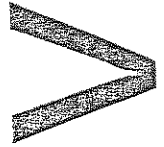


**Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council
Outline Strategic Plan for 2002 to 2005**

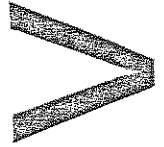
**Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council
Outline Strategic Priorities for 2002 to 2005
Index**



Learning+Skills Council
Derbyshire

| Section | Page |
|---|------|
| Chair's Foreword | 3 |
| Executive Director's Foreword | 4 |
| 1 The Learning and Skills Council as an Organisation | 6 |
| 2 The Strategic Planning Process | 6 |
| 3 Issues and Priorities | 6 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| Desired Outcomes | 7 |
| Tools and Processes | 10 |
| 4 Consultation Details | 17 |

Executive Director's Foreword



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Derbyshire

Derbyshire is a diverse and dynamic county. As a new organisation, if we are to develop a Strategic Plan that is based on the needs of Derbyshire we have to ensure that we make informed strategic decisions based on the needs and views articulated by the people of the county. Therefore, over the past three months we have embarked on an ambitious programme of information gathering. We have sought the views and opinions of as wide a constituency as possible. This has involved some 40 consultation sessions with more than 350 people from over 150 organisations.

We have met with key partners, suppliers and employer representatives. We have worked closely with the Derbyshire Learning Partnership to jointly host a series of consultation events based around each of the Local Authority Districts and Derby City. We have also worked with key organisations to hold consultation events based around particular communities of interest. The Derby Millennium Network helped us organise a session which concentrated on the issues and concerns of ethnic minority groups. Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living arranged

and hosted an event which focussed on the views of disability specialists. Also, the Derbyshire Training Consortium organised an event to gain the views of voluntary sector representatives. I would like to thank all the individuals who attended the sessions and whose contribution has been vital to us in establishing our outline strategic priorities.

I would also like to thank those organisations who kindly supplied venues for the various consultation events up and down the county.

As a brand new organisation we were in the privileged position of being able to approach these sessions with an open book. We did not have a pre-written plan. We did not have set agendas. The discussions were led by the participants and gave an opportunity for people to shape the priorities and approach of Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council.

We do have core priorities that have been set by the Learning and Skills Council nationally within the recently published national Corporate Plan.

continued ...

Section 1 - The Learning and Skills Council as an Organisation

The Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council is one of 47 local branches of the Learning and Skills Council, a national organisation established in April 2001.

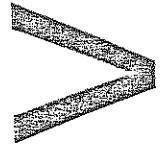
The Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council is responsible for the planning and funding of all post compulsory learning in Derbyshire, except Higher Education. The Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council does not directly deliver any provision. Its annual budget is approximately £100 million.

The Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council is advised by a Council which is made up of local representatives from the private, public and voluntary sectors.

Section 2 - Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council's Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Plan will cover the period from April 2002 to March 2005. It will develop as follows:

- Information Gathering Stage (May - July 2001)
- Publication of Outline Strategic Priorities (September 2001)
- Widened Consultation on Outline Strategic Priorities (September - November 2001)
- Publication of Draft Strategic Plan (January 2002)
- Consultation on Draft Strategic Plan (January 2002 - February 2002)



Learning+Skills Council
Derbyshire

- Publication of Strategic Plan 2002 - 2005 (March 2002)

Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council has adopted a set of core principles by which we expect to operate throughout the whole planning process.

These are:

- That the planning process and decisions associated with it will be transparent;
- The information gained throughout the consultation process will shape key priorities;
- The planning process will be both inclusive and relevant to participants;
- The plan will be the result of effective negotiation with partners and stakeholders and will therefore feel a degree of ownership towards it; and
- DLSC will recognise resource implications on partners throughout the process and endeavour to assist in overcoming them.

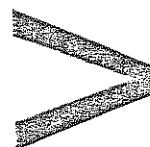
Section 3 - Issues and Priorities

3.1 - Introduction

The expectations and priorities arising from the sessions categorise into two clear groups:

- desired outcomes; and
- tools and processes required to achieve the desired outcomes.

We have included a series of questions throughout the document, and we hope to receive wideranging



Some colleges have responded to the need to provide more flexible learning solutions by opening throughout the week and weekend. These flexible opening hours have proved popular with individuals with weekday family commitments and businesses who are unable to let employees go away from the workplace during work time to train.

Question (a)

Do you support Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council in identifying these as the correct priorities for widening the scope of learning?

If not, which areas would you prioritise?

2. Increased Engagement of Individuals in Learning

There is presently a wide variety of individuals not participating in learning who should be. This group includes people who would require expert help and support due to special and additional learning needs. However, it also includes those people who, given the inclination, information and/or a small amount of support would be able to participate in mainstream provision straight away. Therefore, this outcome encompasses the following characteristics:

- Increased opportunities to participate in learning are available for those requiring specialist help and support, with a longer-term aim of accessing conventional learning opportunities;
- Enhanced support is available to encourage

those currently capable of benefiting from existing learning opportunities but missing out on this; and

- More people valuing learning.

The establishment of joint working practices between providers, voluntary sector and the adult community learning has enabled communities to develop and to offer learning opportunities to individuals who are unlikely to otherwise undertake them.

Question (b)

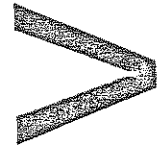
Do you support Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council in identifying that the approach to engaging individuals should look at a wider range of need rather than concentrate on special needs provision?

If not, how do you feel that wider engagement in learning should be achieved?

3. Raised Skills Levels for Employment

The consultation to date has identified a significant concern regarding the skills levels of employees in large parts of Derbyshire. This appears to be the result of a number of key factors including the suitability of learning opportunities, levels of aspiration and limited expectations of the benefits of learning. Therefore, this outcome encompasses the following characteristics:

- Increased employer participation in the design of learning provision;



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Derbyshire

personal and collective development.

Question (e)

Do you support Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council's view that particular communities should be prioritised for the development of learning and skills? If not, how do you feel that particular area needs could be met without such prioritisation?

6. Enhanced Basic Skills Provision

During the consultation to date we have experienced a real concern at the number of Basic Skills tutors available in Derbyshire. We have also learned of the concern of communities that, in an area where trust and confidence are vital, local people are best placed to deliver training. This outcome encompasses the following characteristics:

- A volume of Basic Skills tutors in the area based on need;
- Local people developed to help address the needs of members of their own community;
- Provision supported by effective identification of individuals who would benefit from skills development in this area; and
- A recognition that individuals may need increased confidence in order to participate in learning.

Trade Union involvement in the identification of basic skills needs of individuals has proved successful.

The identification of need and training of Basic Skills within communities have been championed by partnerships such as Read On Write Away! This model has been used extensively throughout the county.

Question (f)

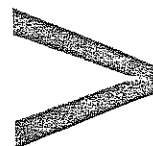
Do you support Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council's view that the number of Basic Skills tutors and the identification of individuals' needs are key issues in this area? If not which do you think are the main concerns in this area?

3.3 - Tools and Processes Required

1. Partnerships and Joint Targets

This approach encompasses the following requirements:

- Develop partnerships with organisations whose collaboration and co-operation will be vital. It will be essential for us to plan jointly with these organisations;
- Work with a wide variety of partners including the following: Local Authorities (including Local Education Authorities), Employment Service, Connexions Service, Schools, Colleges, Work Based Learning Providers, Universities, Local Learning Partnerships, Trade Unions, the Small Business Service, Regional Development Agencies, Employers and Voluntary and Community Organisations; and



3. Accessibility

Equality is integral to quality. We will have a broad view of accessibility encompassing ethnicity, disability, age, geographical location and cultural heritage. Accessibility is not just about participation but also achievement. We expect the type of provision available to reflect access concerns and learning style needs. This approach encompasses the following requirements:

- Everyone should be able to access learning and achieve;
- Ensuring that access represents wide-ranging achievement and does not simply concentrate on opportunities for participation; and
- Development of the training infrastructure to enhance accessibility. This includes:
 - > capacity building of providers;
 - > developing new providers;
 - > capital investment in new and existing buildings;
 - > ICT infrastructure development; and
 - > outreach provision development.

There are many examples of organisations seeking to remove both the physical and psychological barriers impacting on accessibility. These include offering personal strategies to cope with disability and transport because of physical isolation or provision tailored to a specific learning style.

Some colleges are able to provide local training opportunities (not necessarily in traditional learning establishments) and are able to meet the needs of sections of the community for whom the thought of entering a school building acts as a discouragement to learning.

Some property development opportunities have been undertaken by colleges in conjunction with local authorities, enabling buildings to be developed in a way that meets the needs of individuals and satisfies planning regulations.

Question (k)

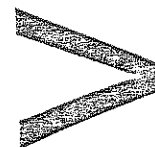
Do you agree with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council's view that the development of the training infrastructure is key to enhanced accessibility? If not, what do you think is key?

Question (l)

Which element of training infrastructure development should take priority?

Question (m)

Do you agree with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council's view that achievement should be a key measure of accessibility? If not, which measure do you think should be key?



Learning+Skills Council
Derbyshire

Question (p)

Has the Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council identified the correct mechanisms for local area feedback? If not, which mechanisms do you feel should be considered?

6. Links to Employers

A successful relationship with employers is key to the success of the Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council. This approach encompasses the following requirements:

- Continue our working relationship with the Small Business Service, incorporating the Chambers of Commerce and the Business Link brand;
- Liaise directly with employers in a number of ways. These include on a sectoral basis, specifically with those sectors having high numbers of employees or significant impact on Derbyshire, these will include Manufacture, Tourism and Land Based industries. We also expect to increase employer involvement in learning on a geographical basis through local clusters based around, for example, industrial estates;
- Build links with National Training Organisations (NTO's) and employer federations based on the importance of the sector to Derbyshire;
- Encourage links between large and small employers in order that they may benefit from sharing good practice. In particular we wish to build on existing relationships between larger companies and their suppliers; and

- Involve Trade Unions in employee development and the promotion of learning.

There is some provision, particularly ICT, which is delivered on a geographical basis around industrial estates. This enables companies to benefit from local provision, which is not only convenient but also allows the reduced costs associated with economies of scale.

Both Employers Federations and NTOs have undertaken assessments of current and future skills needs anticipated by employers within their sectors. These provide valuable information, which enables the tailoring of provision and the effective use of resources.

Organisations have begun to make available sets of case studies, which allow companies to see real life examples of how the training and development of the workforce translates into tangible business benefits including profitability and increased orders.

Question (q)

Do you agree with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council's view that we should select specific National Training Organisations to look to develop strong relationships, especially in the sectors identified? If not, please detail the approach you would recommend.



seen as good examples of where those offering the services collaborate effectively. Those receiving the service appreciate the one stop shop approach.

Question (s)

Do you agree with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council's view that we require a new relationship with providers? If so, please describe the types of relationship you believe the LSC needs to have with providers.

Question (t)

Do you agree with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council's view that the funding of provision should be based on learner need rather than institutional concerns? If not, please detail the approach you would recommend.

Question (u)

Do you agree with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council's view that we should make a clear distinction between rural and urban provision? If not, please detail the approach you would recommend.

Question (v)

Do you agree with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council's expectation that training deliverers should come forward with proposed collaborative ventures? If not, please detail a more suitable expectation in this area.

8. Progression Within Learning

Progression within learning is vital to raising levels of participation and achievement at all ages. This approach encompasses the following requirements:

- Linked and co-ordinated provision that allows for steady progression from pre to post 16 learning. To this end we will work closely with the Local Education Authorities, Schools, the Education Business Link Organisation, the Connexions Service and Employers to maximise opportunities for progression within learning;
- The availability of taster courses to encourage people into learning;
- An adequate and sustainable number of apprenticeship places available within Derbyshire; and
- Providers collaborate to encourage learners to progress.

Many colleges have established links to employers which have a dual purpose:

- Enable colleges to get feedback from employers as to anticipated skills needs, and be responsive to those needs through tailored provision; and
- Provide a range of support services to smaller employers including information and advice i.e.HR