

# Learning and Skills Council Local Area Statement of Need

## Stockport

## 2008/09

## February 2008

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

# Introduction

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

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

More young people are now participating in learning and our Entry to Employment programme is performing well and we have achieved some of the highest positive progression rates in Greater Manchester. We achieved a 93% success rate in delivering the September Guarantee for young people compared with a Greater Manchester average of 89%. Success rates are continuing to rise in the borough and the post-16 sector continues to add high levels of value at Level 2 for young people.

We are working hard to improve the responsiveness of the sector to learners and employers and have increased the proportion of our adult provision which is focused on the delivery of priority provision at Level 2, Level 3 and Skills for Life. Train to Gain volumes are increasing and we have achieved greater alignment with sector skills needs through effective planning informed by our partners. We are working closely with all our colleges (including the two independent specialist colleges) to transform the further education estate in Stockport through a major capital investment programme and maximise their ability to respond to local needs.

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

Christine Troughton  
Partnership Director, Stockport  
Greater Manchester  
Learning & Skills Council

# Challenges, key actions and measures of success for Stockport

As we move forward through 2008/09 we will need to ensure that we have an infrastructure of learning provision that reflects the changing policy landscape. The challenges and actions for Stockport are based on the local Strategic Analysis, a robust review of supply, demand and need; as well as ongoing dialogue with key partner organisations. A copy of the analysis can be obtained from [shahid.mohammed@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:shahid.mohammed@lsc.gov.uk).

## Priority 1: Creating Demand for Skills

### Key Challenges:

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

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

- Plan, through the Stockport 14-19 Partnership, a **comprehensive 14-19 offer**, maximising the utilisation and impact of European Social Fund (ESF) to provide pathways for young people to progress into mainstream learning within the borough including piloting a common application procedure and an electronic individual learning plan for 14-19 learners in the summer term.
- Increase the participation of young people through the **Stockport NEET reduction strategy** with a clear focus on vulnerable learners, and through the development of a borough strategy for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), the needs of this group will be prioritised.
- Provide an increased focus on **engaging employers in learning** with a view to reducing the high numbers of young people who are in employment without any formalised learning.
- Work with partners, including Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, Stockport Chamber, the Stockport Learning and Skills Partnership, colleges and providers and the Skills Brokerage Service, to **promote the Skills Pledge** and increase the take up of Train to Gain and Apprenticeships.
- Supporting the Stockport WBL Network to **promote Apprenticeship provision** to young people and adults and increase employer engagement in vocational learning and through strategic investment, expanding the **Apprenticeship programme** including the expansion of Programme Led Apprenticeships and additional volumes of adult Apprenticeships.

## Priority 2: Transforming FE

### Key Challenges:

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

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

- Working with the Local Authority on the borough's BSF **Strategy for Change** to ensure a coherent approach to capital developments in Stockport.
- Working with Aquinas College, Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College, Stockport College and the specialist colleges of Bridge College and Royal Schools for the Deaf and Communication Disorders to **transform the FE estate through a major capital investment programme** and encourage closer working between mainstream and specialist colleges.
- Ensuring **effective local commissioning processes** that match provision in Stockport to the needs of learners and employers, building on strong performance and minimising poor performance.

## Priority 3: Better Skills, Better jobs, Better Lives

### Key Challenges:

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

We will focus our efforts and resources to engage more people from disadvantaged groups<sup>1</sup> to increase overall participation and achievement levels. We will drive forward the integration of skills and employment and focus training on addressing skills shortages in local labour markets. In addition we will:

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

<sup>1</sup> People from some Black and Ethnic Minorities, people with disabilities including mental health issues, those with low or no skills, offenders, lone parents and those who are on working age benefits or are long term unemployed

<sup>2</sup> Brinnington, Cale Green, Davenport, Edgeley and South Reddish

# Partnership Working

Over the last twelve months the LSC has developed new and effective relationships with providers, partners and stakeholders and we will continue to embed these throughout our work in 2008/09. The impact of the Stockport Partnership Teams has been positive and resulted in a clearer understanding of the key issues within the borough and supported our ability to align funding and resources to address borough needs. If we are to maximise the contribution of the learning and skills sector locally then we need to continue to drive forward partnership working. We will do this through the development of a shared understanding with partners of our joint agendas and targets; and in particular we will:

- Strengthen the relationship between the Stockport Partnership Team and the Regeneration and Economic Development Department of Stockport MBC to develop a clear understanding of skills needs and to stimulate demand for learning by employers.
- Participate in the Stockport Public Services Commissioners' Co-ordinating Board to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure in the borough and oversee the effective delivery of Stockport's LAA.
- Develop close working arrangements with Stockport's Children and Young People Services Directorate to ensure coherent infrastructure planning, aligning the emerging BSF programme to the current FE investment plans.
- Work closely with Stockport Connexions to raise participation levels of young people and reduce the number of 16-18 year olds who are NEET.
- Work closely with Stockport MBC and the 14-19 Partnership to enhance and extend the development of 14-19 opportunities including supporting the Diploma submissions to ensure Stockport is successful in securing four Diploma lines for delivery in 2009.
- Support Stockport MBC to fulfil its obligations under the Skills Pledge and the Local Employment Partnership agreement.
- Continue to develop our relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector in the borough to help capacity build the sector as part of our commitment to widening learner choice working with the Personal and Community Development Learning Strategic Group.
- Develop closer working with Jobcentre Plus to integrate skills and employment agendas, promote Local Employment Partnerships and increase take up of the Skills Pledge.
- Work closely with our providers, schools and colleges to provide high quality choice for all learners and encourage cross-sector collaboration.
- Strengthen our work with local employers and Sector Skills Councils to better understand the local demand for skills and qualifications, working in partnership to take forward skills development in key sectors for Stockport.