

# Learning and Skills Council Local Area Statement of Need

## Birmingham and Solihull LSC

2008/09

December 2007

Of interest to everyone involved in improving skills and learning opportunities  
across the West Midlands

# Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with the West Midlands Regional Commissioning Plan 2008-09, which can be found on the LSC website at <https://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/WestMidlands/Aboutus/Annualplans> . Whilst the area has made good progress on a number of issues, many of our key concerns for 2008-09 are long-term ones, signalled in last year's annual plan. We are still committed to "closing the gap", where there are significant differences in educational achievement, employment and economic opportunities between geographical areas of Birmingham and Solihull, or between different groups of the local population.

The Birmingham and Solihull area lies at the heart of the West Midlands and includes urban, suburban, and rural areas, with many contrasts. The current population is just over a million in Birmingham and 203,000 in Solihull. 31% of the population in Birmingham and 5% in Solihull are of ethnic minority origin. Parts of Birmingham, Sutton Coldfield and south Solihull are affluent areas with high employment, but others, often concentrated in the central and NW wards of the city e.g. Aston and Nechells, have very high levels of worklessness. Many of these wards are among the 10% most deprived in England. Smaller pockets of deprivation can be found in outer city estates in the east, south and southwest of Birmingham, and in north Solihull.

Such areas are also characterised by large numbers of residents with no qualifications and low levels of basic skills. While the proportion of the working age population with qualifications has increased in recent years, Birmingham still has 20% with no qualifications, one of the highest in the region. Most recent employment growth has been in highly qualified occupations, and there is evidence that employers are demanding increasingly higher levels of skills.

The Birmingham & Solihull area is still a nationally important manufacturing centre, despite the collapse of MG Rover in 2005, with major employers including Cadbury Schweppes in confectionery, and Jaguar and Land Rover in the automotive sector. Future prospects for the local economy seem positive, with a growing services sector, notably business, finance, retail, hospitality and public services, good transport and international links, and massive physical investment and regeneration developments.

Although Birmingham is likely to retain a younger population than many other areas of the West Midlands, the structure of the labour force is still likely to change. However, the groups that will account for a growing share of the available labour force in the future - those aged over 50, and some ethnic minorities such as Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African Caribbean heritage - are those that now often have some of the highest levels of economic inactivity and/or low qualifications.

Key targets have therefore been set in the priority wards, supported by both large scale Regeneration Zones, and smaller more localised initiatives, focussing on an integrated approach to employment and skills. Birmingham and Solihull LSC is working closely with Jobcentre Plus and the two local authorities to maximise local employment opportunities, particularly of "hard to reach" groups in the most deprived areas. The continuing challenge is to improve the qualifications and skills levels of residents so that all can benefit from the forecast growth in jobs and prosperity.

Peter Brammall  
Area Director

# Challenges, key actions and measures of success for Birmingham and Solihull

The following challenges and actions are based on our regional *Strategic Analysis*; a robust analysis of supply, demand and need, as well as ongoing dialogue with key partner organisations. The *Strategic Analysis* can be accessed at <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/WestMidlands/wmr-regionalstrategicanalysis-dec07.pdf>

**Note:** 2008/09 targets will be set when 2006/07 out-turns and baselines are confirmed and more detailed discussions have taken place with providers.

<b>National Priority 1: Create a Demand for Skills</b>	
<b>Challenge: Whilst the proportion of young people aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has fallen significantly for November 2007, there is still a challenge to continue to reduce numbers in the vulnerable and targeted groups, and to implement the local NEET strategy</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>
Work with Connexions to continue to reduce the overall proportion of 16-18 young people who are NEET, and the proportion whose situation is <i>Not Known</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduction in NEET group by 1% below the target agreed with Government Office</li> <li>- % of cohort whose situation is <i>Not Known</i></li> <li>- increase in % of 17 year olds in education, employment or training</li> </ul>
Further tendering for gaps in the market for activity with NEETs, targeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- wards in Birmingham and Solihull with above average number of NEETS</li> <li>- particular groups of vulnerable young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduction in number of NEET group who are Looked After Children, Young Offenders, Teenage Parents, Learners with a Learning Difficulty and/or Disability</li> <li>- Increased progression from ESF provision to further training and/or work</li> </ul>
Pilot a Clearing House System as part of an enhanced September Guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Earlier and increased identification of offers made to young people in June 2008</li> <li>- 20% reduction in the "<i>No Offer Made/Unable to Contact</i>" categories</li> </ul>
<b>Challenge: raise participation and achievement of young people on full Level 2 and full Level 3 programmes</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>
Ensure broad range of high quality programmes is available for young people in Birmingham and in Solihull, in the context of local 14-19 Education Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase in numbers enrolled on full Level 2 and 3 programmes</li> <li>- increase in % of cohort achieving Level 2 at 19 (05/06 B&amp;S 62.4%)</li> <li>- increase % of cohort achieving Level 3 at 19 (05/06 B&amp;S 39%)</li> </ul>
Support development of Diplomas through work with local authorities on network and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of Birmingham and Solihull Diploma proposals accepted via</li> </ul>

collegiate submissions via Gateway 2	Gateway 2
Agree an improved range of Apprenticeships, focusing on priority sectors in Birmingham and Solihull, especially Health and Care, Business Admin and Leisure & Tourism	<p>- Increase in number of learners on Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship programmes</p> <p>- New Measures of Success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % Whole Frameworks Completed Success Rate</li> <li>• % Framework or NVQ Completed Success Rate</li> <li>• % E2E Positive Progressions (on average) leading to Apprenticeship programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Challenge: Continue to improve skills levels of adults with no or low qualifications</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>
Continue to implement "Skills for life" action plan	<p>- New Skills for Life targets delivered by 2008/9</p> <p>- Increase in % of enrolments that count towards a Skills for Life target qualification, reaching overall target</p> <p>- Increase in number of enrolments for numeracy in Birmingham</p>
Encourage providers to support learners to progress from entry/Level 1 to Level 2 programmes and/or to employment with training	<p>- Provider evidence of increase in progression from Level 1 to 2 programmes</p> <p>- Increase in number of adult apprenticeships for first full Level 2 through Train to Gain</p>
Continue to use NLDC funding for Skills for Jobs activity via the third Sector to increase engagement of "hard to reach" learners	As above
Target programmes for BME groups with low levels of qualifications to make better use of available workforce	- Increase in % of target population groups achieving Level 2 e.g. Bangladeshi, Pakistani, African Caribbean
<b>Challenge: to improve higher level skills of the workforce</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>
Ensure that appropriate high quality providers are secured through tendering process for Train to Gain contracts in 2008/09	- Providers reach or exceed targets for Train to Gain achievements at Level 2
Integrate apprenticeships into Train to Gain offer	<p>- number of apprenticeships being delivered within Train to Gain</p> <p>- number of employers involved in Train to Gain</p>
Ensure qualifications are delivered at the appropriate level to meet the identified needs of the priority sectors	<p>- Manufacturing and Engineering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in overall number of learners on Level 1 programmes</li> <li>• Increase in numbers of workforce on Level 2 programmes: target BIT Level 2&amp; 3</li> <li>• increase on Level 3 programmes and leadership and management</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduction in learners on Level 1 programmes and general construction</li> <li>• increase in learners on Level 2 programmes in specialist trades e.g. painting &amp; decorating, roofing, tiling</li> <li>• increase in learners on Level 3 programmes in electrical, gas operations, heating and ventilation and plumbing</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Tourism and Leisure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in number of learners on Level 1 programmes</li> <li>• increase in learners on qualifications for cooks/chefs, customer service/reception and managers at Level 2 and 3</li> <li>• Reduction in number of enrolments on qualifications at Level 1 and increase at Level 2 and above</li> <li>• Increase in those taking ITQs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Link to Lifelong Learning Network and extend access to higher level qualifications	- Increase in number of Level 4 and management programmes delivered to companies

### National Priority 2: Transforming FE

**Challenge: to ensure sector can respond to employer needs and skills agenda and adapt to new Demand Led Funding system**

Action	Measure of Success
Encourage colleges to expand Train to Gain delivery	- Increase in number of Train to Gain (TtG) starts by FE sector contract holders - increase in achievements on TtG
Introduce targets for FE providers to raise their levels of fee income and income generation	- Increase in amount of fee income, as agreed with individual colleges
Apply Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP) to local providers, and if necessary issue Notice to Improve	- Proportion of provision below MLP is within threshold and reduces year on year
Continue to develop capital investment strategy in order to improve specialist facilities	- Capital application agreed for Bournville College at Longbridge by December 2008 - other capital proposals reflect local area capital strategy
Use intelligence about planned physical developments or investment to inform procurement of mainstream provision	- Curriculum in mainstream providers aligned with planned physical developments as well as skills forecasts

### National Priority 3: Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives

**Challenge: To secure sustainable employment for workless people**

Action	Measure of Success
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Implement an integrated pre-and post-employment support system establishing a culture of “No Jobs without Skills”	- Birmingham and Solihull City Strategy targets in priority wards met
Provide pre-employability and Skills for Life provision for workless clients through bespoke training focused on employers’ needs	- Birmingham and Solihull City Strategy targets in priority wards met
Agree a worklessness protocol setting out the collective commitment of Birmingham City Council, LSC and Jobcentre Plus to facilitate improved partnership working and more effective delivery in tackling worklessness in Birmingham	- Clearly defined and agreed protocol  - Key accountabilities of partner organisations agreed
Build the capacity of the Third Sector to support the City Strategy Pathfinder	- Third sector engagement with prime contractors for City Strategy
Work with Birmingham City Council, Solihull MBC and Jobcentre Plus to link major physical developments and regeneration to City Strategy Pathfinder	- Production of Neighbourhood Employment and Skills action Plans (NESP)s in each of the priority wards in Birmingham and Solihull
Implement Skills for Jobs plan	- Overall number of learners through Employability Skills Programme - Numbers in priority wards
<b>Challenge: To Deliver the integrated skills and employment system</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of Success</b>
Deliver an integrated Employer Offer to bring together the Skills Pledge, Local Employment Partnerships City Strategy and Train to Gain	- Offer reflects joint targets
Work with Regeneration Zones and other local regeneration initiatives to align activity with LSC priorities, including the development of Joint Investment Plans	- Alignment of activity on-going
Agree joint delivery plans with Jobcentre Plus for Birmingham and Solihull	- Ongoing monitoring
<b>Challenge: To ensure skills and employment targets are incorporated into Local Area Agreements (LAAs)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of Success</b>
Ensure targets are aligned with LSC priorities	- Targets aligned according to plan
Align LAA targets with any proposed Multi-Area Agreements (MAAs)	As above
<b>Challenge: To encourage public sector employers to play a much bigger role in skills and employment</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of Success</b>
Support the delivery of priorities and targets in relation to the Public Services sector, focusing on local employment and regeneration	- Number of public sector bodies making the Skills Pledge - Increase in overall number of young people taking up apprenticeships Increase in number of employees upskilled to Level 2 through Train to Gain - Number of local people without jobs into entry level and essential occupations

# Partnership Working

We cannot deliver our challenging agenda and create a new learning culture on our own. We have formed strong links with others to develop high-quality learning which meets the demands of employers and individuals.

Birmingham and Solihull LSC has a particularly strong record of partnership working. We will continue to work in close partnership with Birmingham City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to take forward the 14-19 agenda, including jointly leading the 14-19 Partnership Groups, and helping to develop the 14-19 Education Plan within the overall framework of the 14-19 Plan for the Children's Trusts, and Block 1 of Local Area Agreement. The local LSC is also working closely with the two local authorities on planning for the new Diplomas.

Birmingham City Council has a NEET Strategy Group led by the local authority with LSC and Connexions as key stakeholders. This Group has developed a NEET Action Plan and reports through to the Children and Young People's Trust Board. Information on the numbers in the NEET group and activities targeted at reducing these are also reported to the Children and Young People's Board and the 14-19 Strategic Partnership in Solihull. The strength of collaboration between all partners is demonstrated in the very significant progress which has been made in reducing the NEET group this year.

There is a history of collaboration between the LSC and Jobcentre Plus, both in response to local employment crises e.g. the collapse of MG Rover in April 2005, and on major construction/retail developments such as Bullring in Birmingham. This partnership model has led to the development of other integrated learning and skills hubs, e.g. at University Hospital Birmingham, and in Eastside. It has also paved the way for the next stage of the development of clear protocols and agreements between the key partners of the LSC, local authorities and Jobcentre Plus in order to implement the worklessness strategy.

We have strong patterns of partnership outside of government, including employers, the voluntary sector, and trade unions. Our wider partnerships extend well beyond direct campaigns to promote learning.

Birmingham and Solihull LSC is continuing to develop clear operating relationships with a number of other key groups, namely:

- Government Office West Midlands
- Advantage West Midlands
- National Training Organisations network
- Small Business Service
- Employment and Skills Boards
- OFSTED
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and awarding bodies
- Voluntary and community organisations, particularly through Birmingham Voluntary Services Council, and those representing equal opportunities issues.