

Learning and Skills Council Local Area Statement of Need

Rochdale

2008/09

February 2008

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

Introduction

Our plan outlines the key priorities and challenges for Rochdale within the context of Greater Manchester and within the context of the North West Regional Commissioning plan and sets out how we intent to focus our efforts and resources over the forthcoming year.

The learning and skills sector in Rochdale is on the brink of significant change. Achievement at Key Stage 2 is the most improved in the UK and is building a platform for growing success at Key Stage 4. Through its BSF programme, the local authority is reconfiguring schools to become, in the main, 11-16 institutions, recognising the need for substantive change in post 16 learning that has been set out by the LSC.

Working in partnership with key local stakeholders such as the Local Authority, Hopwood Hall College and providers of post 16 learning in neighbouring boroughs, the LSC has encouraged a new vision for post 16 learning in the borough that includes the opening of a brand new purpose built sixth form college in 2010 and the reconfiguration of Hopwood Hall College from a tertiary to a general further education institution, focusing on its strengths in delivering vocational learning. This will be enhanced by the proposed redevelopment of the college estate that is due for completion in 2011.

Whilst more Rochdale young people are in learning, the issues of travel to learn patterns and the substantial numbers of young people who are NEET remain as key issues for the borough. In November 2008, 10.4% of young people in Rochdale were NEET. As a NEET hotspot area, Rochdale has received £500,000 of support to challenge the NEET issue through tackling the causes of disengagement and providing new pathways into learning. In Rochdale the Entry to Employment programme is growing and we are securing increasing numbers progressing from the programme. Rochdale is particularly successful at adding value at Level 2. Success rates are continuing to rise.

In Rochdale the sector has had good successes in meeting the needs of adults and some success in addressing the needs of employers. We are working closely with providers to develop their responsiveness to employers and to grow priority provision at Level 2, Level 3 and Skills for Life. Train to Gain volumes are increasing from a low baseline and again the LSC is working with providers to maximise the impact of the programme.

Participation and achievement for young people and adults remains a high priority for the borough and Rochdale starts from a low base in relation to its neighbours. The remains a high proportion of young people who have not achieved success pre 16 and who utilise the 16-19 period to achieve their first full level two. Too many young people require entry level or level 1 courses at 16 and the time taken to achieve positive outcomes at level two prevents them from succeeding at level 3 at age 19. The borough has a history of achievement at level 2 at 19 followed by employment with many adults returning post 19 to complete their level three qualifications in order to progress in the workplace. Addressing this issue will be a key priority for 2008.

Partnership working has been essential in beginning the step-change in post 16 delivery in the borough and relationships with key partners are strong and focused.

Ian Ellis

Challenges, key actions and measures of success for Rochdale

The key challenge for the borough in 2008/09 is to ensure that it frames delivery to better meet the changing policy landscape. Ensuring that the ambitions of the Leitch Review can be met through employer responsive provision is of particular importance to Rochdale.

The borough is undergoing substantial change in both the way in which it delivers learning and in its economy. The refocusing of schools to 11-16, the development of the new sixth form and the changes in Hopwood Hall College will need to be undertaken whilst continuing to improve on results to date. The education sector needs to be aware of and repositioning itself towards a changing economy where lower skilled employment opportunities are fewer and new investment in the borough will create an increased demand for skilled labour in new sectors.

Priority 1: Creating Demand for Skills

Key Challenges:

- Addressing high levels of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Too many young people are in employment without any formalised learning
- There are low levels of progression to Level 3 learning and beyond

To increase the demand for learning in the borough our challenge is to both drive up individual desire for the acquisition of skills and develop an infrastructure that can meet learners' enhanced expectations. Our key aims for 2008/09 include:

- **The development of the 14-19 plan**, as part of the Children and Young Peoples' Plan, that delivers a comprehensive offer to young people. The offer will provide pathways for progression and include activity to engage those outside of mainstream learning through the utilisation of ESF and other resources.
- Driving forward the borough **Participation Strategy** that focuses on reducing the numbers of NEET young people in Rochdale. This will build on the progress made through the NEET Hotspot funding and addressing the challenge of prevention of young people becoming NEET.
- **Increasing the number and range of Apprenticeship opportunities** available to young people and Adults within the borough, through development of existing providers and the introduction of new provision through Open and Competitive Tendering.
- **Support the 14-19 partnership to continue to develop partnerships between schools, FE and WBL** providers to ensure the successful development and delivery of diplomas and the effective engagement of employers with learning across the borough.
- **Effective planning of learning infrastructure and capital development** to both ensure individuals have access to appropriate opportunities and to ensure complementarity with planned developments in the borough.

- **Developing strategies to increase achievement of level 3 at 19** through working with partners to identify and remove barriers to young people achieving success.

Priority 2: Transforming FE

Key Challenges:

- Increasing the range of opportunities for young people and adults to ensure that there is sufficient capacity for level 2 and level 3 provision in the borough.
- Aligning the renewal of the FE capital infrastructure and facilities with the BSF programme for schools

In Rochdale the FE sector is undertaking transformation. Priorities in 2008/09 will focus on ensuring that this transformation occurs without disruption to existing activity and on the promotion of the change being undertaken to young people. Priorities will also include:

- **Working with partners to promote to schools the new FE offer that will be available from 2010** as a means of generating interest in Year 9 pupils.
- **Supporting the FE sector in the delivery of level 3 opportunities**, particularly those offered through work based learning to increase attainment and achievement.
- **Focusing the college on the delivery of E2E** as an additional route into higher level provision alongside or in place of its current, high volume, level 1 provision.
- Working with the college to continue its growth in **income generation** through effective fee policies and the agreement of individual income targets that reflect the local area and employer base, particularly growth in its level 3 T2G delivery.
- Undertake a **structural review of the work based learning provider base and expand the apprenticeship programme** to provide a broader high quality learning infrastructure to increase learner choice and opportunities to progress.
- **Continue to drive up quality** and in particular success rates at Level 3; only purchasing learning opportunities which exceed Minimum Levels of Performance and give value for money

Priority 3: Better Skills, Better jobs, Better Lives

Key Challenges:

- Focusing interventions to assist individuals at risk of redundancy to retrain for the labour market
- High need for Skills for Life learning with a focus on numeracy provision
- Low levels of attainment and skills within the working age population
- Providing opportunities for individuals at significant skills disadvantage

Rochdale contains areas of significant deprivation that provide significant challenges including the engagement of individuals and progression to achievement. We will

focus our efforts and resources to engage more people from disadvantage groups to increase overall participation and achievement levels. We will continue to drive forward the integration of skills and employment. We will also seek to re-equip those individuals under threat of redundancy with the appropriate skills to be successful in a changing labour market. In addition we will:

- Shape and contribute to borough level LAA targets and the **Greater Manchester Multi Area Agreement (MAA)** through effective procurement and programme management to ensure the integration of employment and skills
- Working with the Rochdale Economic Partnership and the Skills and Work Advisory Group to ensure that the needs of existing and new employers are met in a responsive way by local providers.
- Work with local partners to **promote the Skills Pledge** and increase the take up of Train to Gain, in particular through membership of the local authority Skills Pledge group which can be used as an exemplar to other employers.
- **Focus on the new development at Kingsway** which will provide up to 7,000 new employment opportunities within the borough (a £350 million business focused mixed used development on a site which lies immediately adjacent to junction 21 of the M62 motorway in Rochdale). To date 800 Rochdale residents have accessed training delivered locally, which has been focused on the employment sectors planned for Kingsway, and 234 of these residents have already secured jobs in the Borough. The partnership team will continue to work closely with the Kingsway Recruitment Team and the local authority to successfully deliver new training programmes, aimed at boosting employment prospects for out-of-work residents.
- Continue to support the Shaw Trust 'Pathways to Work' programme. We will **work towards the successful integration of employment with skills** by developing suitable vocational training opportunities with our providers for clients on the programme.
- The partnership team will continue to work very closely Boots, the Next Steps Service and a range of local providers to ensure that the workforce is upskilled to level 2 and job-ready in time for **planned redundancies**. Strong relationships and concerted efforts by the partnership team have already had outstanding success with over 90% of workforce at Heywood now undertaking a SfL or FL2 qualification under T2G. The Rochdale site is now implementing a similar programme.
- The Partnership team will continue to work with other partners (RMBC economic affairs unit and JCP) to provide **a redundancy support service** for former MyTravel, Whippe and Bourne and Wincanton employees to ensure they are equipped for the labour market.
- We will continue to work with and **support those providers targeting individual at the most disadvantage**, for example Heywood Skills Ladder and the Jericho Project.
- Work with further education providers to target the learning offer to **adults without a Level 2 qualification**, focusing on those who are disengaged from learning and furthest away from the labour market

Partnership Working

Over the last twelve months the Rochdale Team has strengthened and developed effective relationships with providers, partners and stakeholders and we will continue to embed these throughout our work in 2008/09. The Partnerships that have emerged to manage the transformation of post 16 in the borough have been particularly effective and we will focus on driving forward this collaboration.

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

- Strengthen our role and contribution to the Local Strategic Partnership, particularly focused on the establishment of meaningful targets in the new LAA process.
- Continue to support and work with the 14-19 Partnership, notably in the area of diploma development where the partnership has had significant success in developing a borough wide approach.
- Work with our local Connexions partners to raise participation levels of young people and reduce the number of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training and support the delivery of the September Guarantee.
- Continue to develop our relationship with Voluntary and Community Sector networks in Rochdale to help capacity build the sector as part of our commitment to widening learner choice.
- Develop closer working with Jobcentre Plus to integrate skills and employment agendas, promote Local Employment Partnerships and increase take up of the Skills Pledge
- Work closely with our providers, schools and colleges to provide high quality choice for all learners and encourage cross-sector collaboration in the context of the transformation of post 16 learning in Rochdale.
- Strengthen our work regionally relating to skills and economic development through work with the Rochdale Economic Partnership and its sub groups including the Skills and Work Advisory Group.