:

- Intensive support to enable disadvantaged groups to re-enter the labour market
- Intensive guidance to the multiple disadvantaged
- Breakdown the barriers to learning and participation in the economy by marginalized groups
- Develop the capacity of providers to meet the needs of 'the hard to help'
- A series of employability initiatives that will be designed to re-engage young people in learning so as to improve their chances of employability.

The client groups that we would envisage benefiting from these activities would be:

- Ethnic Minorities
- Disaffected young people, aged 14-18, excluded from school provision
- Those predicted not to achieve (or are not entered for) GCSE's
- Disabled
- Lone parents
- Ex-Offenders
- Homeless
- Dispersed/Disadvantaged communities
- Persons with literacy/Numeracy problems
- Asylum seekers

Given the diverse needs of this client group, it will be vital that the provider can offer the type of support required to meet the preferred learning style of the individual, while taking into account the nature of the barrier faced by the individual learner.

All participants in the programme will be provided with the opportunity to benefit from interventions designed to raise their social awareness. To summarise, for this suite of activity we will utilise ESF in two ways; firstly, to provide specialist activities targeted at those who are hardest to reach, and secondly, to support specialist providers, enabling them to reach those groups of people who suffer multiple barriers to participation and achievement. We will work closely with the Education Business Links Partnership to enhance the provision of disaffected young people.

Measure 3.1

The aim of this measure is to support activities aimed at particular individuals or groups of individuals, it will be primarily concerned with activities to achieve the necessary changes in culture, systems and structures for the delivery of education and training with the aim of increasing participation and attainment. The activities under this measure will specifically include:

- Support for those in low skill employment where company based provision is not easily accessible
- Activities to widen and encourage participation in learning to include the development and adaptation of learning materials, development of new technologies and provision of increased quality standards (especially in ICT) and systems for the accreditation of prior learning
- Capacity building of community provision to encourage community and family based activities, specifically providing flexible forms of learning as appropriate for the client group, also, initiatives to help individuals develop and manage their own learning

The target group that we will be working with is proposed to be:

- Adults with no qualifications or low basic skills
- Adults with outdated or inappropriate skills
- Employees that do not have access to learning provision in the workplace

3.2 Improving Employability

LSC GM aims to invest in Halton's workforce by the continued development of existing provision so as to develop a skilled workforce, a vital ingredient for increasing competitiveness; and to promote business growth and retention aligned to an investment in individuals that will enable them to participate more fully in the ever-changing labour market.

Under this measure we propose to run our Higher Workforce Skills programme – which we are already running within Halton. This is a new apprenticeship programme that has been designed to raise the skill levels of adults aged over 25 already in the workforce by the provision of NVQ's at Levels 2 & 3. Individuals must have been with the employer for at least 3 months before being eligible for the programme. To be eligible for the NVQ Level 2 training, individuals must not already possess an NVQ Level 2, regardless of what occupation it was awarded within. Similarly, to be eligible for NVQ Level 3 training individuals must not possess an NVQ at that level.

Additionally, intervention will also be undertaken for those beneficiaries that are unskilled or have low skills/ outdated skills and for those who have recently been made or are threatened with redundancy.

4.1 Updating/grading Basic and Key Skills

The focus for this measure is on Workforce Development, and in particular:

- Updating and upgrading skills of workers in key sectors
- Train the trainer activity
- Support to employers to offer training and development to employees
- Development of IT skills, both advanced and basic computer literacy

- Mentoring and advice services for people in low skill or at risk occupations targeted at improving levels of training and learning

The client group that we would be focusing on in this measure would be as follows:

- Employers involved in with improving employees skills
- Workers affected by industrial change, or changes in production systems
- Workers threatened with redundancy, with particular priority given to those employed at SME's

4.2 Identifying Skills Shortages

This measure will enable us to run our Skill Works Programme that we are currently running in Objective 1, within Halton. The qualifications delivered under this programme will be up to Level 4 and will be vocational. The main principles and activities behind this programme are as follows:

- **Demand Led** – the identification of actual and the stimulation of latent demand so as to increase the number of SME's locally actually investing in Workforce Development
- **Comprehensive** – covering the full spectrum of demand as it is expressed by SME's. Including the full range of functional business areas, all training types, levels and delivery models.
- **Effective** – ensuring the programme is streamlined and enables maximum impact to be derived from programme investments
- **Timely** – capable of meeting SME needs rapidly
- **Accessible and Understandable** – a straightforward process that enables SME's to access support promptly and appropriately
- **Simple** – uncomplicated for all users and stakeholders
- **Establishes Clear Relationships** – develops a sense of partnership and clarity of role for all partners and service users
- **Value for Money** – ensures that available resources are focussed upon the SME end user
- **Developmental** – builds upon established good practice and effective practices and develops both new capacity and capability and a new culture of workforce development within Halton
- **Deliverable** – capable of enabling programme targets to be delivered
- **SME Choice** – enabling, where possible, SME's to have maximum choice and flexibility in the selection of providers and provision (content and delivery)
- **Cross Cutting Themes** – enabling cross cutting themes, priorities and targets to be addressed

The client group that we would be concentrating this programme at is:

- **SME's** – particularly those who have not participated in workforce development activity previously and who need support to articulate their training needs. The programme will be responsive to employer needs, triggered by the outcome of an initial SME diagnostic process.

We would expect the training support required by the SME's², to include:

- The production of company and individual learning plans, including training needs analysis
- Management Development
- Learning programmes developed for NVQ Level 3 and above
- Training of in-house trainers
- Continuous Professional Development and higher level skills
- Training of key workers to be workplace assessors
- Initial training on recruitment
- Basic training
- Technical and Functional Skills development
- Supervisory training

5.1 Improving Access to Learning

Through this measure we will run the gender-mainstreaming element of the Higher Workforce Skills programme. Successful equality and diversity policies deliver significant business benefits including more effective recruitment, increased retention and improved understanding of the workforce. It is vital that areas of personal and professional development and cultural change are embedded into organisations to enable this to happen. We will look to procure activity that specifically focuses on up-skilling for women in non-traditional occupational areas.

Within this measure we will also look to procure the following activities:

- Tackling barriers such as childcare and other caring responsibilities, raising awareness and promoting family friendly policies.
- Improving access to learning and employment opportunities
- Support for women returnees to enable them to re-enter that market at the level that they left
- Improving the quality and flexibility of local training including participation in lifelong learning partnerships.

The client group that we would focus on would be as follows:

- Female lone parents and female part-time workers
- Women returnees to the labour market
- Employed women facing particular barriers to their career advancement
- Women managers
- Women working in non-traditional occupations/areas where women are under-represented
- Young mothers who missed out first rung provision.

² As in line with the RDP this measure “provides support to companies to update and up-grade the skills of their work-force..” Individuals wishing to further themselves will therefore be covered under the lifelong learning measure.

Expected Results by Measure

Tables 15 shows indicative outputs, results and impacts across the measures. This is based on a pro-rata calculation for the scale of proposed activities against those set out in the RDP (July 2003).

Table 15

1.1 Guidance & Support 2004-2006	Total Programme	Greater Merseyside LSC 2004-06 Total
Input		
Total Funding	£17,480,000	£104,206
Total ESF	£7,866,000	£46,893
Output		
Number of Beneficiaries	74,113	445
No.	31,127	187

1.2 Vocational & Key Skills 2004 - 2006	Total Programme	Greater Merseyside LSC 2004-2006
Input		
Total Funding	£161,250,000	£335,286
Total ESF	£72,562,500	£150,879
Output		
Number of Beneficiaries	67063	140
Women receiving support	24805	52
Beneficiaries completing their courses	41932	88
Working towards a qualification	35435	74
Results		
Positive Outcomes on Leaving (and at 6 months)	28325	105
In work on leaving (and at 6 months)	16773	35

2.1 Widening Access to Basic Skills 2004-2006	Total Programme	Greater Merseyside LSC 2004-2006
Input		
Total Funding	£25,860,000	£369,240
Total ESF	£11,637,000	£166,158
Output		
Number of Beneficiaries	64675	646
Women receiving support	27163	271
Working towards a qualification	38805	388

Results		
Positive Outcomes on Leaving (and at 6 months)	40745	407

2.2 Local & Area Based Responses	Total Programme	Greater Merseyside LSC 2004-2006
Input		
Total Funding	£106,870,000	£530,733
Total ESF	£48,091,500	£238,830
Output		
Number of beneficiaries	54456	272
Women receiving support	22872	114
Working towards a qualification	32674	163
Number of trainers trained	3533	17
Results		
Positive Outcomes on Leaving (and at 6 months)	34307	171

3.1 Promoting Wider Access 2004 - 2006	Total Programme	Greater Merseyside LSC 2004-2006
Input		
Total Funding	£120,170,000	£2,210,548
Total ESF	£54,076,500	£994,747
Output		
Number participating in Lifelong learning	45382	835
Women receiving support	22691	417
Working towards a qualification	45382	835
Number of trainers trained	12718	234
Number of capacity building projects	97	1
Results		
Leavers gaining a qualification	23531	432
In work or further study on leaving (and at 6 months)	35489	653

3.2 Improving Employability	Total Programme	Greater Merseyside LSC 2004-2006
Input		
Total Funding	£51,500,000	£2,078,517
Total ESF	£23,175,000	£935,333
Output		
Number participating in Lifelong learning	18094	731
Women receiving support	9047	365
Completing their courses	15380	621
Working towards a qualification	18094	731
Number of trainers trained	5127	207
Results		
Leavers gaining a qualification	9382	379
In work or further study on leaving (and at 6 months)	14149	571

4.1 Up-dating/grading Basic and Key Skills	Total Programme	Greater Merseyside LSC 2004-2006
Input		
Total Funding	£21,860,000	£359,980
Total ESF	£9,837,000	£161,991
Output		
Number of companies helped	983	16
Number of employees helped (given ESF training)	13278	219
Number of women receiving support	4382	72
Working towards a qualification	7967	131
Number of trainers trained	3918	64
Results		
Beneficiaries gaining a qualification	5099	84

4.2 Identifying Skills Shortages	Total Programme	Greater Merseyside LSC 2004-2006
Input		
Total Funding	£24,590,000	£197,733
Total ESF	£11,065,500	£88,980
Output		
Number of companies helped	4915	39

5.1 Improving Access to Learning	Total Programme	Greater Merseyside LSC 2004-2006
Input		
Total Funding	£19,130,000	£557,004
Total ESF	£8,608,500	£250,652
Output		
Women receiving support (beneficiaries)	9,804	285
Women trained in non-traditional occupations	588	17
Results		
Positive Outcomes for Women	8627	251
Women with children under 5 in work 6 months after ESF	2941	85

6. Provider Selection Arrangements

Approach to Sub-Contracting

Throughout the procurement and contracting process, from the initial invitation to submit proposals, through to the monitoring and evaluation of provision, our approach will be one that is fair, open and transparent, and accessible to all, but at the same time will be focused to ensure we get the right proposals coming forward that meet the needs of Halton.

It is LSC policy to ensure that we make the best use of learning resources per se and this can be seen in our approach to the planning and funding of our core programmes. This policy will apply equally to ESF and our approach to co-financed provision, which we will ensure is of high quality, is demand driven and responsive to the needs of individuals and companies, and which demonstrates real added value to what can be delivered using mainstream resources.

New providers will be subject to an initial assessment based on the requirements placed on existing providers focused on seven key areas e.g. financial assurance, quality of learning delivery, leadership and management, quality assurance, data management, Health and Safety and Equality of Opportunity.

To facilitate continuous improvement all providers will be expected to make available, on an annual basis if appropriate, a self-assessment report and development plan that focuses on an evaluation of the learning and development on offer, takes account of learner feedback and seeks to address identified weaknesses and to build on existing strengths. Quality Assurance will also be monitored and managed through the Project Manager (see Section 10).

LSC Greater Merseyside recognises that in order to deliver some “best practice” initiatives that there will be a need to work with providers from all sectors e.g. voluntary, public and private sector. It is likely that this approach will bring forward a number of providers who are not currently in receipt of contracts from the LSC and as a result are unfamiliar with the LSC’s quality assurance requirements. It is recognised that there will be a need to capacity build providers in this area and GMLSC will make appropriate levels of support available.

Providers approach to equal opportunities will be scrutinised; support for local, flexible delivery will be encouraged, and innovative proposals using best practice.

We see the subcontracting organisations falling into the following categories: -

- Public Sector Funded Providers (FE, HEIs, LAs)
- Private Sector Training Providers/Consultancies

- Community and Voluntary Sector Providers
- Employers
- Partnerships, Consortiums, Sector Forums, Networks

Invitation to Submit Proposals

This plan focuses on the procurement and delivery of co-financed provision, which will benefit both companies and individual employees. Providers should be clear which of these (or both) is the intended beneficiary of any proposals that they submit, as the choice of beneficiary will have an impact on the management information required.

There will be two aspects to this procurement exercise. The first aspect will concentrate on procuring specific projects delivered by providers to address a particular activity. The second aspect will be for securing the services of providers who can deliver the range of demand-led activities.

To receive proposals from providers wishing to co-finance activities, and to procure the services of demand-led providers, we will publicise the invitation to tender in the following ways:

- Through marketing to our current provider base
- Using the Learning Partnerships as a medium, targeting local providers that might not currently be contracting with the LSC
- Through the Halton Learning Partnership
- Through the wider Objective 3 Partnership
- Through the local press

Application Procedure for Project Delivery

Providers wishing to submit proposals for co-financed funding will be required to complete one of three Provider Proposal Form (see Annex 3). The completion of the form will depend on which activity/programme the proposal is submitted under, as we have a general form, one for the Higher Workforce Skills Programme and also one for the Skills Works Programme (see page 29 for a description of the programmes).

Our intention is to keep the process as simple as possible for providers and to ensure providers are fully aware of the basis on which their proposals will be assessed. The updated form and guidance notes will be available in the form of a Tendering Document and guidance. The prospectus will also contain more detailed information for Providers such as how they will be paid and standard contract terms for example.

Providers will be required to word process their applications, and can return completed applications to Learning and Skills Council Greater Merseyside, either by post or electronically.

Support for Providers

We will respond to any requests from providers for copies of the prospectus and guidance notes in formats other than print.

Timetable for Submission

The first phase of procurement activity will take place in September 03, as detailed below.

Call for co-financing proposals from providers – end September 03

Deadline for submission of applications – end October 03

Appraisal and Selection Period between – November – December 03

Co-financing projects begin from January 2004

Appraisal and Selection

The appraisal and selection criteria is intended to determine three things:

- I. The suitability of the proposal (to meet the objectives of the co-financing plan – i.e. is the provision needed);
- II. The financial viability and capacity of the Provider to deliver the provision;
- III. The quality of the provision on offer, whether it is fit for purpose and demonstrates good value for money.

Process of Assessment

There are 4 stages in the assessment process, which are

- i. Strategic Fit. This is to ensure that the proposals fit with LSC strategy, the organisation is eligible to receive funds and that the proposal fits with the tender specification. Two senior managers do this independently.
- ii. Technical Appraisal. Two LSC Greater Merseyside staff will independently appraise the proposals and assign a score, based on detailed scoring guidance (see Annex 4). A senior manager will mediate for applications with widely varying scores.

Key criteria, fields that must be completed in order to determine the selection of projects are labelled with an “S” (selection). The following fields fit into this grouping:

- Activity Focus
- Activity Summary
- Timescales
- Linkages
- Added Value
- Outcomes
- Activity Management
- Financial Information

- Cross Cutting Themes

Other additional information required to support the appraisal and selection process, (but which is not used in the appraisal) is marked “A” (additional), and “O” (optional):

- Geographic area of Delivery
- Target groups
- Submission to any other CFO
- Current Contracting Arrangements

Each bid will be independently assessed twice and scored in relation to the extent to which the application satisfies the following:

- The activities and target groups identified in the prospectus;
- The impact of the project in relation to “added value “, outcomes and cross cutting themes;
- The quality assurance and management of the project in relation to meeting the needs of the beneficiaries;
- The project provided good value for money.

The assessment criteria applied and scoring mechanism is weighted towards points one and two above, as it is believed that other areas could be developed through negotiation and monitoring support. It is considered important that creativity and meeting local needs should be rewarded.

- iii. Package Development. This is to ensure that the mix of providers and provision is appropriate to enable the programme to deliver the outputs, and to be delivered across, for example: geographically, sectorally etc.
- iv. Panel Decision. This will take final decisions on proposals. They will draw on evidence from appraisal scores, comments and observations from the appraisers. The panel will confirm which proposals are approved or rejected and the reason for that decision. They may also indicate areas that require clarification or further discussion prior to the issuing of a contract. The level of funding may also be subject to change for the following reasons:
 - Project costs from some providers are too high and will be subject to negotiation;
 - Project beneficiary numbers for some projects are considered unrealistic.
- v) It is our intention to engage NWDA in the package approval process and also to consult with the Halton Vale Royal Partnership regarding the resulting options.

Notification of Results

All bidders will be notified in writing of the decision following the panel, regardless of whether their bid was considered in detail by the panel or rejected at an earlier stage. This will ensure that LSC Greater Merseyside retains maximum flexibility throughout the process: The letters will provide the following information:

- a) For approved bids, a named contract manager who will be expected to see the approval through to contract signature
- b) For rejected bids, a named person in LSC Greater Merseyside will be given who can provide further information on the process and decision where requested.

We will then ensure that the results of the tendering round are then published on our web site: www.lsc.gov.uk. Furthermore, where it is apparent that providers are proposing similar or linked provision, we will encourage them to work together to develop joined-up proposals.

New Providers

Any approved bidders who are not already approved providers to the LSC will be asked to complete the appropriate application to assess capacity and capability to become an LSC Greater Merseyside provider. A financial health check will be performed by Audit and Assurance and then the Quality team will make a paper based assessment of the application to assess quality assurance.

Independent Scrutiny

The appraisal and selection process utilised by LSC Greater Merseyside in its co-financing arrangements will be independently assessed and assured by Government Office for the North West prior to the first bidding round for ESF monies via LSC Greater Merseyside's Co-finance Plan.

The NWDA will be invited to scrutinise the selection process, as will other relevant bodies and partnerships involved with Halton, as appropriate.

7. Administrative and Management Costs

National guidance on admin and management costs for co-financing organisations, states that costs at a level of up to 5% of the co-financing plan as a whole should be viewed as reasonable, if an adequate breakdown is provided.

In this plan, we propose to manage approximately £3,034,463 of ESF over 36 months with a total Plan of £6,743,247. Admin and management costs of 5% would therefore equal £337,162.

Our assumptions are:

Role	% Of time	Salary cost p.a.
Objective 3 Priority Manager	30	12,000
4 Contract Managers	50	48,000
3 Admin/Claims	60	33,000
Total (for Plan)		279,000
Total including on costs (for Plan)		337,162

In addition to these direct costs, supervisory responsibility to ensure achievement of the plans objectives will be allocated to senior management staff.

Greater Merseyside LSC is managing co-financed activities across the 6 boroughs of Greater Merseyside, managing Objective 1 funds in Merseyside and Objective 3 funds in Halton. The management of co-financed activity is being fully integrated into the appropriate organisational management arrangements. This is intended to ensure not only that ESF is used to deliver additionality, but also to ensure that the management arrangements are efficient and cost-effective. The organisational charts and descriptions provided to GONW show how resources are required and allocated in a number of different departments and functions.

It would not be realistic or cost-effective for the LSC to establish a separate co-financing resource for each of these functions for Halton activity, given the scale of ESF likely to be available for co-financing in. Resourcing of the O3 plan will therefore benefit from GMLSC's O1 activity – without this, the management & admin costs for Halton would need to be significantly above the 5% level.

Actual staff time allocated to the O3 and O1 programmes will be recorded through use of the LSC's national time recording system (TS2000). Set up time required in the early months may result in costs above the 5% level in the short term, but will be within the 5% 'ceiling' over the life of the Plan.

8. Match Funding

The relevant LSC budgets for the nine measures covered by this plan are:

- ❖ FE 16-18
- ❖ FE 19+
- ❖ Workforce Development (WFD)
- ❖ Work-based Learning (WBL)
- ❖ Discretionary Budget e.g. Local Intervention and Development Fund (LIDF)

Greater Merseyside LSC will also ensure that in addition to providing its own match funding, that there are systems in place to enable providers to bring their own match funding should they wish to.

For those projects that have been approved by Greater Merseyside LSC, where the Provider has indicated that their match funding will be used, negotiations may then take place in which the Provider may then decide that they will not utilise their own match funding. In these instances Greater Merseyside LSC match funding will then be used. Providers are able to use their own match funding ensuring that “..under OCT required for co-financing, that wishing to contribute match funding must have no bearing on the appraisal and selection process. Having own match funding cannot be a selection criterion except in circumstances where employers will be required to contribute their own funding.”

9. Technical Assistance Pooling

Under the current arrangements, GMLSC will pay the voluntary levy. We will also expect any providers who are awarded contracts in excess of £100,000 to pay the levy, a list of these providers will be provided to Government Office North West to action. Further discussions will be required with the Programme Management Team to consider e.g. providers accessing ESF via both Co-Financing and direct bidding routes. We would not intend that any providers are worse off under Co-Financing.

The purpose of the current voluntary levy is to help fund programme management costs. The current overview of the management structures may therefore affect the continued application of the levy, including GMLSC's position.

10. Cross Cutting Themes

At Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside we are committed to ensuring that the CCT targets in the revised RDP are incorporated into all activity that we procure.

Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion

The Learning & Skills Council is charged by the Secretary of State with the ambitious task of creating a learning society in England, in which everyone has the opportunity to go as far as their skills and talents will take them. The Council is expected to make learning more inclusive, eliminate unlawful discrimination and tackle social and economic disadvantage by removing barriers to post-16 education and training.

Equality of Opportunity and Social Inclusion (EO&SI) has been mainstreamed throughout Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside's Strategic Plan to address the following local challenges:

- Low levels of participation in education and training and below average levels of achievement amongst both young people and adults
- A higher than average number of people who lack the basic skills of literacy and numeracy
- A concentration of lack of access to learning and work amongst particular communities of people – both by geography and characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, disability, age – compounded by high levels of economic and social deprivation
- The general absence of a learning culture within both communities and the employer base
- A higher than average incidence of people in low skill jobs in industries vulnerable to economic change

Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside providers are required to: -

- Adhere to an EO & SI Policy in line with the Council's own policy which extends their commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all regardless of gender, race, disability, age, marital status, religion and sexual orientation and to those suffering social exclusion
- Agree EO & SI targets for delivery and strategies designed to reach the hard to help
- Challenge stereotyping however and wherever it occurs

To support this in co-financing Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside will: -

- Identify and integrate equal opportunities into all aspects of planning and implementation
- Identify lesson learned and promote good practice in equal opportunities through appropriate dissemination strategies
- Use the appraisal and selection system to ensure that projects comply with a minimum standard as regards equal opportunities

- Ensure that we will promote best practice in project design and delivery, for example, with regard to gender, this means the type of support and training, the timing and location of delivery and support and guidance services are designed to take account of any barriers and constraints that reduce the capacity of women to take up opportunities
- Undertake monitoring and evaluation activities that assess progress towards objectives and targets and help identify good practice and areas where improvements are required.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development ensures the integration of social, economic and environmental concerns. These areas are of significant importance to the Halton area. Manufacturing industries amount for nearly a quarter of employment in the area, with particular emphasis on the chemicals sector. Environmental considerations are therefore critical for both businesses and residents in the area. In addition, the legacy of contaminated land is a significant problem for the area. Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside therefore fully recognises the need to address issues of sustainable development in our co-financing activities. In doing this Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside will: -

- Ensure that potential applicants are aware of the Integrated Appraisal Toolkit – “Building a better quality of life into Projects, Programmes, Plans and Strategies” to help them to integrate “sustainable thinking” into the project development process.
- Ensure that all projects approved have a statement clearly identifying how the project is addressing the issue of sustainable development.

The Information Society

This agenda is diverse and complex and Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside focus is on the development of e learning and skills.

Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside recognise: -

- The potential for the development of new forms of employment and high skilled jobs, especially by providing SME’s with the instruments to innovate and adapt to a rapidly changing economic environment.
- That the Information Society opens up opportunities for new ways of working, providing wider access to jobs and more flexible working time, and a basis for overcoming mobility and access problems arising, for example, from poor transport infrastructure.

Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside will ensure:

- That the Information Society will be considered in the Learning & Skills Council Greater Merseyside co-financing scoring and selection processes.
- Once detailed implementation guidelines have been developed by the wider partnership with options for the setting of minimum standards and outcomes, we will endeavour to ensure that potential applicants are made aware of these so that these can be integrated into the project development process.

11. Implementation Plan

Targets

As the plan is developed the target number of beneficiaries and associated delivery costs will be refined to demonstrate not just total figures as shown at present but also quarterly targets. Due to the demand-led nature of the programme it is very difficult to profile the actual spend and delivery of outcomes. However, the management arrangements detailed in Milestones and Processes will ensure that the programme is fully delivered.

As proposals are received each contract with a provider will specify start and end dates and quarterly project targets / milestones. Where payment is on a profile basis, quarterly reconciliation against outcomes and actual costs will be undertaken. The individual projects will be monitored both for expenditure and outcomes and consolidated at project level for comparison with targets and milestones.

Milestones

Outlined below are a number of key milestones that will be used to monitor the implementation of co-financing arrangements for LSC Greater Merseyside.

MILESTONE	ACHIEVEMENT DATE
Draft Co-finance Plan Circulated for Consultation	June 2003
Consultation on Draft Plan Ends	July 2003
Consultation amendments recorded (as appropriate)	August/September 2003
Final Co-finance Plan Produced	October 2003
Co-finance Plan Approved by PM/RC	20 October 2003
Publish Co-financing Prospectus	October 2003
Deadline for Submission of Project Proposals wishing to start activity on 1 st January 2004	November 2003
Appraisal and Review Process completed	November 2003
GMLSC ESF Co-finance Senior Internal Panel Approve Recommendations	December 2003
Applicants Notified of Outcome (1 st Round) – Initial Discussion Letters Issued	December 2003
Projects Commence Delivery	January 2004
Launch 2 nd Bidding Round – Projects Commencing Activity September 2002 and January 2003	July 2004
Proposals Assessed and Selected	September 2004
1 st Quarter Reconciliation of Sub-contractors Claims and 1st Quarterly Claim to GONW	April 2004
Applicants Notified of Outcome and Contracting for 2 nd Round Projects Commences	July 2004
2 nd Round Projects Commence Delivery	October 2004
2 nd Quarter Reconciliation of Sub-contractors Claims and 2 nd Quarterly Claim to GONW	October 2004
3rd Quarter Reconciliation of Sub-contractors Claims and 3rd Quarterly Claim to GONW	January 2005
4th Quarter Reconciliation of Sub-contractors Claims and 4th Quarterly Claim to GONW	April 2005
Evaluate impact of first 12 months of Co-finance Delivery	December 2004
5 th Quarterly Reconciliation of Sub-contractors Claims and 5 th Quarterly Claim to GONW	July 2005
6 th Quarterly Reconciliation of Sub-contractors Claims and 6 th Quarterly Claim to GONW	October 2005
7 th Quarterly Reconciliation of Sub-contractors Claims and 7 th Quarterly Claim to GONW	April 2006
8 th Quarterly Reconciliation of Sub-contractors Claims and 8 th Quarterly Claim to GONW	July 2006
9 th Quarterly Reconciliation of Sub-contractors Claims and 9 th Quarterly Claim to GONW	October 2006
Co-finance Activity through this Plan ends	31 st December 2006
Final Evaluation Report produced	February 2007
Project Closure Report to GONW	February 2007

In addition to these milestones, LSC Greater Merseyside reserves the right to commission activity as appropriate.

We will manage the process of project reconciliation throughout the life of the measure-level approval, and where necessary the life of the specific project where that might be a lesser period of time.

Regular contract reports will be supplied by providers, which as a minimum will detail activity to date, outcomes in the period and cumulative as well as covering the project based ESF reporting requirements identified earlier.

Within LSC Greater Merseyside a Contract Manager will be responsible for quarterly reconciliation of provider activity, reports and payments against the agreed profile. Where appropriate the Contract Manager may amend the provider delivery or payments profile, which may require a meeting with the provider. Equally, the reported evidence may require further intervention with the provider to ensure delivery is on track. In extreme circumstances it may be appropriate for contracted activity to be reduced or terminated contractually, and for other provision to be put in place.

Activity and spend will be reported to GONW on a quarterly basis. The quarterly report will include the following information and will be derived from cumulative ISR/ILR/SER returns and project progress reports.

- Details of activity delivered;
- Summary of beneficiaries and outcomes achieved;
- Expenditure to date, both programme delivery and management and admin costs.

At the end of the period of measure-level activities we will submit a closure report to GONW which will summarise activity and delivery during the period, this report along with copies of annual evaluation reports will be posted on the national LSC website.

Annex 1 - Consultation Response/Questionnaire



Any information on this response form maybe published, but not accredited.

Please use this form in responding to the consultation by 30 July 2003.

Please complete the following:

ORGANISATION NAME
PERSON TO CONTACT
ADDRESS
POSTCODE
TELEPHONE
FAX
EMAIL

Completed consultation response forms should be returned to **Pam Catterall** at Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council.

By Fax to: 0151 672 3533

By email to: pamela.catterall@lsc.gov.uk

By Post to:

Pam Catterall

Learning and Skills Council Greater Merseyside

4th Floor, Tithebarn House

Tithebarn Street

Liverpool

L2 2NZ

4. Do you feel that the activities and beneficiaries identified in Chapter 5 target the appropriate groups in the Halton area?

Response

5. Do you feel that Chapter 6, Selection Arrangements, effectively describes the processes involved in selecting providers? If no, what other points should be included here?

Response

6. Is there any additional information that you feel should be included in the plan?

Response

7. Would your organisation be willing to endorse this plan and be included in a list of supporting bodies in the final published version?

Response

Annex 2 - LSC Programmes

Work Based Learning – programme for young people through the work based route.

Modern Apprenticeships – The preferred work-based learning route for all young people aged 16 to 24 who are capable of achieving NVQ Levels 2 and 3.

NVQ Training – NVQ training is high quality, flexible training provision to NVQ standards at Levels 1,2 and 3. Young people aged 16 to 24 are eligible for NVQ Training where they are unable or unwilling to follow the MA route.

Life Skills – The Life Skills learning provision, this provides with Personal Advisers providing ongoing individual support.

Pre 16 Education Business Links – Provision of support to ensure that local education business link organisations work closely together to provide high quality education business link opportunities for all young people, including all those primary and secondary education.

Workforce Development – Workforce development aims to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of those in work, those seeking work or those about to enter the labour market for the first time. It maybe used in conjunction with other LSC budgets such as the Local Initiative Fund to address local priorities.

Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults (IAG) – Providing local information, advice and guidance for adults on learning and work. The Learning and Skills Council is committed to ensuring quality of opportunity in all its policies and actions.

Adult and Community Learning – innovative community-based learning opportunities provided by local voluntary and neighbourhood groups to attract and motivate adults wary of traditional forms of education. Learning can be integrated with other activities that concern local people, such as the environment, tenants' representation, childcare, arts, sports, crime prevention or health promotion.

FE Provision – Provision of Post 16 education and training through colleges and other providers

National Target Level 2 Project – A national drive by local LSCs to achieve the DfES 2002 target of 25% of 19 year-olds to attain a Level 2 qualification.

Sixth Form (From April 2002) – Provision for 16-18 year olds within schools.

Rapid Response Fund – Responds to the needs of individuals in companies who are threatened with redundancy.

Basic Skills – Development of effective approaches for improving the basic skills of children, young people and adults, often in partnership with other organisations.

DISCRETIONARY FUND
PROJECT APPLICATION FORM
GENERAL

PROJECT TITLE AND SUMMARY DETAILS

Proposal Name:

Name of Applicant Organisation:

Address and Telephone Number:

E-mail address:

Person to Contact:

Legal Status of Applicant:

Area of Project (Please circle)	Halton	Knowsley	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral
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Project Reference Number e.g. AD 103 Basic Skills Provision

(Refer to point 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 of the prospectus – schedule a)

Project Start Date Project End Date

Total Project Cost

Declaration **I confirm, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this Proposal is correct.**
I confirm that all partner organisations have been consulted and have agreed roles and responsibilities and financial costs of the activity

Signature _____

Name _____

Position _____

Date _____

Section A – All applicants to complete

1 Activity Focus

Please detail the activities you intend to deliver and give examples / evidence of how they link into the Project Specification as described in the Learning & Skills Greater Merseyside Prospectus of Requirements. (Word limit 150)

2 Activity Summary

Please provide a brief but clear description of the proposed activities. This should include the aims and objectives of the activity and the main delivery mechanisms and key milestones, in relation to targets set out in the Prospectus. It should contain a clear description on:

- **What** the activity intends to do
- **What the main delivery mechanisms are**, including aspects of project design, whether the physical resources required to deliver the programme are already in place to enable an early start in delivery, if not when they will be in place, how individual needs will be identified and addressed and how you will ensure equality of opportunity throughout the project.
- Outline and quantify the **key milestones** of the project

(Word limit 250).

3 Target Groups

This section should include:

- A clear description of your target groups including the age groups and background of individuals and size and type of companies
- The numbers of beneficiaries from each target group (Please complete the table below)
- Evidence including previous results of working with the identified target group(s)
- If your project targets people or employers for development how will you recruit them? Show that this process is appropriate.

Please note that the project should reflect the priorities of the LSC GM Discretionary Funding Prospectus. (Word limit 250)

Target Groups and numbers of beneficiaries	Year End 2003	Year End 2004	Year End 2005	TOTAL NUMBER
Individuals				
Companies				

Please indicate the number of the above individual beneficiaries, from the following categories.

	Year End 2003	Year End 2004	Year End 2005	TOTAL NUMBER
Black/Ethnic Minorities Assisted				
Disabled - including SEN Assisted				
Lone Parents Assisted				
Ex-Offenders Assisted				
Homeless Assisted				
Refugees Assisted				
Drug/Alcohol Mis-users Assisted				

4. Volumes Outputs and Funding

Please complete Tables 1 and 2 attached setting out your plans on beneficiary numbers, outputs/ results and key milestones. NB Table 2 refers to projects, which intend to deliver to beneficiaries in the Halton area either on a single area only basis or as an area wide project.

In the table below please breakdown activity costs in detail e.g. training, marketing, childcare, beneficiary costs, staff costs etc and summarise by providing a unit cost per beneficiary/ outcome. **Please use the space below at B) to add any commentary in support of your costing assumptions particularly how your assumptions represent value for money.**

Please note all costs should be clearly linked to the activities and aims of the project and a clear explanation of how individual amounts have been calculated should be included.

A) Project Costs

Items of Expenditure	£
Total	

Total Number of Beneficiaries	Unit Cost per Beneficiary/ Outcome
	£

B) Please specify below your costing assumptions including a value for money assessment.

5. Timescales

Please note that this section is looking for a clear project plan, indicating activities, timescales and people responsible for the project activities

- Please specify start and end dates of the activity stages within the plan
- Please demonstrate that these dates are realistic in relation to the project activities and expected outcomes.
- Please describe the timescales for the main processes and stages of your project
- You should also provide details of the implications (if any) of the project not starting on the specified date

6.Linkages

Please provide evidence of how your project links in with:

- Other learning / economic strategies relevant to the area e.g. LSC Strategic Plan, Sector Skills Council's Workforce Development Plans, Objective 1 Programme Complement
- Priority 1 and Priority 2 of the Objective 2 programme and Other Structural Funds programmes including Objective 2 ERDF
- National funding initiatives i.e. Neighbourhood Renewal
- Relevant activities / organisations in the local area
- Strategic Investment Areas/ Economic Development Zones within the Greater Merseyside area

Could you also provide details of your current involvement in partnerships relevant to this proposal
If linkages are not fully established then please indicate which organisations / partnerships you expect to work with on this activity, the role they will play and how this involvement will be secured. (Word Limit 150)

7. Project Additionality

Please describe why you feel this project adds value to current provision in the area, either by:

- Enhancing existing provision
- Delivering creative projects that are not funded elsewhere
- Sharing best practice provision that will further develop learning in the area

Please advise to what extent the project is dependant on an LSC Discretionary Funding.

What will you do if your project is refused?

Go ahead as planned:

Go ahead as planned, but over longer timescale:

Go ahead, but on a reduced scale:

Will not go ahead at all:

8. Activity Management

Please detail how the activity will be managed, delivered and quality assured. As a minimum, your proposal should contain:

- How you plan to monitor project activity and beneficiary needs throughout the lifetime of the project
- Your management information systems and resources and how they will be applied to the gathering and recording of the information required for the Individual Learner Record (ILR) or Short Event Record (SER) and performance management
- How you will monitor financial spend including your internal audit arrangements
- What your quality assurance arrangements are; how you will ensure continuous improvement and how you will seek and evaluate learner feedback
- Relevant experience of the organisation and its staff in managing and delivering similar activities (including staff qualifications)
- How you plan to publicise and promote the project
- Details on the project exit strategy i.e. detailed proposals on how you plan to keep your project going after Discretionary Fund support finishes

9. Cross Cutting Themes

Taking into account the target groups identified for this project, please explain how your activity will contribute to each of the Cross Cutting Themes of:

- Equal Opportunities
- Information and Communications Technology
- Environment

10 Are you submitting / planning to submit a proposal(s) to any other Co-Financing Organisation or any direct bids to Government Office for ESF?

If yes, please provide details for any other intended activities

- You should also provide details of your involvement in current ESF funded projects and provide details of ESF funding already secured

Please note that failure to declare this could result in the automatic disqualification / termination of your proposed activity. Please declare any conflict of interest you may have regarding this application.

11 Do you currently hold a contract with the Learning + Skills Council Greater Merseyside?

Please provide details

If you do not currently have a contract with the Learning + Skills Council Greater Merseyside, we will need to undertake an assessment of your capability to become a provider. This assessment will review a number of areas, including quality of education and training, continuous improvement, leadership and management arrangements, resources, equipment and facilities, health and safety, and equal opportunities.

12 Other Information

Please include any other information, which you feel is important and have not had the opportunity to include elsewhere in the application. (Word Limit 100)

VOLUMES AND OUTPUTS SCHEDULE (REFER TO SECTION 4)

TABLE 1 – OBJECTIVE 1 AREA DELIVERY

This table should be completed to show the calendar year in which the “outputs”, “results and (as far as possible) the “milestones” of the project will be delivered.

	2003	2004	2005	TOTAL
Participants Numbers				
Individuals				
Companies/ Providers (re capacity building projects)				
RESULTS/POSITIVE OUTCOMES/ QUALIFICATIONS Please specify type of results/ outcomes and title and level of Qualifications				
KEY MILESTONES Please specify				

VOLUMES AND OUTPUTS SCHEDULE (REFER TO SECTION 4)

TABLE 2 – OBJECTIVE 3 AREA DELIVERY HALTON BENEFICIARIES

This table should be completed to show the calendar year in which the “outputs”, “results and (as far as possible) the “milestones” of the project will be delivered.

	2003	2004	2005	TOTAL
Participant Numbers				
Individuals				
Companies/ Providers (re capacity building projects				
RESULTS/POSITIVE OUTCOMES/ QUALIFICATIONS Please specify type of results/ outcomes and title and level of Qualifications				
KEY MILESTONES Please specify				

Co-Financing Project Proposal Selection Criteria Guidance

S = Criteria to determine the selection of projects

A = Additional information to support the appraisal and selection of projects

O = Optional information

1	Activity Focus	S	The provider should detail the activities it intends to deliver and give examples / evidence how they link into the aims described in the GMLSC Prospectus of Requirements.
2	Activity Summary	S	<p>The provider should provide a brief but clear description of the proposed activities. This should include the aims and objectives of the activity and the main delivery mechanisms and key milestones.</p> <p>It should contain a clear description on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the activity intends to do • Why it is needed – providing clear evidence e.g. labour market information, consultation with employers, NTO workforce development plans • How the need will be addressed • Outline the management arrangements, clearly identifying roles and responsibilities of individuals and organisations involved in the project • Outline and quantify the key milestones of the project
3	Geographic Area of Delivery	A	The provider should provide specific information on how the project links with the Strategic Investment Areas within the Merseyside area.
4	Target Groups	A	<p>The provider should complete this section with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear description of your target groups including the age groups and background of individuals and size and type of companies • The numbers of beneficiaries from each target group • Evidence including previous results of working with the identified target group(s) • Appropriate recruitment methods
5	Timescales (Including start and end dates of project)	S	<p>Please note that this section is looking for a clear project plan, indicating activities, timescales and people responsible for the project activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start and end dates of the activity stages within the plan • A demonstration that these dates are realistic in relation to the project activities and expected outcomes • Description of timescales for the main processes and stages of the project • Should provide details of the implications (if any) of the project not starting on the specified date

6	Linkages	S	<p>The proposal should provide evidence of how the project links in with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other learning / economic strategies relevant to the area e.g. LSC Strategic Plan, NTO Workforce Development Plans, Objective 1 Programme Complement • Relevant activities / organisations in the local area <p>Details of current involvement in partnerships relevant to this proposal should be included. If they are not established, detailed plans should be in place</p>
7	Project Rationale		<p>The proposal should indicate and provide a clear rationale why this project adds value to current provision in the area, either by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing existing provision • Delivering creative projects that are not funded elsewhere • Sharing best practice provision that will enhance learning in the area <p>Additionally, it should provide a clear rationale why these activities cannot be funded via other funding streams</p>
8	Outcomes	S	<p>Outcomes of the activity should be clearly specified – quantitative and qualitative – including details that proposed outcomes are achievable and realistic and how the provider will ensure that they will be achieved</p>
9	Activity Management	S	<p>The provider should detail how the activity will be managed, delivered and quality assured. As a minimum, it should contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design and delivery of the activity • Monitoring project activity and beneficiary needs throughout the lifetime of the project • Ensuring continuous improvement and the commitment to seeking learner/customer feedback, how this will be gathered, positively responded to and integrated into the on –going development of the programme • Relevant experience of the organisation and its staff in running similar activities (including qualifications) • Publicity and promotion of the project • The project exit strategy – i.e. how the project will continue after Co-Financing support finishes
10	Financial Information	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear breakdown of activity costs e.g. training, marketing, child care and total costs directly relating to the project activity <p>All costs should be clearly linked to the activities and aims of the project and a clear explanation of how individual amounts have been calculated should be included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal should demonstrate value for money of the project • The provider should detail how you they will monitor financial spend including internal audit arrangements • Where the project attracts Private Sector Match Funding, the provider should detail the organisations involved and the amount of match funding.
11	Cross Cutting Themes	S	<p>With reference to the target groups identified in section 4, the provider should make it clear how the activity will contribute to each of the Cross-Cutting Themes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal Opportunities • Information and Communications Technology

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability
12	Are you submitting / planning to submit a proposal(s) to any other Co-Financing Organisation or any direct bids to Government Office for ESF?	A	<p>If yes, details should be provided (for this and any other intended projects). Failure to declare this could result in the automatic disqualification / termination of the proposed project.</p> <p>The provider should also provide details of any involvement in current ESF funded projects and provide details of ESF funding already secured.</p>
13	Do you currently hold a contract with the Learning and Skills Council?	A	<p>If the provider does not currently have a contract with the Learning and Skills Council, an assessment will need to be carried out to determine capability to become a preferred supplier. This will review a number of areas, including: resources, equipment and facilities, sub-contacting arrangements, health and safety, and equal opportunities.</p>