

Learning and Skills Council



Local Strategic Plan 2002-05

Cheshire and Warrington



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> Chairman's foreword

The creation of the Learning and Skills Council is the most significant and far-reaching reform ever enacted to post-16 learning in this country. Where once we could succeed on the basis of an abundance of natural resources, today our prosperity, and the vitality and cohesion of our communities, depends upon our single biggest asset – the skills and abilities of our people. Our vision is of a learning society in which everyone has the opportunity to go as far as their talents and efforts will take them'.

The Secretary of State for Education and Employment, Remit letter to the Learning and Skills Council, 9th November 2000

The challenge for this local Learning and Skills Council is both exciting and demanding. We need to create an environment for change, an environment in which the learner is at the heart. Their needs and aspirations will be the driving force for the way in which we administer and direct £100 million of public money into learning provision in Cheshire and Warrington.

Our role is to provide funding effectively and efficiently to enable the local provider network to offer all learners the highest quality opportunities. There is a direct relationship between achievement in learning and career progression. It is therefore vital that our provision is responsive to the competitive demands faced by local employers. This can only be achieved through a thorough analysis of the dynamics of the local economy, an analysis which will need to be shared so that employers, providers, economic and community partnerships and most importantly learners, will understand the pattern of changing skill needs of our local economy.

In relative terms, the economy of Cheshire and Warrington has a record of prosperity and offering a wide range of learning and employment opportunities to local residents. However, we need to ensure that not only is this prosperity maintained in the future but that it is shared by all, wherever they live and whoever they are. We are committed to widening participation and exploring every avenue to remove real and perceived barriers and improve access to learning for all.

As this strategy explains, we need to engage an immensely wide range of local partners to ensure that our vision is clearly understood and shared. We must therefore work closely and in partnership with local employers, the provider network, the voluntary sector and key organisations such as Business Link, local authorities, the North West Development Agency, Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance and Connexions partnership.

We would like to thank especially all those partner organisations and individuals who provided detailed comments on the draft version of this Strategy. Such partnership will be the key to realising what we believe is a significant opportunity to make a real difference in Cheshire and Warrington. We now look forward to working closely with you to realise this opportunity.



Brian Fleet

Brian Fleet
Chairman
Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council
March 2002

> 2. Key tasks, mission and vision

This local strategy will address the Council's key tasks, set out in the Secretary of State's remit letter of 9 November 2000 and revised after consultation on the Corporate Plan, to:

- Raise participation and achievement by young people
- Increase demand for learning by adults and equalise opportunities through better access to learning
- Raise skill levels for national competitiveness
- Raise the quality of education and training delivery
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency.

Cheshire and Warrington Local Learning and Skills Council needs to deliver the Learning and Skills Council's mission and vision within the local area.

Our mission and vision

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 fundamental message of the mission is that it **places the learner at the heart of the system**. This therefore means that it will be the learner's wishes and needs which will determine the education and training opportunities which the Council will secure in Cheshire and Warrington. While it is a statutory duty to encourage participation in education and training it is also a statutory duty to encourage employer participation in the provision of that learning. This is designed to ensure that the skill needs of the economy and society are also met.

> 3. Strategic objectives and targets

3.1 National Targets

At the national level, the Council has set a series of interim targets to 2004 in order to measure progress against the key objectives.

Key Council objectives and targets for 2004

Key objectives	Targets for 2004
1. Extend participation in education, learning and training	80% of 16-18 year olds in structured learning (2000:75%) Set baseline and target for adults in next year's plan
2. Increase engagement of employers in workforce development	Develop measure of employer engagement in workforce development in next year's plan
3. Raise achievement of young people	85% at level 2 by age 19 (2000: 75%) 55% at level 3 by age 19 (2000: 51%)
4. Raise achievement of adults	Raise literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults % of adults at Level 2: target to be set in next year's Plan 52% of adults at level 3 (2000:47%)
5. Raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction	Set baselines and targets in next year's plan

Potential action designed to ensure the achievement of these targets is described at the strategic level within the three local strategies included in this document for:

- Skills
- Participation, and
- Learning

The operational activity associated with these strategies will be described annually in the Business Plan.

In line with national guidelines which encourage each Local Learning and Skills Council to adopt two additional strategic objectives for their area, Cheshire & Warrington Learning and Skills Council will implement the 5 national strategic objectives through the following approaches to its work:

6. Create local Learning Zones. These will encompass schools, Sixth Form Centres, FE Colleges and incorporate Vocational and Lifelong Learning Centres. They will be designed to develop further provision in support of learner needs to provide coherence to 14 plus provision in a local context.
7. Create integrated Centres of Vocational Excellence. These will involve Higher Education, schools, Colleges of Further Education, private training providers, employers, and the community working together to provide solutions within the local context

3.2 Local Targets

Local versions of the targets are detailed below.

Target	Cheshire and Warrington 2000	Cheshire and Warrington 2004	
		%	Numerical increase required
% of 16-18 year olds in structured learning	87%	91%	1,125
% of 19 year olds achieving Level 2	89%	92%	330
% of 19 year olds achieving Level 3	55%	60%	565
Raise literacy and numeracy skills	11,750 adults to achieve literacy and numeracy qualifications		
% of adults achieving Level 3	55%	64%	30,000

Other local targets around specific areas include:

Additional Local Council targets for 2004

Local Strategy	Targets for 2004
<p>Skills</p>	<p>To raise skill levels to improve employer competitiveness: National measures of employer competitiveness to be agreed by National Office during 2002.</p> <p>25% of organisations with more than 10 employees within Cheshire and Warrington to have in place Workforce Development Plans that include a basic skills assessment by Dec 2004.</p> <p>Investors in People:</p> <p>10 – 49 employee organisations: 235 organisations to be recognised as Investors in People by Dec 2004.</p> <p>50 plus employee organisations: Commitments - 35% of all non recognised organisations to be committed to Investors in People by Dec 2004 . Recognitions- 50% of all 50+ organisations recognised by Dec 2004. Level of Investors in People recognised organisations to be maintained at 90% to 2004.</p> <p>Management Development: Increase number of Managers and Team Leaders being accredited. Baseline to be set by Dec 2002.</p> <p>National Training Awards: Identify and encourage organisations to enter for the National Training Awards. Minimum of 4 area finalists per year.</p> <p>Sectors: Establish strategic forum where appropriate for key sectors as identified within skills strategy by Dec 2002.</p> <p>CoVEs: 4 FE Colleges to have established at least one CoVE in line with the proposed model by 2003/04.</p>
<p>Participation</p>	<p>A rise in the number of accredited suppliers of Information, Advice and Guidance.</p> <p>A reduction in the numbers of young people who are not in learning.</p> <p>Achievement of equality targets for increasing participation and outcomes for particular excluded groups that reflect local needs and LLSC priorities.</p>
<p>Learning</p>	<p>5% annual increase in participation.</p> <p>5% annual net increase in achievement.</p> <p>10% annual increase in participation in basic skills training.</p> <p>5% annual increase in provider childcare places</p> <p>5% increase in achievement at level 2.</p> <p>5% net rise in grades at inspection and reinspection.</p> <p>At least 650 young people participating in Flexibility projects</p> <p>25% of young people in Modern Apprenticeships before the age of 22</p> <p>50% participation in higher education by 18-30 year olds by 2010.</p>

> 4. Local context



Local Context – summary of key needs

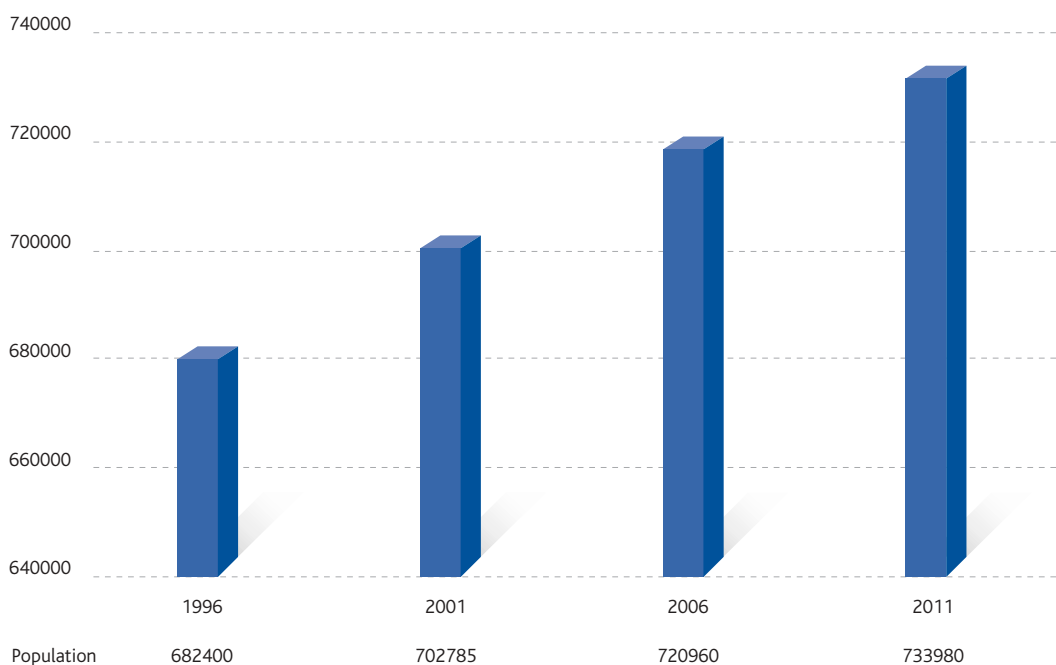
- Ageing population which will require re-skilling to meet needs of local employers
- Increase in size of 16-24 population will need expansion in provision
- 11% of 16 year olds are not entering any form of learning
- In 2000, 1,650 young people failed to achieve level 2 by age 19 and 4,900 did not achieve level 3 by the same age
- 52% of adults are qualified to level 3
- 24 wards are among the top 20% most deprived wards in England
- 115,000 working age people have some problems with literacy while 114,000 have low levels of numeracy
- On average, 15% of adults in Cheshire participate in learning
- 21% of employers have identified a "skills gap" between their staff skills and what their business needs
- 25% of vacancies are due to skill shortages
- Employment growth will be driven by the Business and Financial services (34,000 more jobs by 2010) and Distribution (18,000 more jobs)
- Major inward and new investment opportunity at the Omega site in Warrington, potentially the largest business park in Europe.

4.1 Demography

Cheshire and Warrington has a population of 861,411 across an area of 2,257sq km containing a mixture of rural and urban communities. The population is expected to continue its recent growth to reach 893,250 by 2006. Crewe and Nantwich (+8.7%) and Vale Royal (+5.3%) are the main growth areas. **The age breakdown shows that the area has a slightly older population than average with only 25% aged 15-34 compared with 27% nationally.**

The LSC is responsible for encouraging lifelong learning up to and beyond retirement. **The total 16+ population, as shown in the following chart, is expected to grow by 3% between 2001 and 2006 and by 4% to 2011.** However, this growth is largely confined to the post-retirement age population.

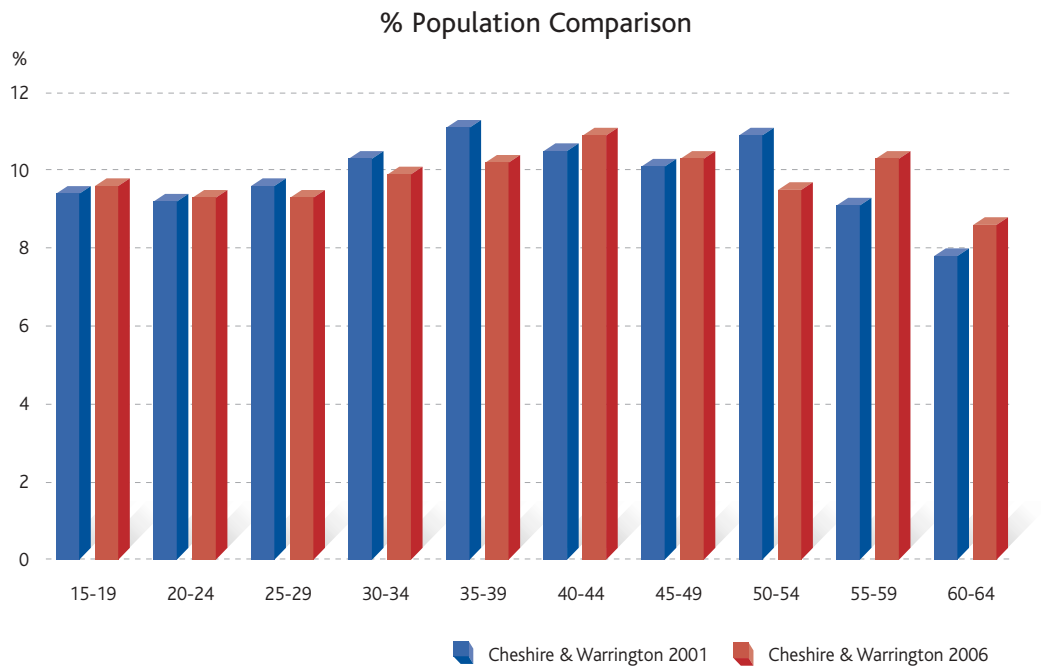
16+ population, Cheshire and Warrington 1996-2011



Source: Cheshire County Council, Warrington Borough Council Population Reports¹

Analysis of the structure of the working age population confirms the ageing trend. Currently 49% of the Cheshire and Warrington population are between 40 and 64. It is estimated that by 2006, this will rise to 51% (see following chart).

¹Forecasts are based on midpoint of high and low population projections



Source: Cheshire County Council, Warrington Borough Council Population Reports 2000

The population of young people in Cheshire and Warrington is projected to rise in the period to 2006. Taking the midpoint of the local authority high and low estimates suggests that there may be a **4.9% increase in 16-18 year olds and a 7.8% increase in 19-24 year olds between 1998 and 2006**. On average, each annual year group has around 11,000 individuals. (Table 4.1)

Table 4.1: Population of young people, Cheshire and Warrington, 1998-2006

	16-18	19-24
1998	32900	62200
2001	32960	65120
2006	34535	66745

Source: Cheshire County Council, Warrington Borough Council Population Reports²

Cheshire and Warrington has a working age population of 530,000³. Of these, 423,000 (or 80%) are economically active⁴, compared with the regional average of 77%. 404,000 (96%) of those who are economically active are in employment. Again this is higher than the regional average of 94%.

In terms of ethnicity, **99% of the population are white**, with the largest proportion of non-white population being Chinese. **Just under 9% of the working age population have a "limiting long term illness"** which makes it difficult for them to participate fully in the labour market.

²Forecasts are based on midpoint of high and low population projections

³Source: Labour Force Survey, August 2001

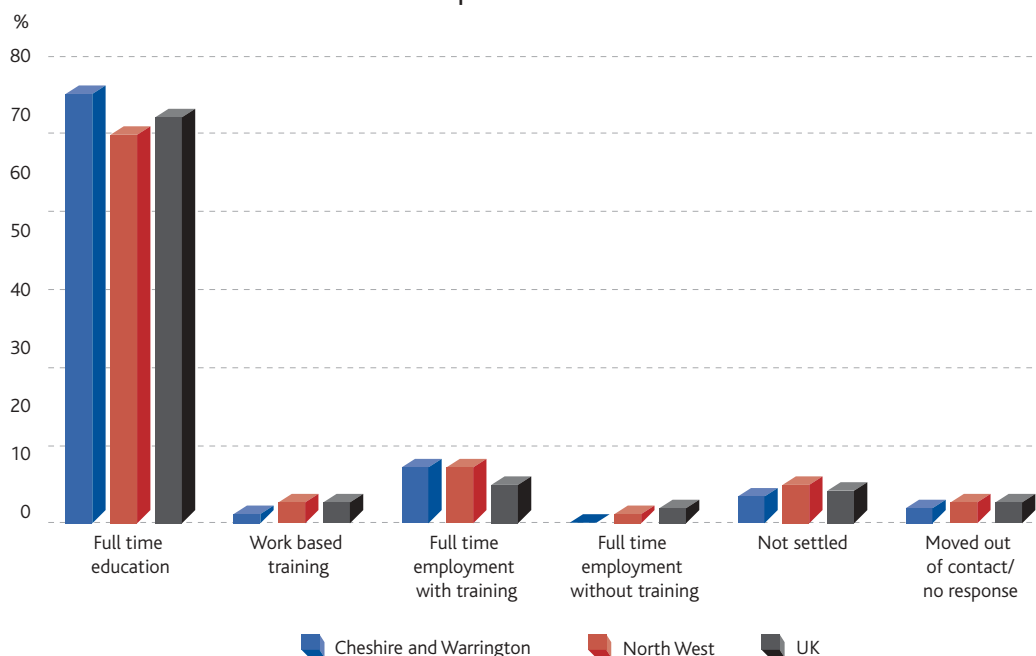
⁴economically active – participating in the labour market either through employment or seeking employment.

4.2 Participation

Of the 11,000 16 year olds in Cheshire and Warrington in 2000, **75% continued in full time education, compared with 71% in England as a whole**. A further 14% were receiving some form of training but 11% were either employed without training, not settled or were not recorded.

As the following chart shows, although Cheshire and Warrington has a higher proportion of students staying on in full time education and entering employment with training, the proportion who are not settled or who have not responded/moved away are similar to regional and national levels. **This relates to a group of around 1,100 young people each year and those who are not in any form of learning are the most difficult group to make an impact on in terms of improving levels of achievement.**

Year 11 - Pupil Destinations Statistics



Source: Connexions

Within the Connexions target group of 13-19 year olds, 10,493 young people have been identified as requiring the closest supervision and support in Cheshire and Warrington. These form 14% of the total. A further 30% require "some additional support".

Many of these individuals live in Widening Participation (WP) uplift areas. Overall, 13% of 16-18 year olds and 15% of 19-24 year olds participating in learning are from WP uplift areas.

Eight per cent of the 25+ population attended Council funded institutions in 1999-2000. Of these, 12% came from WP uplift areas, a slightly smaller proportion than in the 16-25 age category.

In terms of employer based training, the Labour Force Survey indicates that 77,000 (15%) adults of working age in Cheshire and Warrington (approximately one in seven) had undertaken training within the previous four weeks. This will include both formal funded courses at local institutions as well as training in the workplace.

4.3 Employment

Employment growth has helped **Cheshire and Warrington to continue to be the most prosperous area of the North West with a GDP/head which is 114% of the UK average.** Meanwhile, unemployment in Cheshire and Warrington is at a historically low level but may well not stay this low in the long term. **There were 8,635 people claiming unemployment benefit** in November 2001 but the Labour Force Survey showed 19,000 unemployed on the ILO (International Labour Organisation) measure (people without a job who are available to start work in the next two weeks and have looked for work in the previous four weeks).

Vulnerability to unemployment and poverty can be related to geography or personal situation. In terms of geography, while Cheshire and Warrington is a prosperous area overall relative to regional averages, there remain localities which have not improved significantly since previous recessions and it is likely that they will suffer again, given the historical trends in concentrations of unemployment and poverty. **There are 24 wards in Cheshire and Warrington which are among the 20% most deprived wards in England**, 14 are in the Ellesmere Port and Neston or Warrington districts. Cheshire and Warrington also has ten wards which rank within the top 10 per cent most deprived wards in England in terms of education, skills and training.

In terms of personal situation, there are also groups of older workers and people with disabilities (*see section 4.1 above*) and people with fewer skills. These groups are most likely to face poverty and unemployment yet research findings indicate that they are less likely to want to undertake training.

4.4 Skills issues

The performance of schools is one indicator of how well the area is doing in the core supply of entrants to the labour market. As Table 4.2 shows, **over half of the students in Cheshire and Warrington have reached level 2 by age 16** and this forms a good base from which to extend achievement to levels 3 and beyond through post-16 learning. The A level performance in Warrington, however, will need to be raised to at least match the national average.

Table 4.2: Performance of school pupils by exam results

	Achievement of 5+ A*-C grade GCSEs	Average GCSE Point Score	Average A/AS/AGNVQ point score per pupil (where entered for 2+ exams)
Cheshire	57.0%	42.1	18.2
Warrington	50.5%	40.2	16.7
England	49.2%	38.9	17.3

Source: DfES, 2000, n/a =not available

Overall, in 2000, the NVQ level 2 achievement levels for 19 year olds in Cheshire and Warrington were 85% and 80% respectively. Table 4.3 provides the detailed numbers of individuals from which these figures are derived.

Table 4.3: 1999/2000 19 year old Level 2 achievement by individual

	GCSEs/ GNVQs	FE based quals	Work based learning	TOTAL
Cheshire	5344	1102	351	6797
Warrington	1165	342	312	1819
TOTAL	6509	1444	663	8616

Source: Analytical Services, DfES

Therefore in this year there were approximately 1,650 young people in Cheshire and Warrington who did not achieve level 2 by age 19.

Meanwhile, the achievement levels for NVQ level 3 by age 19 for Cheshire and Warrington were 55% and 39% respectively in 2000. Table 4.4 provides the breakdown of these achievements.

Table 4.4: 1999/2000 19 year old Level 3 achievement by individual

	A levels/ GNVQs	FE based quals	Work based learning	TOTAL
Cheshire	3732	594	96	4422
Warrington	725	140	33	898
TOTAL	4457	734	129	5320

Source: Analytical Services, DfES

In terms of Adult Learning, around half of the economically active adult population is qualified to level 3 while almost a third are qualified to level 4. (Table 4.5)

The data for the level 3 Adult Learning target is based on a population figure which has been adjusted for migration. This increases level 3 achievement to 55%.

Table 4.5: Adult Learning performance 2001 (000's unless otherwise specified)

	Economically active population 16-retirement	NVQ level 3		NVQ level 4	
		Number	%	Number	%
Cheshire	319	158	50	98	31
Warrington	94	41	44	23	24
TOTAL	413	199	48	121	29

Source: Labour Force Survey, August 2001

It is vital that if our local industries are to be successful and grow, they have an adequate supply of skilled labour. Research by Cheshire Learning Partnership shows that on average 15% of the adult population participate in Further and Higher Education, although this varies across the county from 7% up to 25%.

In its final report "Skills for all" the Task Force identified six main areas of national skills deficiency:

- Basic skills (literacy and numeracy)
- Generic skills (transferable skills, essential for employability)
- Mathematics skills (poor supply and an increasing demand)
- Intermediate level skills (specific occupational skills needed in intermediate jobs at levels 3 and 4)
- Specialist information and communication technology skills (both professionals in the ICT sectors and ICT specialists in other sectors)
- Major adult skills gaps (the large proportion of the adult workforce with no qualifications or qualifications below level 2)

For example, Basic skills are crucial. Without them, adults may find it virtually impossible to learn other new skills which are required by employers. The Moser report and others have illustrated that a significant proportion of adults in the UK have poor basic skills. One in five adults are functionally illiterate (a lower literacy level than an 11 year old child). Numeracy is even worse with nearly half of all adults in the UK have numeracy skills below those expected of an 11 year old. A recent international study found only two of twelve participating countries had higher proportions than Britain of adults with low levels of literacy and numeracy. These problems are particularly severe among older sections of the workforce

Locally, figures from the Basic Skills Agency indicate that in Cheshire and Warrington 115,000 working age⁵ people have some problems with literacy while 114,000 have low levels of numeracy. (See Annex A4)

It has been established that people with lower levels of literacy are less likely to engage in adult education and training and often would not perceive it as a priority issue⁶. This lack of awareness operates as a barrier to learning and leads to a general lack of interest in learning. When asked to identify what they thought were the key obstacles to learning, 43% of respondents said that they preferred to spend their time doing other things, with 26% saying that they were not interested. Almost one in five said they did not require any additional learning for their job.

Family pressures, age and prior learning experience were all presented as major barriers for more than one in five of non-learners. Financial difficulties were cited by 19% of all respondents while a number gave reasons which suggested a lack of confidence, including those who had not done any learning for a long time (24%) and those who felt they might not be able to keep up with others (17%)⁷.

⁵Working age population is 16 to retirement age (female 59, male 64)

⁶Skills for all: Report from the National Skills Task Force, 2000

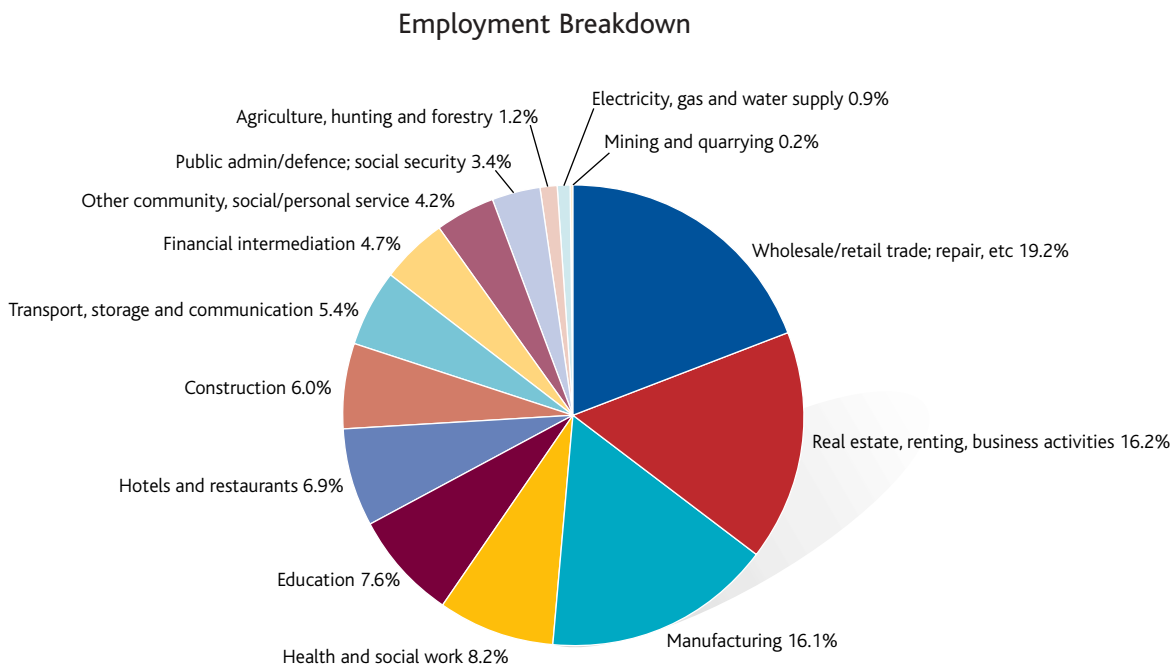
⁷Third Report of the National Skills Task Force, 2000

4.5 Key sectors

Skill requirements within individual jobs are increasing. Research illustrates that almost every job, even in lower occupational categories, now requires some competence in basic skills and that, as such, 50% of jobs are closed even to people who have Entry Level basic skills. Almost two million employees in England are considered by their employers not to be fully proficient at their own jobs and **21% of employers in Cheshire and Warrington have identified a "skills gap" between their staff skills and what their business needs. Indeed, 25% of all hard-to-fill vacancies are due to skill shortages.**

However, 31 per cent of employees in the UK say their current employer has never offered them training. Although 91% of firms with 500 or more employees say they provide off the job training, this does not mean that it is universal. Only 28% of employees with even the largest firms say they receive off the job training.

There are four main employment sectors in Cheshire and Warrington, Retail and Wholesale Distribution (including hotels and restaurants), Manufacturing, Business and Financial services and Public Administration which between them account for over 70% of total employment. **Employment grew in Cheshire and Warrington by 18% between 1995 and 1999, with Distribution and Business and Financial services accounting for over half of this growth.**



Source: Annual Business Inquiry 1999.

Employment forecasts suggest that future growth will continue to come from the Business and Financial services (around 33,716 new jobs) and Distribution (18,380 new jobs) sectors. (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Cheshire and Warrington current employment and future projections based on Cambridge Econometrics forecasts for Cheshire County Council

	1999	2010	% change	Job change
Banking, finance and insurance, etc	86569	120285	39%	33716
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	108346	126726	17%	18380
Public administration, education & health/ Other service	102044	114327	12%	12283
Transport and communications	22455	22455	0%	0
Agriculture and fishing	4915	4369	-11%	-546
Construction	25084	24406	-3%	-678
Energy and water	4362	3490	-20%	-872
Manufacturing	66927	58197	-13%	-8730
TOTAL	415508	460635	11%	45127

Source: Annual Business Inquiry 1999, Cheshire Economic Report 2001

While **Manufacturing could lose almost 8,730 from its total employment, a 13% reduction in total workforce**, the sector will remain of key importance to the prosperity of the area. Demand will remain high for replacement labour for those leaving manufacturing industry, particularly as the sector has an older than average age profile.

Indeed, in recent years, skills shortages have been most critical in the Manufacturing sector, particularly in Engineering. Other sectors affected by skills shortages have been Construction, Business services and Public and private services, particularly for nursing and care staff and teachers. While there are shortages of these specific job-related skills, surveys have also indicated high proportions of employers who are dissatisfied with the level of generic skills such as practical, customer service, problem solving and general communication skills and this is exacerbated by a tight labour market in some districts.

Cheshire and Warrington has a key role to play in the economic performance of the North West, accounting for a tenth of its population and a sixth of its GDP. Forecasts produced for the Skills Task Force⁸ show that only in the business and related services sector in the North West does the projected annual average rate of employment growth match the UK average, culminating in a 179,000 increase in jobs in the sector between 1998 and 2009. Meanwhile, a net loss of 93,000 Manufacturing jobs is forecast over the same period. In all, employment in the region should rise by 0.52% per annum compared with 0.72% across the UK as a whole.

⁸Projections of Occupations and Qualifications 1999/2000, Institute for Employment Research

It is therefore vital for the region as a whole that Cheshire and Warrington residents are equipped with the skills necessary to enable them to deliver the economic growth required. Table 4.9 shows the sectors identified by the NWDA as having a significant role to play in the economic development of the North West, together with some specialisms local to Cheshire and Warrington, such as Warehousing and Logistics and Agriculture and Horticulture.

Table 4.9: Key sectors in Cheshire and Warrington

	Employees	% of total	Locations	% of total
Business and Financial services	64816	15.6%	6344	19.3%
Retail	58948	14.2%	6019	18.3%
Tourism/Hospitality/Leisure	36159	8.7%	2825	8.6%
Engineering and Technology	35147	8.5%	2364	7.2%
Care & Health	33533	8.1%	1335	4.1%
Education	31658	7.6%	764	2.3%
Construction	25084	6.0%	2516	7.7%
Wholesale warehousing and logistics	19612	4.7%	2354	7.2%
Electricity, gas & water	14423	3.5%	48	0.1%
Chemicals	14396	3.5%	134	0.4%
Public Administration	13978	3.4%	330	1.0%
Other transport	10783	2.6%	920	2.8%
Information and Communication Technologies	10504	2.5%	2362	7.2%
Real estate, renting	8292	2.0%	1425	4.3%
Biotechnology and pharmaceuticals	7389	1.8%	14	0.0%
Food and drink	6355	1.5%	169	0.5%
Agriculture and Horticulture	5968	1.4%	106	0.3%
Textiles	2019	0.5%	89	0.3%
Rail manufacture and transport	1860	0.4%	8	0.0%
Creative Industries	1509	0.4%	374	1.1%
Mining & quarrying	723	0.2%	53	0.2%
Aerospace	313	0.1%	13	0.0%
Medical equipment and technology	293	0.1%	30	0.1%
Environmental Technologies	??	0.0%	??	0.0%
Other sectors	11746	2.8%	2239	6.8%
Total of above sectors	415508	100%	32835	100%

Source: Annual Business Inquiry 1999

Annex A5 summarises some of the main skill trends currently affecting these sectors.

Cheshire and Warrington has an attractive environment and the potential to bring in further high technology, high added value investment. New opportunities have been created through the building of the A500 extension to develop the Basford sidings area in Crewe while other strategic investment sites are at Hooton Park and Ince Marshes in Ellesmere Port. The development partners have recently been announced for the Omega site, a major development in Warrington which will include a new junction on the M62. This project will open up large areas of land industrial development in the period up to 2005. Given the significant impact which the Omega development is expected to have, the Council is providing direct assistance in planning to meet the demand for high technology and other skills.

Recent large-scale investment has included Volkswagen's £500 million investment over five years at Bentley in Crewe, £31 million on extra manufacturing capacity by Astra Zeneca in Macclesfield and Vauxhall's decisions to build the Vectra alongside the Astra at Ellesmere Port, a new distribution centre and phase two of the Hooton supplier park. The cluster of financial services companies in Chester (MBNA, Marks and Spencer and Bank of Scotland) has grown rapidly to employ around 8,000 people. Just outside the area, the completion of the second runway at Manchester Airport and the development of BAe's A3-80 in North Wales were both expected to create further employment expansion for Cheshire and Warrington, although the terrorist attack on the US may damage these prospects in the short to medium term. Meanwhile, the Trafford Centre, Cheshire Oaks and Broughton Shopping Park will all create jobs for some of the area's residents while threatening local retail employment.

Although it is too early to be clear about the full impact, **the terrorist attacks in the US followed by the knock-on effects on the economy now cast some doubt on the figures for employment growth suggested above.** Business Strategies Ltd have revised their growth forecast for the UK down to 1.8% and 2.2% for 2002 and 2003. **At the time of writing, the risks of not meeting even these revised forecasts are significant.**

> 5. Summary of local strategic priorities

Based on the previous analysis of the local economy, the following issues are priorities for this LSC to address through its contracting and partnership arrangements. They come under three headings:

1. Development of Skills
2. Widening Participation
3. Raising standards

Development of skills

- Cheshire and Warrington is forecast to need an additional 45,000 in the workforce by 2009. In the same period, the working age population in the area will remain the same.
- Industrial sectors in Cheshire and Warrington operate in ever increasingly competitive markets and their employees' skills levels will be a vital element in securing future growth and development. Currently 21 per cent of local organisations have skills gaps within their workforces.
- 115,000 people of working age in Cheshire and Warrington have literacy problems and 114,000 have numeracy problems.

Widening Participation

- By 2006, there will be 1,600 more young people aged 16-18 in Cheshire and Warrington and local provision will need to meet the resultant expansion in demand for learning.
- Currently, each year in Cheshire and Warrington, 1,100 16 year olds do not enter any form of learning or cannot be contacted.
- 69% of the UK adult population are "not interested in learning" or "prefer to do other things" and these proportions are unlikely to be very different in Cheshire and Warrington.

Raising Standards

- 1,300 participants in learning do not achieve a level 2 qualification by the age of 19.
- Over 3,000 young people who have achieved an NVQ level 2 qualification, do not progress to level 3 by age 21.
- All learners will benefit from an overall improvement in the standards of learning delivered in Cheshire and Warrington.

These issues are addressed through our local Skills, Participation and Learning strategies.

> 6. Local skills strategy

Introduction

National projections for employment growth indicate that an additional 2 million jobs requiring qualifications and skills at Level 2 and above will be created over the next ten years, but young people alone will not fill these jobs. The forecast is that over time there will increasingly be fewer young people in proportion to the total working population. **It is therefore clear that the skills of both young people and working adults must be developed to raise overall skills levels for national competitiveness.**

The Local Participation Strategy demonstrates how this local Learning and Skills Council will work to increase the demand for learning by young people and adults in Cheshire and Warrington, as individuals within the general population; and the Learning Strategy shows how higher participation and achievement levels by both young people and adults will be achieved through college, Sixth Form, community and Work Based Learning routes.

The Skills Strategy both gives direction to and is informed by these two strategies, but **deals predominantly with how this local Learning and Skills Council will work with employers and their representative bodies at the local, regional and national level to identify the skills gaps affecting competitiveness now and in the future.** It also outlines the types of activity that will be supported and how they will impact on the local skills and competitiveness in Cheshire and Warrington.

The Skills Strategy looks to embed inclusion and equality in all aspects of delivery in order to:

- Improve skill levels and the individual's parity of achievement
- Address the benefit of diversity to employers' business needs
- Provide an equality assurance of all programmes' contribution to economic and social development

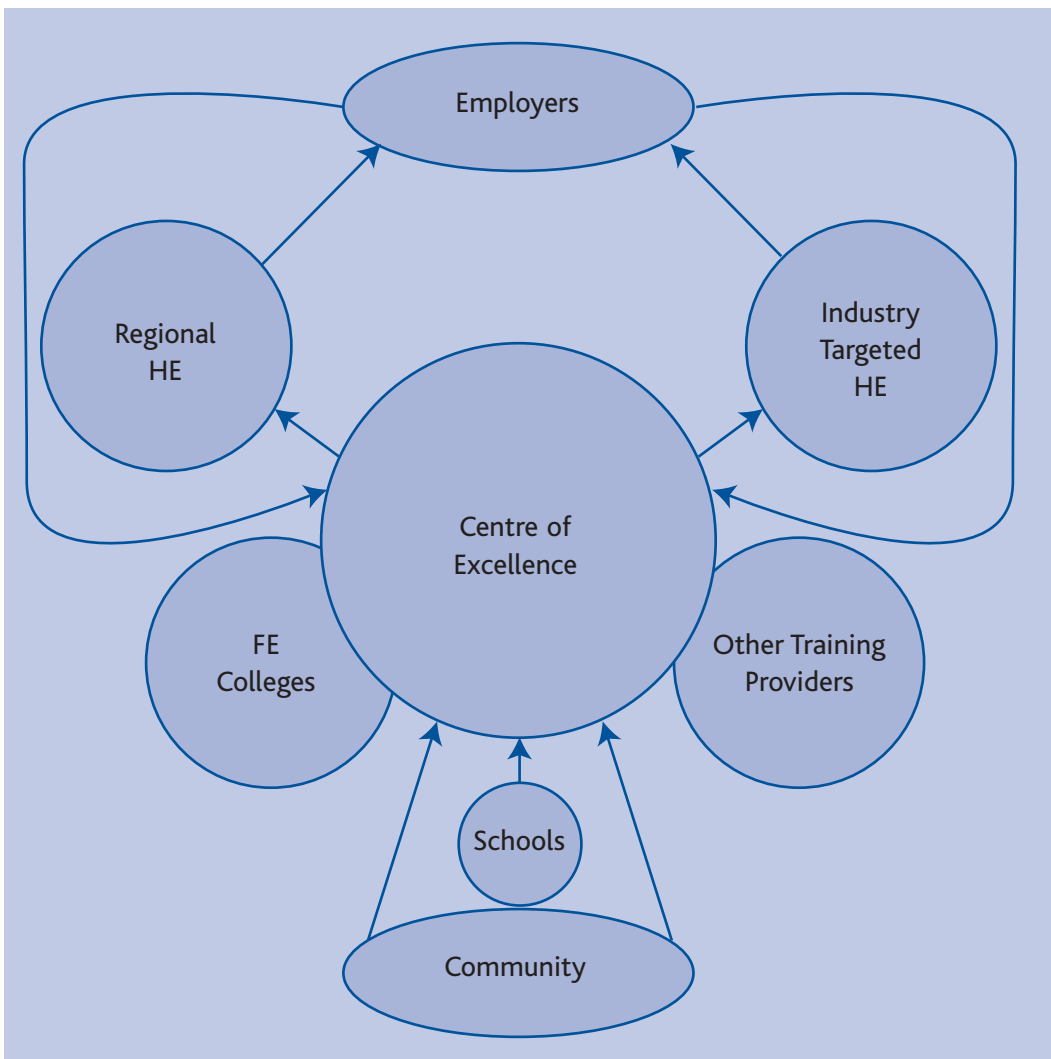
This strategy will focus on giving an equality investment in people (or "valuing all equally") and support a clarity of vision, affirmative action, continuity of effort and the collective involvement of all agencies and partners to be sensitive to the needs of under-represented or excluded groups including collaborative action in researching employers' views of skills gaps and training needs.

The Council will secure **ESF Co-financing** to support the skills, learning and participation strategies. These extra resources will be used to research and secure additional learning and skills development opportunities which stretch or enhance existing provision to meet both the needs of learners and the economy.

The introduction of the new **Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)** will give more responsibility to groups of employers prepared to provide leadership and take action on meeting their sector's skills and business needs. Greater emphasis will be placed on cross-sectoral

skills that enhance employability and labour market mobility. The new **Sector Skills Development Agency** will have an overall co-ordination role in respect of cross-sectoral skills. The Council will work with SSCs, local and regional employer networks to develop workforce development strategies relevant to the generic and sectoral skills needs of Cheshire and Warrington.

The Council wish to see **Centres of Vocational Excellence** developing to meet the current and future needs of key businesses or sectors within Cheshire and Warrington. They will be **driven by skills market and learner demand**, be designed to meet the needs of both business and their local community and will aim **to achieve a positive impact on levels of participation in learning, skills within the local labour market and economic growth**.



Strategic Activity

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>Develop strong and long-term relationships with local employers to influence employer engagement in workforce development</p> <p>With key strategic partners the Council will produce a workforce development plan for Cheshire and Warrington focusing on both key local sectors and those specified by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) in their skills strategy.</p> <p>The Council will work with the Business Link Operator to ensure consistent and effective practices are employed.</p> <p>The Council will develop and maintain a team of advisers/ ambassadors to create and sustain relationships with large employers.</p> <p>The Council will work with organisations to develop individual integrated workforce development plans, through a diagnosis of their requirements, which will include liP, management development, basic skills, key skills, National Vocational Qualifications, key workers and Trade Union learning services.</p> <p>The Council will encourage all organisations to work towards the Investors in People (liP) standard.</p>	<p>Delivery of the recommendations of the Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) workforce development project</p> <p>The workforce development needs of both SMEs and larger organisations are met.</p> <p>These will not only meet their internal workforce plans but also contribute to the Council planning process.</p> <p>Plans which are linked to an assessment of local provision, skills intelligence & market research to meet the current and future skill needs of the local economy</p> <p>Increased numbers of organisations will maintain and seek liP recognition where appropriate.</p>	<p>These actions will contribute directly to increasing the engagement of employers in workforce development and sequentially on to raising the participation and achievement rates of adults in the workforce.</p> <p>Progress against local liP targets</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>The Council will identify, co-ordinate and enhance management development provision in Cheshire and Warrington.</p> <p>A forum for organisations employing more than 250 people will be developed.</p> <p>The Council will work with Trades Unions and their Learning Representatives to encourage learning among employees through support for key workers and mentors in the workplace</p> <p>The Council will work with partners to seek innovative ways for employers and their employees to engage in learning through the use of ICT and e-learning solutions.</p> <p>The Council will work with the North West Development Agency and local partners to facilitate inward investment to Cheshire and Warrington. This will include the provision of high quality and robust information about available local skills.</p> <p>The Education Business Link Organisation will need to develop a strategy for expanding and improving the quality of pre-16 education business links.</p>	<p>Improvements in local levels of management development participation and achievement.</p> <p>Cross-sectoral skills initiatives will be supported linking as appropriate to relevant Centres of Vocational Excellence.</p> <p>Further development of learning in the workplace.</p> <p>The continued supply of appropriately skilled labour to meet the needs of the inward investors.</p> <p>Vocational education which is given equal value to the academic route.</p>	<p>This will help the Council to equalise opportunities through better access to learning by facilitating access in the workplace.</p> <p>By working to ensure the supply of the skills required by growing or investing sectors, there should be a reduction in the number of employers indicating skill gaps within their workforce.</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>Ensure that cross-sectoral and sector specific skills requirements are developed to meet the needs of key industrial sectors and developments in Cheshire and Warrington.</p> <p>The Council will work in line with the NWDA priority sectors for the region where they have a significant contribution to the skills, learning and economy of the area. In doing so full account will be taken of the recommendations and guidance emerging from the new SSCs.</p> <p>The Council is actively engaged within the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals (with the North West Chemicals Initiative - NWCI, Chemical Manufacturing and Processing NTO, Engineering Construction Industry Training Board in tandem with Learning + Skills Council Greater Merseyside). The Council is working closely with NWCI and has actively supported the development of the NWCI Skills Project 2002. 	<p>Support with partners for existing, and where demand exists, new local or regional sector-focused employer fora to develop and support sector-specific skills initiatives.</p> <p>The Council would look to link activities within these sectors into emerging CoVE developments where appropriate or to set up pilot and project work to address specific needs</p>	<p>By working with the sectors and providers in this way, the Council will contribute directly to widening participation, increasing engagement of employers in workforce development and raising achievement of young people and adults.</p> <p>These developments will contribute to the creation of integrated Centres of Vocational Excellence</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism (with the IMPACT group of NTOs, the North West Tourism Skills and Employment Network, Cheshire County Council). The Council is represented on the Business Excellence Task Force Group and together with Business Link is working to support the development of the local training infrastructure and skills projects. • Retail (with British Institute of Retailing Retail Sector Skills Council, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council, West Cheshire College of FE, South Cheshire College of FE) • Creative Industries (with Cheshire Creative Industries Network, NWDA, Business Link and North West Arts Board and linking into the CoVE work in Mid Cheshire College) • Telecommunications (with Business Link, NWDA, local employers, Learndirect, e-skills NTO and linking into Chester College NTI work) 		

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omega - Building on the developments at the new developments on the Omega site and wider links to the Warrington economy working with Warrington Borough Council, Warrington 2000+, Cheshire and Warrington Business Link Operator, Warrington Collegiate Institute (in particular Management Development) and Warrington Chamber of Commerce and Industry. • Healthcare sector (with Cheshire & Warrington NHS Workforce Development Confederation, GONW, Greater Merseyside Cheshire & Warrington Learning and Skills Council and linking into West Cheshire College) <p>Other sectors and cross-sectoral skills areas which the Council is planning to work with include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and Financial services • Engineering and technology • ICT • Warehousing and Logistics • Public Administration • Agriculture and Horticulture • Call Centres • Management and Leadership 		

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>With key strategic partners develop innovative education, learning and skills initiatives, including Centres of Vocational Excellence tailored to support and maximise the employability of the existing labour pool and growth of Cheshire and Warrington's local economy.</p> <p>The Council is currently looking to develop the following Centres within Cheshire & Warrington:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Cheshire Engineering – Bentley Motors, Reaseheath and South Cheshire Colleges of FE, communities within the West End of Crewe, large employers and SMEs within the engineering and allied sectors and schools in Crewe. • European Centre for Aerospace Training (ECAT) – BAE Systems at Woodford, North West Aerospace Alliance, Macclesfield College of FE, Ryles Park School. • West Cheshire Services – In conjunction with Mersey Dee Alliance, Gtr. Merseyside LSC, Ryder Logistics, Quinn Glass, West Cheshire College, healthcare, tourism and retail sector SMEs, NHS, communities in Ellesmere Port, Wirral and Chester and schools within the area. 	<p>The Council will seek to develop Centres of Vocational excellence under the model described in the Learning Strategy.</p>	<p>The model which is being promoted locally under the CoVE initiative will contribute to all the Cheshire and Warrington targets. The choice of geography and sector focus for the development of CoVEs here will be directly linked to priority sectors and clearly identified skills needs. The Council wishes to see CoVE developments led by the needs of learners and the local economy, aligned with the quality of provision rather than by the quality of FE provision alone.</p> <p>These developments directly support the local Strategic Objective for the creation of integrated Centres of Vocational Excellence</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="379 409 683 1261"> <p>• Mid Cheshire New Media Design – In conjunction with Mid Cheshire College, Cheshire Colleges Consortium, Chester College of HE, MMU, Salford and Wolverhampton Universities, Manchester Colleges Consortium, Cheshire County Council, Vale Royal Borough Council, Ufl local schools, local designers and regional employers across a range of sectors and technical disciplines. The Council is a member of the Cheshire and Warrington Creative Industries Network steering group. This Network is working in parallel with NWDA funded consultants to develop the Creative Industries strategy for Cheshire and Warrington.</p> <li data-bbox="379 1294 683 1877"> <p>• Reaseheath- Food Chain Technology – In conjunction with Muller, Tetra-Laval, Express Dairies, Central Midland Co-op, Harper-Adams University College in Shropshire, Chester College of HE, Cannington College in Somerset and local schools. Links will be made into the regional Food Alliance Group and its work and the Council is a member of the NWDA Skills Development Food Project Steering Group.</p> 		

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="150 405 448 808">• South Cheshire College- Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism – In conjunction with Chester College of HE, Staffordshire University, MMU, Bridgemere and Stapeley Water Gardens, Crewe Hall, Rookery Hall, Alvaston Hall, Cheshire and Warrington Learning Partnerships and local schools <li data-bbox="150 842 456 1458">• West Cheshire College- Care and Childcare – In conjunction with Early Years Development Childcare Partnership, Chester City Council, Early Years Forum, Social Services, Health Authority and Hospital Trusts, Nursing homes, Voluntary Services Agencies Cheshire Learning Partnership, MMU, University of Manchester, Chester College of HE, Cheshire Colleges Consortium, primary schools, nurseries and playgroups. <li data-bbox="150 1491 432 1615">• Logistics (regional) In conjunction with the four other LLSCs in the Northwest region. 		

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>An Annual Skills Needs Assessment will be produced and disseminated to all local Partners and Providers. The Council will then assess the integration of this data into planning and delivery.</p> <p>The Council will ensure perceived and genuine barriers to participation and achievement faced by the employed are addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Sector Skills Councils and industry groups to promote equal opportunities practice • Promoting the business case for equality and value of diversity in the workforce and help small organisations to develop EO and HR policies • Persuading inactive learners who are in employment that they need to update their skills. • Do more to prevent rather than respond to the needs of people who drop out of learning • Do more to tailor initiatives to individual needs. 	<p>Knowledge of the local economy will be used effectively by local Providers and within Information, Advice and Guidance, Connexions, the Education Business Link Organisation and the local Business Link Operator. The Council will promote the raising and maintaining of economic data quality and try to ensure coherence of data collection and eliminate duplication and overlap.</p>	<p>Fundamental to achievement of all targets.</p> <p>Through these actions the Council will make a contribution towards increasing participation in learning, raising achievements of young people and adults and increasing the engagement of employers in workforce development.</p> <p>These developments directly support the local Strategic Objective for the creation of integrated Centres of Vocational Excellence</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do more to raise basic literacy and numeracy skills encouraging basic skills provision in the workplace • Encourage employers to ensure that their entire workforce becomes engaged in learning. <p>The Council will encourage the training of childcare workers. It will also encourage large employers to consider the provision of childcare facilities on site where feasible.</p> <p>The Council will support TUC Learning Representatives and the provider network to identify basic skills needs in the workplace.</p> <p>Through the partnership with Business Link Cheshire & Warrington and the TUC, the Council will encourage and support SMEs to recognise basic skills needs within the workforce and to plan provision to address them.</p> <p>The Council will work through partners and directly to ensure that the legislative requirements for Equal Opportunities provision are adhered to and also will put the Learning & Skills Council Equal Opportunities Strategy into action locally.</p> <p>The Council will work closely with our provider network</p>	<p>An increase in the volume of affordable childcare facilities within Cheshire & Warrington</p> <p>Building of capacity within the area to meet the demand for basic skills training within the employed workforce.</p> <p>To embed EO principles within the workplace through work based learning, for example.</p> <p>To ensure that providers develop and deliver flexible and responsive provision to meet employer needs.</p>	<p>Annual increase in childcare provision.</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>The Council will work closely with neighbouring Learning and Skills Councils on issues arising from cross-border travel to work and learn patterns. Strong working relationships are being developed with LLSCs in the neighbouring regions such as Staffordshire, Greater Merseyside and Greater Manchester to share information and ensure coherence of provision for those sectors, organisations and initiatives that straddle administrative boundaries. These include work on the chemicals, engineering, tourism and retail sectors.</p> <p>Given the strong travel to work patterns between Cheshire and Warrington and North Wales the Council will also work closely with Education and Learning Wales (ELWa).</p>	<p>This will ensure that regardless of location the learning and skill needs of individuals and businesses are appropriately served.</p>	<p>These actions will help to improve effectiveness and efficiency of provision.</p>

> 7. Local participation strategy

Introduction

The Local Participation Strategy **puts individual learners "at the heart of the system"** and also defines strategies for bringing more people into learning, **especially from groups that are currently under-represented**. The strategy demonstrates key priorities to work with young people, drive up participation and achievement and develop mechanisms to support adult learners including both "third" and "fourth" age learners from the 50+ age group. Issues which will also be addressed are those of rural and economic isolation and the poverty of aspiration felt by those who are falling behind the majority of the local population who enjoy relative prosperity and a good quality of life.

A major priority for the Council is to address issues of lack of **Basic Skills**. It is estimated that as many as one in five of the adult population experiences some difficulty with literacy and numeracy. Cheshire and Warrington LSC working with partners and through the providers it funds, has a key role in reducing this figure. The importance of non-threatening activities to give non learners positive experiences to move them on to the first rung of the learning ladder is also recognised. We will build on successes in community and family based learning in order to reflect this.

The Council is engaged in strategies to increase participation in learning by those who have been hard to recruit and drive up the quality of the learning experience offered to all learners. Provision of accessible help with literacy and numeracy is a critical part of such engagement. The impact of ICT on jobs is also driving up the standards required in literacy and numeracy.

Overall, work will be undertaken to ensure that the skills needs of employers and the learning needs of individuals are balanced and **the benefits of lifelong learning are understood and embraced by all sections of the community**.

The Participation Strategy aims to ensure that **social inclusion and equality are mainstreamed** and to identify the extent and depth of this Council's commitment to Equal Opportunities (E/O) and Diversity aims, which are to:

- ensure that all sections of the community are equipped to participate fully in the economic life of the area
- ensure that the people for whom services are designed can access them according to their need and obtain maximum benefit from them, whatever their circumstances
- maximise participation in learning in order that individuals make the most of their talents and fulfil their potential regardless of disability, gender or race or social disadvantage
- achieve and maintain an exemplary status as an employer.

In addition to the partnerships referred to in section 9.3 the Voluntary sector has a vital role working with us at all stages of our work to increase participation.

Strategic Activity

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>The Council will develop strategies in partnership with key stakeholders that influence the contracting for local learning provision and the culture of learning providers to ensure that high quality, appropriately located and accessible learning opportunities are available to all learners and potential learners.</p> <p>Initiatives will be developed in partnership and supported that measure the take up, retention, achievement and progression of specific groups of learners and analyse perceived or real barriers to participation in learning</p> <p>In partnership, it will be ensured that learners and non-learners are consulted and their views are taken into account when planning, developing and contracting the delivery of all learning. The Council will work with key stakeholders to ensure mechanisms are developed to gain the views of non learners from areas and sectors of the community that are under represented in learning.</p>	<p>Learning provision that fits the needs of the learner, meets preferred learning styles, is accessible to all and contributes to increasing participation rates retention, achievement and progression.</p> <p>Results of client group monitoring which can be promoted and used to inform provider reviews.</p> <p>Bespoke and diverse learning opportunities, relevant and responsive to individuals at a time, location and cost supported by inter-related modules of provision and new technologies which support the delivery of learning.</p> <p>Provision of baselines on barriers to access to learning.</p>	<p>Extension of participation.</p> <p>Improvement in numbers of young learners who are in learning</p> <p>Development of local equality targets for increasing participation and outcomes for particular excluded groups.</p>
<p>Both internally and externally a climate will be promoted that challenges inequality in any form and celebrates and promotes the business and social opportunities that diversity brings to this area</p>	<p>The Council will become a 'Beacon LLSC' in both the North West and nationally for the promotion of equality of opportunity and the celebration of the positive aspects of diversity. Providers of learning in Cheshire and Warrington are meeting and striving to exceed the expectations of Ofsted and ALL inspections.</p>	

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>A mainstreamed EO/Diversity strategy and annual action plan will be developed and delivered using equality-related targets and performance indicators to measure progress.</p> <p>Women returning to work after childcare responsibilities sometimes lack the skills or qualifications required to compete in the labour market or need to update their skills.</p> <p>It is recognised that prisoners and those supervised in the community have significant basic skills needs and that this is a crucial factor in the rehabilitation of offenders in their search for employment. The Council will therefore work closely with Probation, Youth Offending Teams and local prisons to address this issue.</p>	<p>A significant impact on the numbers of young people entering non stereotypical occupations e.g. the numbers of young women entering engineering.</p> <p>Provision is offered which is flexible to the needs of this group through, for instance, high quality and accessible training venues with childcare support.</p> <p>Good quality relevant provision is ensured for this vulnerable group.</p>	<p>Improved levels of participation and achievement.</p>
<p>A radical shift will be sought in the perspective of providers that ensures the best possible fit between the needs of the learner, the curriculum and available provision and the learning environment that leads to equality of participation, retention, achievement and progression across all sectors of the community.</p>	<p>An increase in the number of adults entering learning from the socially deprived wards in our area.</p>	

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>A marketing strategy will be developed in partnership with local Learning Partnerships, Education Business Link Organisation, Connexions Service, employers and learning providers that uses innovative and challenging methods to promote the benefits of lifelong learning especially to groups underrepresented in learning.</p>	<p>A coherent strategy for the promotion of learning that is shared by all key stakeholders and engenders increased participation by all regardless of any specific or additional need and that meets preferred learning styles.</p>	
<p>The Council will identify, consult and develop working relationships with appropriate partnerships and organisations engaged in participation strategies including Learning Partnerships, Connexions, Education Business Plus and Learning and Work Plus.</p> <p>A mapping exercise will be undertaken to establish the availability, usage and effectiveness of different forms of advice and guidance in Cheshire and Warrington.</p>	<p>Clear and robust arrangements will be ensured for working with the Connexions service and Adult Information, Advice and Guidance network.</p> <p>The development of common data definition and collection systems to aid measurement of progress towards the Council's targets, in particular the participation of 16 year olds, adults and groups identified as under represented in learning.</p> <p>Improved understanding of local IAG provision.</p>	<p>Increase in accredited suppliers of IAG</p> <p>Development of local targets for improving the numbers of adults accessing IAG services</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>Literacy, language (English for speakers of other languages - ESOL) and numeracy provision will be funded within the proposed national framework. However, the Council is seeking to ensure that this priority area is funded in an effective and flexible way to cater for the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Funding will cover pre-entry level to level 2 and will include the key skills of communication and application of number, whether delivered as stand alone provision or as part of a vocational programme or additional courses, and whether delivered full-time, part-time or through self study or ICT. Equal Opportunities will be monitored in all aspects including practices in recruitment, employment and support for staff.</p> <p>The Council will provide funding for the major expansion of basic skills provision. The funding system must motivate providers to expand this part of their provision and enable learners to access provision and support for their learning easily⁹.</p>	<p>Basic Skills learning opportunities which are accessible and meet the needs of the whole Cheshire and Warrington community.</p>	<p>Increase in Basic Skills participation and achievement.</p>

⁹ Further details can be found in the Guidance on Further Education Funding Eligibility and Rates 2001-2002. The guidance for 2002-03 is currently being reviewed and a separate document for basic skills has been proposed, which will pull together all aspects of funding for this area of provision.

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All literacy and numeracy provision is free to learners • The cost weighting factor to be applied to all literacy and numeracy provision will be 1.5 to reflect the higher costs of such provision • An additional uplift of 10% is applied to all literacy and numeracy provision • Literacy and numeracy provision leading to the National Tests and other literacy and numeracy qualifications will receive achievement funding in the same way and at the same rate as other nationally recognised qualifications. 		
<p>Cheshire and Warrington LSC will adopt as appropriate lessons learnt through the nine national 'Skills for Life' Pathfinder projects in particular the local project in Merseyside.</p> <p>Cheshire and Warrington LSC will work with both FE and HE institutions involved with teacher training to understand the lack of teachers trained in the delivery of basic skills and to facilitate the increase in the delivery infrastructure.</p>	<p>The capacity of all providers to respond to the diverse needs of learners is built through increased funding, awareness of managers and strategic decision-makers, training and development of existing staff and the encouragement of new, well-qualified teachers.</p>	
<p>Cheshire and Warrington LSC will build on the success of the Non-Schedule 2 Pilot Programmes which have been very successful in using innovative programmes that have a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy.</p>	<p>Engagement of new learners.</p>	

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
Work based Learning has a critical part to play in delivering Basic Skills expansion. It is important that rigorous and effective programmes to enhance literacy and numeracy skills are built into provision made in this area	Basic Skills are embedded in the parts of programmes likely to be most motivating to learners and not merely 'added on' to vocational training.	Improvements in Basic Skills.
When the Local Education Authority budget is integrated fully into LSC funding in 2003/2004 the development of connectivity between non-vocational learning and literacy and numeracy through integrated and embedded programmes will be actively encouraged, as will be a focus on targeting disadvantage. Family learning can be particularly effective, building as it does on the incentive of helping children at school.	Diverse delivery mechanisms, building on such work as family learning and family literacy and numeracy, are encouraged and supported.	
The voluntary sector providers in adult education in particular have demonstrated their ability to engage with disadvantaged learners and this will be capitalised upon.	The voluntary sector is key to reaching groups who would not contemplate taking a first step into learning through College or Adult Education Centre and therefore this should become a further route through to engaging new learners.	
The Council will work closely with Employment Services which now assesses the literacy and numeracy skills of all jobseekers.	The Council will ensure that Basic Skills provision meets the specific needs of the unemployed.	

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>Employers will be critical partners in the delivery of literacy and numeracy. For many the workplace is the natural place for learning. The development of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) will address the needs of all learners within a given sectoral and/or geographic approach. Particular emphasis will be placed on the promotion and delivery of basic skills within CoVEs and on ensuring barriers to access are removed.</p> <p>The Council will work closely with Business Link and advisers to larger organisations to promote the 'Skills for Life' strategy.</p> <p>The Basic Skills Agency Brokerage project will be piloted in the North West. This is a national development programme aimed at large, medium and small employers where Brokers promote literacy and numeracy to organisations and facilitate a close working relationship between employer and provider.</p> <p>Trade Union learning representatives in the work place can have significant impact on the take up of literacy and numeracy provision by people at work. Cheshire and Warrington LSC will continue to support and encourage such good practice.</p> <p>The particular targeting of public sector employees by the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU) will involve the development of close relationships with the Council.</p>	<p>Links with employers are capitalised upon to deliver Basic Skills.</p> <p>Tailored courses to ensure they meet the needs of employers and employees.</p> <p>The capacity of the public sector to respond to the strategy is developed.</p>	<p>The development of CoVEs which allow the Council to achieve its Participation Strategy outcomes within the defined sectoral and geographic markets.</p> <p>These developments directly support the local Strategic Objective for the creation of integrated Centres of Vocational Excellence.</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>The Council will work with Local Authorities, community and voluntary groups to identify and actively support opportunities for capacity building with voluntary and community organisations. To help fulfil this it will support Adult and Community Learning providers in partnership with mainstream providers.</p>	<p>Appropriate high quality learning opportunities that increase participation by under represented groups of learners, targets particular skills needs, encourages progression and maintains overall participation levels.</p>	

> 8. Local learning strategy

Introduction

The Council is determined to secure high quality learning which:

- meets learners', employers and community needs;
- delivers high retention and achievement rates;
- ensures that learning is delivered by competent and qualified staff;
- offers equality of opportunity and success in a safe and supportive environment;
- is well managed and led and delivers value for money.

The Local Learning Strategy supports the Skills and Participation Strategies by ensuring that there is proper and reasonable provision available for learners, which meets the dual needs of individuals and economic growth. The Council will encourage young people to remain in learning and increase their achievement. This will be through initiatives such as the 14-16 vocational pathways and level 2 projects. The status of vocational learning will be raised by implementing the recommendations from the Modern Apprenticeships Advisory Committee and through more effective relationships with employers. We will also strive to promote appropriate progression routes into higher education.

Integration of learning provision and the development of pathways from school to higher education will be enhanced through the creation of local Learning Zones. These will encompass schools, Sixth Form Centres and FE Colleges incorporating Vocational and Lifelong Learning Centres. They will be capable of developing further provision in support of learner needs to provide coherence to 14 plus provision in a local context

The provision is monitored through the quality assurance framework. This involves the development of strong, long-term relationships with a wide range of providers, ensuring that learners are placed at the centre of every provider's business and strategic development plans.

A key priority for the Council is the commitment to put the learner first. Raising Standards must mean that learners are better served than in the past and are able to succeed in their learning. The quality of post-16 education and training in Cheshire and Warrington is generally good and academic levels of achievement are above national standards. Some schools, for example, produce exceptional results. However, inspection evidence does reveal some poorly performing and mediocre providers. The overall strategy is to introduce robust quality arrangements to tackle inconsistency of standards by challenging poor and "satisfactory" providers, and by ensuring **excellence in teaching and learning**. The Council will work with providers to embed a culture of continuous improvement and sharing of good practice. Strategies to reward and promote excellence will be developed. It is vital that the IAG provided to young learners is of the highest quality also. The Council will work with Connexions to ensure that **the right information is provided at the right place for all young learners**.

The Council will work with providers to ensure that each undertakes an annual self assessment and works to an action plan. Providers will be helped to use reliable and accurate data and information and to make rigorous and objective assessments of their own performance.

The standards fund will be targeted to encourage providers to give priority to quality improvement in areas such as: retention and achievement particularly at level 2; key skills; basic skills and the qualifications of teachers, development programmes for managers, and governance in FE colleges. Funds will also be provided to facilitate additional childcare places and training to remove barriers for learners.

The Council will encourage providers to investigate the reasons for learners leaving programmes early and take action. Tracking learners' progress to further and higher learning and/or employment must be improved to ensure appropriate and relevant curriculum pathways are in place.

Centres of Vocational Excellence will be developed which lock together the educational and vocational provision from schools, colleges, private training providers and higher education and link these more directly to each other, to the needs of the employment market and their local communities.

The Learning Strategy aims to create a self sustaining drive for inclusion and equality by encouraging the development of learning communities, employment sectors, groups and a provider environment which:

- **Fits the opportunities offered with the learner's preferred learning style, method and goals and**
- **Places inclusion at the heart of the evaluation of learning.**

Equality of opportunity and success must be ensured by working to reduce performance gaps between learners from different backgrounds, including ethnic background and gender. The Council will seek to fund new providers where there is a shortage of good quality provision such as in certain vocational areas or in provision for socially excluded groups. It is very important that providers improve the availability and effectiveness of learning support, including support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and improve initial guidance for learners in partnerships with Connexions, Adult Guidance Networks and other key agencies.

Strategic Activity

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>With partners and through partnerships meet both the needs of learner and the needs of the local economy as identified in baseline research and information and through working with Sector Skills Councils (SSCs - formerly National Training Organisations) to identify specific sector needs. The LSC will conduct area studies in Cheshire and Warrington in order to map provision presently available to learners. Some of the area studies will lead to the development of local learning zones.</p>	<p>The outcomes of the area studies alongside information from the directorates of Resources and Innovation and Inclusion will inform the learning strategy. It will then be ensured through the contracting processes that appropriate learning programmes are available to meet the needs of the local population and employers in Cheshire and Warrington.</p>	<p>Raising skill levels to improve employer competitiveness.</p> <p>These developments directly support the local Strategic Objective for the creation of Learning Zones</p>
<p>The development of vocational strategies for 14-16 year olds that promote collaborative working between schools, colleges and private training providers. Provision will need to be flexible and at a time and place to meet learners and employers needs. ICT will need to be further developed to facilitate this flexibility. The creation of local learning zones will be an important initiative in this respect</p> <p>Further development of entry to employment provision with providers.</p> <p>Development of pathways from informal courses into formal courses.</p>	<p>Maximise the numbers of learners participating in programmes. The promotion, availability and implementation of basic skills will assist learners in their future careers and towards lifelong learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Raising achievement of young people.</p> <p>These developments directly support the local Strategic Objective for the creation of Learning Zones</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
Work with the HE sector to facilitate pathways into higher education, assessing the provision of HE within local areas and its compatibility with FE and other forms of provision	Closer collaboration between the FE and HE sectors, joint initiatives, strategic and active partnerships. Local developments in estate changes etc. are capitalised upon to foster improvements to provision.	Towards 50% participation in higher education by 18-30 year olds by 2010.
The implementation of the level 2 projects will result in the achievement of learners. Examples of good practice from these projects will be disseminated to all providers. Strategies for support for learners at risk will be actively encouraged. Additional childcare places and childcare training will be supported through the bidding process.	Improve the proportion of learners remaining in programmes until completion.	Increase in achievement at level 2. These developments directly support the local Strategic Objective for the creation of Learning Zones
Providers will be supported in the introduction of appropriate monitoring and reporting systems and improvement strategies. Value added systems are to be encouraged and developed for all learners. Progression will be promoted from entry level qualifications to level 3 and beyond, into both higher education and employment. CoVEs will have an important role in encouraging young people to achieve vocational GCSEs and level 2 and 3 qualifications. The CoVEs will develop initially in schools with young people through collaboration with local colleges.	Improve the numbers of learners achieving qualifications from programmes completed Colleges in cooperation with private training providers, employers and higher education develop foundation degrees in specific areas of sector need.	Raising achievement levels. These developments directly support the local Strategic Objective for the creation of integrated Centres of Vocational Excellence

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>Providers will be supported in continuous improvement activity through self-assessment, monitoring quality of delivery and by commissioning specific quality improvement projects. Provider review will identify providers with excellence provision and those that need support. Areas of underperformance will be identified as early as possible and the Council will work with Providers and other partners to address the issues raised. Providers that achieve excellence will be encouraged to advise and support others seeking to develop their quality of delivery. Provider performance will be reported to Council, National Office and other relevant partners. Performance indicators will be required at a local level in order to ensure that Cheshire and Warrington based initiatives are meeting their objectives. Monitoring systems will be established at the outset in order to ensure that measures are put in place, which will provide the data necessary to inform progress against these measures.</p> <p>Reports on provider performance will be produced annually and distributed through the partnership networks.</p> <p>Procedures for new providers will be developed to ensure that there is proper and reasonable provision to meet learners' needs.</p> <p>Strategies to raise the level of the competence of trainers and teachers will be actively supported through the standards fund.</p>	<p>Support for learners by raising standards, by working with providers on continuous improvement strategies and by supporting those most at risk.</p> <p>Effective use of the standards fund.</p>	<p>Raising quality of education and training and user satisfaction.</p> <p>Rise in grades at inspection and reinspection.</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>The Cheshire and Warrington Provider Network has been recently established and will be used as a forum for dissemination of good practice and benchmarking with external partners.</p> <p>A Good Practice Library is also being developed which will be available to assist Providers and the Council to locate high quality good practice materials rapidly.</p>	<p>Effective development of the Cheshire and Warrington Provider Network and Good Practice Library.</p>	<p>Raising quality of education and training and user satisfaction.</p> <p>Rise in grades at inspection and reinspection.</p>
<p>The Council's reviews of performance will be based on Inspection data which has been compiled within the previous 18 months. Where this does not exist already, it will be based on annual Self-Assessment and Development Plan data.</p> <p>Common standards will be developed and utilised for Adult and Community Learning and providers of Information, Advice and Guidance.</p>	<p>The Council's resources are focussed on assisting providers that are failing to achieve their potential.</p>	<p>Raising quality of education and training and user satisfaction.</p> <p>Rise in grades at inspection and reinspection.</p>
<p>The consortium of New Deal and Routeway (short job focus courses) will have full access to good practice held by the Council. Strategies for both provision and quality improvement will be harmonised between the LSC and Employment Service.</p>	<p>The sharing of good practice with Employment Service</p>	

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>Industrial sectors which have already been identified for targeting include: business and financial services; tourism, hospitality and leisure; retail; engineering and technology; warehousing and logistics and health and care. Centres of Excellence will be developed through wide ranging and innovative approaches some of which will be based in colleges, whilst others will be based in employers' premises.</p> <p>The Education Business Link Organisation (EBLO) will produce a strategy which is aimed at bringing parity of esteem for the vocational and academic education routes.</p>	<p>The addressing of local priorities in a national context.</p> <p>CoVEs which reflect the current and anticipated skill needs of the local economy by focussing on a specific sector or speciality.</p> <p>While the strategic objective is a higher value placed on vocational education, interim outcomes will include a bringing together of the systems for school teacher and FE lecturer placements and the greater use of business based mentors for the setting up of "young enterprises".</p>	<p>Raising skill levels to improve employer competitiveness.</p> <p>These developments directly support the local Strategic Objective for the creation of integrated Centres of Vocational Excellence</p> <p>Raising achievement of young people.</p>
<p>A framework of activity will be developed for communities, employers and groups to work with Providers on reviewing and assessing approaches to inclusion and equality.</p> <p>Learner needs will be diagnosed rigorously, including approaches to enabling learners to advocate their needs and provide feedback on the effectiveness of provision. It is essential that the "voice of the learner" is heard and understood.</p> <p>Special needs delivery will be reformed.</p> <p>The Council will plan new approaches to the delivery of basic and key skills actions, to recognised equality "kitemark" standards.</p>	<p>Capacity which supports flexible access and delivery to special needs and disadvantaged groups using new technology and other innovations.</p> <p>Resources to develop responsive provision, particularly for those disadvantaged and facing barriers to learning.</p> <p>Opportunities within mainstream provision in local communities will be enabled and promoted which offer parity in potential attainment, irrespective of the learner's pace of learning.</p>	<p>Achievement of equality targets.</p>

Action	Outcomes Sought	Contribution to targets
<p>Programme delivery levels and related expenditure will be monitored to ensure efficient and effective use of funds. The resultant analysis and interpretation will be used to direct resources to those learners and sectors most in need of investment in Cheshire and Warrington. For example, there are significant differences across the area in the proportion of young people in work-based learning who are in employment. It seems that local economic factors are only a partial reason for this. The reasons for these differences will be examined and realistic targets developed with Providers to move to parity where this is realistic.</p>	<p>Effective use of public funds allocated to Cheshire and Warrington by improving overall performance of both participation and achievement of learners.</p>	

> 9. Operating principles

A number of cross-cutting themes are central to all activity funded or influenced by Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council. The focus on the needs of the learner has already been emphasised under our Mission and Vision. Other key principles are:

- Equality of Opportunity
- Raising standards
- Working in partnership
- Health and Safety
- Value for Money

9.1 Equality of Opportunity

Our Commitment to Equal Opportunities (EO) and Managing Diversity.

Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council confirms its ambitious objectives to make learning more inclusive, to widen participation, remove unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity for all learners. It will aim to tackle social and economic disadvantage by removing barriers to post 16 education and training.

From the outset it is intended to integrate equal opportunities into culture and operations helping to meet stakeholder expectations that services provided to them by the LSC will be underpinned by good equality principles and practices.

It is now a statutory requirement of the Learning and Skills Council that it provides for equality of opportunity. The Government expects the Council to create:

“A learning society - a society in which everyone can share in the benefits of learning, enabling people to discover new talents, stretching their creativity and widening their opportunities”.

The statutory duty requires the Council to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- People from different racial groups
- Men and Women
- People with a disability and people without

It is also a responsibility to report annually through National Office to the Secretary of State on:

- The equality arrangements made during the preceding year
- How effective the equality arrangements were
- Equality plans for the following year

The Council has adopted as a guiding principle the intent “*To give everyone the chance, through education, training, and work, to realise their full potential and thus build an inclusive and fair society and a competitive economy*”. (DfES stated aim for Social Inclusion.)

The Council's vision is therefore to contribute to the creation of a learning society which is free from discrimination and prejudice and which encourages and helps all learners reach their full potential.

The Mission / Aims

EO/Diversity will be mainstreamed and integrated into all aspects of the Council's work. The Council is committed to:

- developing and delivering EO for young people and adult learners through all programmes and providers
- promoting equality and diversity in the Council's employment policy and practices.

The need is also recognised to work in partnership and build on and learn from the expertise developed by national and local organisations and providers. Therefore, fundamental to the development of the EO strategy will be effective consultation with the key partners, providers and learners in Cheshire and Warrington.

The Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) and amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act require the Council to prepare an annual equality action plan. It is intended to be proactive in setting the standard and agenda for high quality education and training by helping to meet the diverse needs of individual learners. The EO/Diversity strategy will therefore cover all activity for:

- targets and actions for widening participation
- developing inclusive learning
- tackling social exclusion and supporting neighbourhood renewal
- promoting equal opportunities and workforce development.

This commitment to the development of the Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council EO/Diversity Strategy and action plan will be underpinned by the following high level objectives to:

1. Develop the Council as an EO employer/organisation
2. Develop the Council as a champion of equality
3. Embed EO into all policies, programmes and actions
4. Report on progress towards equality

It will take account of both legislative and non-legislative considerations and address the different needs of any locally under-represented groups. Actions will be put in place to dismantle barriers to participation and inclusion by ensuring that their monitoring categories, publicity, delivery and resources reflect the complexity and diversity of learning needs within local communities.

9.2 Raising Standards

Raising quality and standards is critical to the Council's agenda. The Council will focus on using a robust and rigorous performance review process three times a year to ensure that all learners in Cheshire and Warrington receive quality provision.

The Council will work with existing Providers in their assessment of quality through examination of their self-assessment processes and development plans. Early identification of poor performing Providers will lead to immediate action planning and support to achieve improvements.

This support will include specialist advice and guidance, appropriate use of the Standards Fund and active encouragement to excellent providers to share good working practices and procedures.

A comprehensive and effective complaints procedure is under development which will ensure that complaints are dealt with rapidly and thoroughly and that the lessons learnt are communicated and developed into good practice.

9.3 Working in Partnership

Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council can only achieve its objectives through others; partnership working is therefore a key critical process.

The following principles apply both to work with individual partners and as members of local partnerships:

- **Vision and Aims.** The vision and aims of the Learning and Skills Council will be clearly stated and those areas identified where both the Council and its partners can work together to help to achieve objectives and targets.
- **Strategy and Planning.** The Council's strategy and plans will be shared widely and partners will be consulted to ensure the needs of learners within Cheshire and Warrington have been heard and understood. This will facilitate the joint planning of developments where appropriate to fit with partner plans and strategies.
- **Funding.** Funds will be used where possible in a complementary manner in order to further shared priorities. Funding will be secured from a range of sources in order to maximise outcomes against shared agendas. The effective use of funding will become increasingly important as the Council moves towards becoming a Co-financing Organisation, giving it responsibility for the appropriate distribution of significant sums of European funding.
- **Information.** Partners will be kept apprised of developments in the Council's planning and timely and accurate data on progress towards targets will be provided. Socio-economic data will also be supplied on an annual basis in order to assist partners with the preparation of their strategic planning.
- **Co-operation.** Regular meetings will take place with partners in order to review actions and continue to plan for further developments. These will be used to resolve issues and ensure achievement of objectives. The Council will continually place the learner at the heart of its planning and strategies.

Where appropriate and desirable, Protocols or Memoranda of Understanding will be drawn up at a local level based upon national models.

Although a number of partners are described below, it is not an exhaustive list. The Council is keen to engage with a wide network of partners and organisations in addressing the learning agenda.

Council partners fall into three categories. There are:

- Those with whom the Council has contractual relationships
- Those with whom the relationship is rather one of influencing and receiving feedback and information.
- Formal partnership groupings around geographies, sectors or categories of individuals.

The main contractual relationships are with Further Education Colleges, Work-based Learning Providers, Business Link, Adult and Community Learning Providers and Local Education Authorities.

- *FE Colleges*

The Council will through college strategic planning processes and its own research identify skills gaps in Cheshire and Warrington. It will then through its contracting arrangements endeavour to improve provision in these areas for learners and employers. Additional resources will be available to providers who seek to widen participation, improve their childcare facilities and raise levels of participation and achievement. The Council will look to providers to provide learning pathways that extend from basic skills provision through to level 3 and then to either higher education and/or employment. The CoVE initiative will develop collaborative approaches with colleges, schools, employers, private training providers and higher education.

- *Private Training Providers*

The contracting process for work-based learning will recognise and build on providers and sectors which have a proven record of increasing achievement levels at Level 2. The Council will also assist providers to have rigorous self-monitoring processes and performance improvement strategies.

- *Local Education Authorities (LEAs)*

The LSC will through the LEAs of Cheshire and Warrington develop productive relationships with schools. From April 2002, through the LEAs, the LSC will become responsible not only for funding pupils in school 6th Forms but also for Post-16 pupils in LEA-maintained and non-maintained Special Schools. The Council supports the Cheshire LEA's post OFSTED Inspection Action Plan and in particular the planned review of sixth form provision which is designed to review and determine effectiveness of sixth form provision in Cheshire schools and, where necessary, to implement changes which could lead to greater collaboration between providers.

Our relationship will be developed also through CoVEs, 14-16 initiatives and the area studies. A communications strategy will be developed to promote the Council's activities with schools through the Cheshire and Warrington Associations of Secondary Heads (CASH and WASH).

There will be further close collaboration with local education authorities in the area of childcare, particularly in the provision of accessible and cost-effective facilities at local schools.

- *Adult and Community Learning Providers*

The Council will work with Cheshire Local Education Authority and Warrington Local Education Authority in order to secure adequate adult learning provision within Cheshire and Warrington to meet the identified learning needs and interests of adults.

- *Business Link Operator for Cheshire & Warrington*

The local Business Link Operator, Business Link Cheshire & Warrington is the Council's primary interface with Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and as such its "sales force to SMEs". As such the Business Link will be the key delivery mechanism of the Cheshire and Warrington workforce development service for SMEs. The LSC will lead in the development of strategic priorities and planning for workforce development implementation, with the Business Link contributing to this development and meeting specific needs relating to the SME sector.

In addition to the contractual relationship with the Business Link for delivery of services to SMEs, joint work will be undertaken to identify existing and emerging skills priorities within the SME sector, to engage SMEs in the workforce development agenda and to contribute to the planning and development of CoVEs in response to identified needs.

Other priorities will be the facilitation of links between the Business Link, Connexions and the Further Education and Work Based Learning provider network and work with Business Link to encourage employers and employees, particularly within the SME sector, to improve levels of numeracy and literacy within the workforce.

Business Link will also have a significant role in providing a Gateway and signposting service to learning opportunities for local employers.

- *Education Business Plus (Education Business Link Organisation)*

With Education Business Plus, the Council will develop, review, and contract manage the programmes to students that support participation, achievement, retention and progression of young learners. The Council will support Education Business Plus in its production of the Education Business Plus strategy.

- *Learning and Work Plus (Information Advice and Guidance)*

The availability of appropriate high quality local information, advice and guidance will be developed in the same way through the relationship with Learning and Work Plus.

Partners with whom the LSC's relationship is mainly around influencing and exchanging information include Employers, Connexions, local authorities, NWDA, Equality organisations, the TUC and SSCs.

- *Employers*

Employers already make the most significant financial contribution to the development of adult skills and this must be recognised and built on. Research shows that fewer employees in smaller firms have access to training and this places a reliance on larger employers to both bring their influence to bear on and provide support to their suppliers and other smaller employers in their local areas and networks.

There is a need and a clear mandate for strengthening the relationships between the local Learning and Skills Council and local employers both directly and, for example, through Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), employer networks and the local Business Link Operator. Employers, in turn must be free, and have the appropriate channels, to feed their skills requirements through their representative bodies, including SSCs and local employer networks and where necessary directly to the Council, to enable the necessary changes in style and content and quality of provision to be identified, verified and effected.

- *Connexions*

There will be close working with the Connexions Service within Cheshire & Warrington (the Council's "sales force to young people and parents") to ensure the needs of all learners, and particularly young learners, are being met. This will be facilitated by relationships between the Learning and Skills Council and Connexions which will be developed at Board and in particular at local Management Committee level. This will not only ensure that shared targets can be achieved but the range of opportunities available to young people reflects feedback from young people themselves.

Socio-economic data, destination data and Individual Learner Record data will be shared in order to improve continually the provision for learners. It will also be important to engage Connexions fully in the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence.

- *Local Authorities (LAs)*

The six Districts, the County and the Unitary Authority in Cheshire and Warrington will make a major contribution to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the Council. There are many existing fora within which the Council interacts with the Local Authorities including Strategic Partnerships, Community Planning Partnerships, Local Learning Partnerships and Economic Partnerships. The Council will look to work with LAs to identify areas of need within the area and then to plan to meet that need through a co-ordinated approach.

Work will also be undertaken with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Education Authorities in order to secure adequate adult and community learning provision within Cheshire and Warrington that not only targets resources to where they will be most effective in removing barriers to participation in learning, particularly by those who suffer disadvantage, but also maintains programmes that promote a lifelong learning culture.

- *North West Development Agency (NWDA)*

Whilst focussed on local needs the Council will also be working within a regional dimension in taking account of travel to work and learn patterns that extend beyond Cheshire and Warrington. Work will be undertaken with the NWDA to ensure that the Council's strategic aims are in line with the regional skills strategy and that sectoral priorities are aligned.

The NWDA's long-term strategy for the North West (*England's North West: a strategy towards 2020*) identifies a number of target and established sectors, such as:

- chemicals
- aerospace
- mechanical and other engineering
- automotive
- tourism

These sectors have been supported through a number of skills development and research projects. The North West LSCs will work closely with the NWDA to ensure that this is built on and work will be undertaken together in a complementary and co-ordinated approach across the region. For example, the NWDA will be involved in CoVE developments from a very early stage in defining the breadth of projects and in maximising opportunity for impact at both local and regional level to plan solutions.

- *Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)*

SSCs develop workforce development plans for their respective industries. As these are developed and refined for industry sectors relevant to the Cheshire and Warrington economy the Council will engage with SSCs to inform their planning and assist in the implementation.

- *Adult Learning Inspectorate/OfSTED*

The Inspectorates will play a key role locally in supporting and measuring improvements to the quality of delivery. This is through their 4-year cycle of institutional and area inspections. The Council will work with providers before their inspection by supporting them with self-assessment and post inspection with their action plan. Inspectors from both ALI/OfSTED participate in the provider review process.

- *Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU)*

The ABSSU has been charged with developing and implementing the Basic Skills Strategy. It will advise on best practice and new and successful ways of working that can be implemented in the field. Locally Cheshire and Warrington LSC has appointed two full time staff to implement the Basic Skills Strategy.

A regional network will be established with staff responsible for basic skills from the five North West LSCs and will meet on a monthly basis with the ABSSU regional representative. This will provide a secure platform from which to monitor progress towards the achievement of targets and review the delivery strategy.

- *Equality Organisations*

The Council will develop working partnerships with the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Racial Equality Council, local community and faith groups and appropriate regional and national organisations to ensure that equality of opportunity and the promotion of the benefits of diversity underpin and are central to all of the activities of this Council, its employees, partners and learning providers.

- *Trades Union Council (TUC)*

Trades unions have long been active in promoting workforce development with their members and employers. TUC Learning Services will therefore be an important partner in the development of post-16 learning. The advent of Learning Representatives within the TUC provides a further vehicle to promote the benefits of lifelong learning to both the employer and the non-learner, helping to reach those who have not been involved in learning since school and who have few or no qualifications.

- *Employment Service*

The Council will encourage closer working between ES and Providers to increase Modern Apprenticeship and take up and participation by adults. The two organisations will develop a shared Quality Agenda including joint reviews of shared providers and work on a common approach to self-assessment. There will also be joint working to address Basic Skills issues and information on local employer needs will be shared.

- *Local Learning and Skills Councils*

Travel to work and study patterns do not conform to administrative boundaries. Cross-border projects that relate to the skills needs of a particular workforce or community will be developed wherever appropriate. Liaison with colleagues in neighbouring LSCs will be utilised to share emerging and existing skills shortages and to work together to address these.

- *Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations*

Voluntary and Community organisations have established networks, links and partnerships that the Council can support and help to develop. Through these access will be gained to the views of learners, community and family learning initiatives will be promoted and a lifelong learning culture engendered. A strong voluntary sector also offers important opportunities for individuals to learn through volunteering.

- *University for Industry (Ufi)*

The Council will look to expand the local network of Ufi centres and access points and address the comparatively low take up in Cheshire and Warrington.

- *Criminal Justice Organisations*

Strong working partnerships will be developed with the Probation Service, Youth Offending Teams and the Prison Service to ensure that issues in "The Skills for Life – the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills" are addressed locally.

- *Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership*

The Council will work with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships to increase the number of childcare places in Cheshire and Warrington. High quality childcare is a vital element in enabling a large section of the adult community to participate in learning and in the labour market.

- *Health and Social Services*

The Council will work with Social Services, Community Mental Health Teams and General Practitioners to identify the learning needs of their clients and their families, to promote the benefits of learning and promote social inclusion through specific partnership projects and activities.

Key Partnerships which the LSC will be working with include Cheshire and Warrington Learning Partnerships, Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance, Mersey Dee Alliance, Local Strategic Partnerships and sector networks

- *Local Learning Partnerships*

Local Learning Partnerships and the LSC have a statutory relationship and it is fundamental that an enhanced and strong working relationship is developed to enable the achievement of joint and shared aims to promote a culture of lifelong learning and social inclusion. Specific initiatives will be developed together to identify local learning needs and to gain the views of individual learners and non-learners.

- *Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance (CWEA)*

The Council will support the CWEA in its economic activities within Cheshire and Warrington in those areas of work that are relevant to the strategic plan and the learning agenda. The Council will explore with CWEA how it can both make use of and enhance labour market information and understanding of emerging skills issues.

- *Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA)*

As the Alliance represents districts that span the Cheshire and Warrington and Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council areas in terms of both an economic and a travel-to-learn area, it affords the opportunity to address projects and issues on a wider basis. Work will continue with MDA on those projects that offer a cross-sectoral, geographic or community based approach to addressing a priority.

- *Local Strategic Partnerships*

The Council will work with local, district and neighbourhood partnerships to ensure that the strategic objectives and targets of the LSC are not only reflected in local plans, associated activities and projects but also that the Learning Strand in particular reflects and coherently addresses the needs of individuals, communities and employers.

- *Sector Networks*

Research will be undertaken in partnership at the local and regional level to identify specific skills issues within the North West. For example, the North West Tourism Skills and Employment Network has been able to provide the Council with a focus on local needs in this sector.

9.4 Health and Safety

The strategic health and safety objectives for Cheshire and Warrington will integrate with statutory duties imposed by current legislation and best practice.

Continuous improvements in Health and Safety standards will be at the forefront of all contractual and partnership arrangements. This will be achieved by the introduction of suitable and sufficient key stages of health and safety monitoring, determined by risk banding following the Provider Performance Review process. All learning activity will focus on the individual learner needs, irrespective of training route.

Best endeavour will be used to ensure that the Learner operates within a safe working environment, characterised by well-motivated, competent supervision, making full use of sound Health and Safety management methodology.

The Council will act as a support mechanism, becoming a catalyst for change and continual improvement through the sharing of good practice and dissemination of information throughout the Provider network and will assist in the development of providers using relevant funding mechanisms.

The Health and Safety Commission document "Revitalising Health and Safety" strategy statement and targets will create an emphasis on accident reporting and reduction. Statistical analysis will identify trends that will become the focus for attention.

Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council will be proactive in influencing the "safe Learner" concept, targeted through adherence to the "provider good practice guide". This sets the benchmark to which providers must aspire. In so doing, account will be taken of the outcomes derived from national H&S working groups.

Demonstrations of appropriate primary levels of duty of care will be expected from those providers at the forefront of Learner activity.

Partnerships with local education authorities and government bodies will be strengthened to assist the introduction of "risk education" at all levels.

Internally there will be a clear health and safety management commitment, based on a comprehensive, well communicated policy, sustained by effective measurement of "best practice" standards, and compliance review techniques.

9.5 Value for Money

Cheshire and Warrington LSC will ensure that the funding available to it will be used as effectively as possible, adding value and seeking opportunities to lever other resources where possible. It will also seek to eliminate wasteful and unhelpful competition between providers, wherever it occurs.

For instance, the Ofsted inspection of Cheshire Local Education Authority (October 2001) states, "Too many schools have small sixth forms. Although some provide a satisfactory quality of education, others are less effective. Fourteen schools have sixth forms with fewer than 150 pupils and six have fewer than 100." The Council will be working closely with Cheshire LEA to address this issue.

Two areas in which the Council will look to make early progress in gaining additional resources are those of **Co-financing** and **Information and Communication Technologies**.

The Council has applied to Government Office North West to become a Co-financing Organisation (CFO) under the new proposals for the European Social Fund. This will enable the Council to channel both ESF and its associated match funding for training providers and other organisations delivering against Council objectives.

Co-financing will enable the Council to take a strategic view of the use of ESF in Cheshire and Warrington and address local needs within the North West regional priorities of the European programme. Initially the focus will be on those ESF measures that cover lifelong learning, adaptability and entrepreneurship, and women's participation in the labour market.

The Council will work closely with other potential CFOs such as Connexions, Employment Service, Business Link and local authorities to ensure coherence of ESF funding across Cheshire and Warrington. Work will also be undertaken with providers to establish ways in which they can use ESF to enhance their provision.

It is anticipated that co-financing will be piloted in Cheshire and Warrington from April 2002 with full operation starting in Autumn 2002.

The Council will ensure that where possible co-financing **does not add to the burden of providers** and will integrate its operation within the contracting process for both mainstream and non formula funding such as the Local Initiative Fund.

Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) are revolutionising the way organisations and individuals work and learn. The Council recognises that electronic learning in conjunction with electronic business and information services is becoming an increasingly important component of its remit to maximise the competitiveness of local business and widen participation in learning. The Council aims to be a leader in the innovative and appropriate use of ICT to encourage more people into learning.

The workforce of the future will need to be flexible, adaptable ICT literate and have the ability to learn new skills to meet the changing nature of the world of work. In collaboration with key local partners, the Council will seek to develop its own e-learning strategy for Cheshire and Warrington, by the integration of e-learning activities with other modes of learning in order to build a more comprehensive and adaptable set of learning solutions. This strategy will be placed in the context of work already undertaken by the NWDA at a regional level and highlight those issues to be addressed locally particularly in terms of developing appropriate ICT infrastructure.

The promotion of e-learning will enable individuals, employers and communities to learn at a time, rate, place and in a manner to suit their particular requirements. It is important for individuals to be confident and competent in using ICT as a means of learning and the Council will also support the take up and use of ICT to ensure the benefits of e-learning are enjoyed by all and are used to overcome barriers to participation. To facilitate such a provision, the Council will work with other bodies towards securing a high quality provision of broadband network through the Cheshire and Warrington area, in line with regional strategy.

Working closely with the University for Industry through the learndirect network and the local hub structure, which promotes e-learning opportunities and access to learning, the Council will encourage colleges and training providers to use ICT and, where appropriate, to raise standards and ensure the efficient use of resources through new methods of delivery. The Council will seek to integrate other ICT initiatives like UK Online and E-Government into this development and promote a coherent and geographically well distributed network of learning centres for learners to access.

The Council will seek to initiate with partner organisations, examples of good practice in e-learning delivery as solutions to individual and business learning needs and share successful examples with others. This will also include the development and promotion of high quality content learning materials that demand to be used, together with a flexible network of delivery support and tutorial staff.

The appointment of an e-learning adviser demonstrates the commitment of the Council and will ensure that Cheshire and Warrington maximises the potential benefit of ICT for the development of learning and skills.

> Annex

A1. Organisation

Under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (the Act) the Secretary of State for Education and Employment was empowered to set conditions and requirements for the Learning and Skills Council which are laid out in the Financial Memorandum and Management Statement. This both governs the financial relationship between the DfES and the Council and sets out the Council's role, organisation and purpose. The Council derives its powers and duties from the Act and can only do those things that the Act provides for.

Relationship between the National Council and Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council.

The 47 local Councils are committees of the national Council. They carry out its functions locally as specified by the national Council which has overall responsibility for ensuring that local Councils fulfil their duties but do not exceed its specifications. This system combines national co-ordination and guidance with local knowledge, planning and flexibility.

Local Council members are appointed using the Nolan principles for public accountability for periods of two, three or four years. The Secretary of State must agree all appointments. Membership reflects both the geography of the area and its sectoral make-up; for example, business, the voluntary sector, unions and providers. However, members are appointed as independent individuals rather than as representatives of their organisation or employer.

The secretary of state has also specified that the local Council should invite to its meetings as observers the Employment Service regional director, the Government Office regional director, the head of the local Connexions Partnership and a representative of the local Business Links.

Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council Members

<p>Jim Bisset Chief Executive, David Lewis Centre</p>	<p>Clive Jeanes Board member, North West Development Agency</p>	<p>Helen Reed Community Services, Deafness Support Network</p>
<p>Mike Carr Formerly Managing Director, Martin Dawes</p>	<p>Tim Lawton Proprietor, TPL Hairdressing</p>	<p>Dr Karen Russ Technology Programmes Manager, Pilkington Technology Centre</p>
<p>Vic Croxson Principal, Reaseheath College</p>	<p>Bill McMillan Healthcare Services Manager, UNISON (North West Region)</p>	<p>Bill Rutter Formerly Site General Manager, Astra Zeneca</p>
<p>Julia Dowd Executive Director, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council</p>	<p>Philip Millward Manager of Personnel and Quality, Vauxhall Motors</p>	<p>Tim Wheeler Principal, Chester College of Higher Education</p>
<p>Brian Fleet (Chair) Director, Manufacturing, Airbus UK</p>	<p>Cllr Peter Nurse Chair of the Education Committee, Cheshire County Council</p>	
<p>Fran Hulbert Head of Skills Policy, North West Development Agency</p>		

Role

The local Council is responsible for:

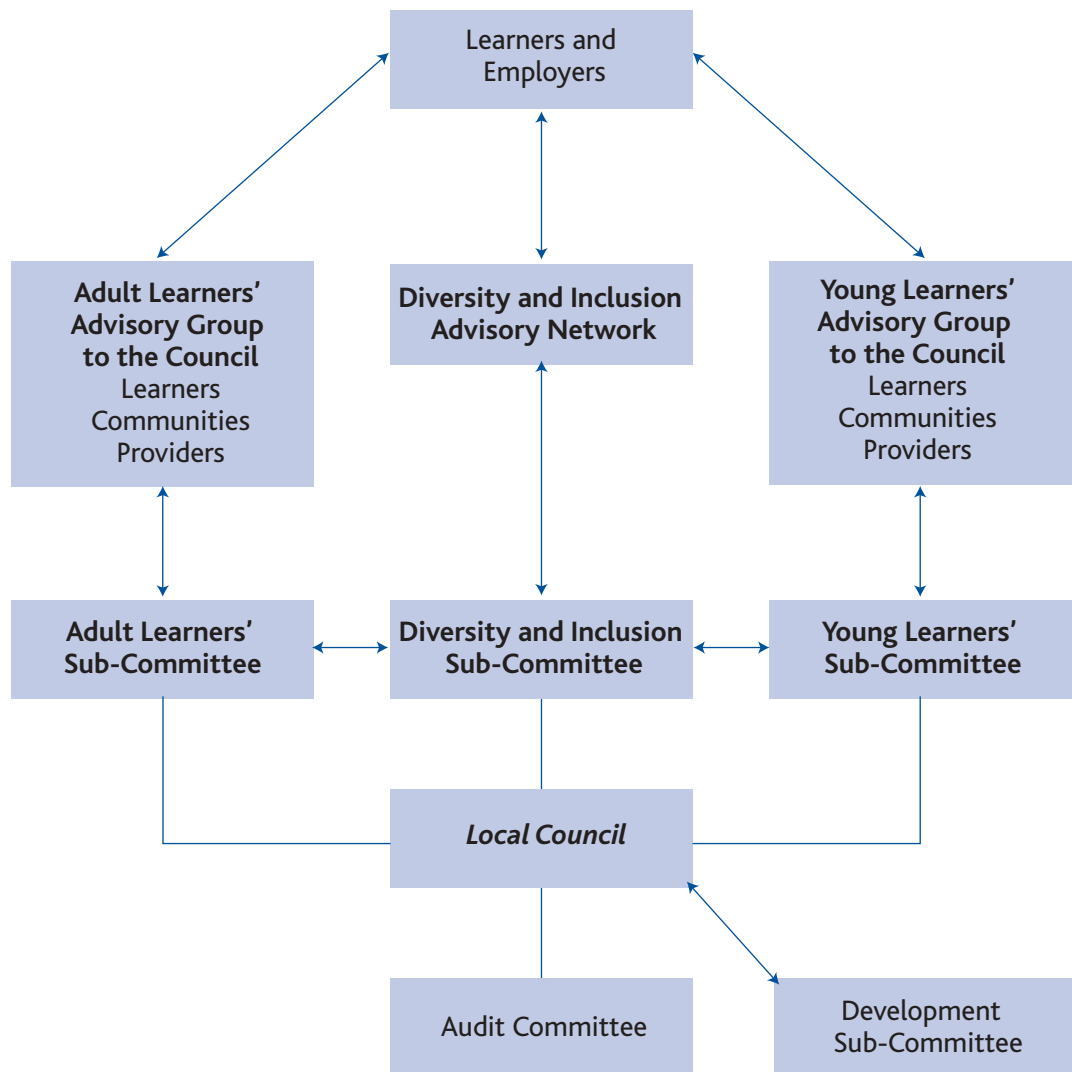
- agreeing the local strategic priorities and the local strategic and business plans informed by local intelligence on skills needs and priorities
- reviewing the performance of the local Learning and Skills Council against objectives, targets and priorities
- ensuring that an effective system of internal control operates
- ensuring activities are conducted in an open and responsible way
- ensuring that high standards of corporate governance are observed at all times.

The local Council has a number of sub-committees in order to inform planning processes and ensure that duties and targets are met:

- *Adult Learners' sub-committee* - advises on local issues relating to adults and organisations, such as adult basic skills, workforce development and achievement levels
- *Audit committee* ensures that effective systems of control are developed and adhered to, particularly with financial systems

- *Development sub-committee*- offers advice to the Learning and Skills Council for Cheshire and Warrington in order to progress matters affecting corporate governance, council evaluation, council development, and recruitment
- *Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee* - considers issues relating to widening participation, equal opportunities and social inclusion for all learners in the Cheshire and Warrington area
- *Young Learners' sub-committee* - advises on local issues relating to 16-21 year olds, such as participation and achievement.

Model Structure Council Consultative Process



Each sub-committee consists of local Council members and key officers and is supported by an advisory network, members of which act as conduits for issues raised by interest groups and stakeholders, from learners, employers and providers to learning partnerships and economic and business organisations.

Adult Learners' Sub-Committee	
Mike Carr (Chair)	Formerly Managing Director, Martin Dawes Ltd
Julia Dowd	Executive Director, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council
Clive Jeanes	Board member, North West Development Agency
Tim Lawton	Proprietor TPL Hairdressing
Bill McMillan	Healthcare Services Manager, Unison
Anne Petry	Director of Innovation and Inclusion, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council
Ian Ruff	Innovation Manager, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council
Bob Slusarchuk	Director of Learning and Skills Programmes, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council

Audit Committee	
Jim Bisset	Chief Executive, David Lewis Centre for Epilepsy
Steven Broomhead (co-opted)	Chair, Cheshire and Warrington Connexions Partnership
Karen Russ	Technology Programmes Manager Pilkington Plc
Tim Wheeler	Principal, Chester College of Higher Education
Councillor Dot Flint (co-opted)	Local Government Association
Liz Lunn (Co-opted)	Head of Audit, Cheshire County Council

Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee	
Julia Dowd	Executive Director, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council
Anne Petry	Director of Innovation and Inclusion, Cheshire and Warrington LSC
Helen Reed (Joint Chair)	Head of Community Services, Deafness Support Network
Bill Rutter (Joint Chair)	Formerly Site General Manager, AstraZeneca Research and Development
Vic Croxson	Principal, Reaseheath College
Members of the Innovation and Inclusion team as required	Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council

Young Learners' Sub-Committee	
Jim Bisset (Chair)	Chief Executive, David Lewis Centre for Epilepsy
Anne Bundell	Access and Information Manager, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council
Julia Dowd	Executive Director, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council
Fran Hulbert	Head of Skills Policy, North West Development Agency
Karen Kelsall	Raising Standards Manager, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council
Bob Slusarchuk	Director of Learning and Skills Programmes, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council
Bill Rutter	Formerly Site General Manager, AstraZeneca Research and Development

Development Sub-Committee	
Jim Bisset (Deputy Chair)	Chief Executive, David Lewis Centre for Epilepsy
Julia Dowd	Executive Director, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council
Brian Fleet (Chair)	Director, Manufacturing, Airbus UK
Bill McMillan	Healthcare Services Manager, Unison, (North West Region)
Karen Russ	Technology Programmes Manager, Pilkington Technology Centre
John Rawsthorne	Director of Resources, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council

A2. Evaluation arrangements

Evaluation of the Strategic Plan will be about evaluating the overall performance of the Council in achieving its mission and objectives in the local area and finding ways to improve.

This will be achieved through:

- Developing measures and criteria to demonstrate the progress being made
- Evaluating achievement against these measures and criteria
- Identifying the causes of success and failure
- Applying the lessons learned in future strategic planning
- Reformulating targets and activities in the light of this analysis.

Partner organisations will be involved in this evaluation through reviews, surveys and audits which will measure issues such as learner achievement, participation, destinations and satisfaction; equal opportunities; health and safety; outcomes of funded activities. The information used will be both quantitative and qualitative.

A3. Consultation process

Local consultation on this Strategic Plan began in October 2001 for a twelve week period in line with recommended Government Guidelines. Following discussions between the local Council, its three sub-committees and advisory groups, the Plan was distributed to the Council's partners and stakeholders in Cheshire and Warrington and the wider region. After revision based on comments received (available to view on the LSC website), the Plan was passed to the National Council for approval. The Council is then able to roll forward the Corporate Plan, based on a "bottom-up" process of assimilating information from all 47 local plans. Those organisations which endorsed the draft version of the Plan included:

- Charter Training
- Cheshire Association of Learning Providers
- Cheshire County Council
- Cheshire Learning Partnership
- Congleton Borough Council
- Equality North West Ltd
- Henbury High School
- LearnDirect
- Learning Northwest
- Macclesfield Borough Council
- Martin Dawes Ltd
- North West Development Agency
- North West Tourism Skills and Employment Network
- Sandbach School
- Sir John Deane's College
- South Cheshire College
- Sutton High School
- Vale Royal Borough Council
- Vale Royal CVS
- Warrington Borough Council
- Warrington Collegiate Institute
- Warrington Learning Partnership

A4 Basic skills

Population 16-60 with Poor Literacy Skills as a Percentage/ Count

District Authority	Population 16- 60	Low Literacy	%	Lower Literacy	%	Very Low Literacy	%	Total with Poor Literacy	%
Chester	69500	9954	14.3	2678	3.9	2318	3.3	14950	21.5
Congleton	52565	7155	13.6	2040	3.9	1615	3.1	10809	20.6
Crewe & Nantwich	68936	10941	15.9	3049	4.3	2929	4.2	16919	24.5
Ellesmere Port & Neston	47314	7233	15.3	2374	5	2024	4.3	11648	24.6
Macclesfield	90411	12269	13.6	3247	3.6	2766	3.1	18282	20.2
Vale Royal	69794	10268	14.7	3012	4.3	2684	3.8	15964	22.9
Warrington	114865	16748	14.6	5254	4.6	4426	3.9	26428	23
C & W LSC	513385	74568	15%	21654	4%	18762	4%	115000	22%
National Average 2000		Low Literacy	15%	Lower Literacy	5%	Very Low Literacy	4%	Total with Poor Literacy	24%

Population 16-60 with Poor Numeracy Skills as a Percentage/ Count

District Authority	Population 16-60	Low Numeracy	%	Lower Numeracy	%	Very Low Numeracy	%	Total with Poor Numeracy	%
Chester	69500	7230	10.4	4285	6.2	3046	4.4	14561	21
Congleton	52565	5720	10.9	2867	5.5	1949	3.7	10537	20
Crewe & Nantwich	68936	8429	12.2	4761	6.9	3890	5.6	17080	24.8
Ellesmere Port & Neston	47314	5873	12.4	3381	7.1	2513	5.3	11767	24.9
Macclesfield	90411	9201	10.2	4827	5.3	3345	3.7	17374	19.2
Vale Royal	69794	8206	11.8	4404	6.3	3386	4.9	15996	22.9
Warrington	114865	13595	11.8	7305	6.4	5412	4.7	26312	22.9
C & W LSC	513385	58254	11%	31830	6%	23541	5%	113627	22%
National Average 2000		Low Numeracy	12%	Lower Numeracy	7%	Very Low Numeracy	5%	Total with Poor Numeracy	24%

Source: The Basic Skills Agency, Estimates of Level of Need in English Unitary and Local Authorities, (September 2000)

A5 Sectoral Focus

Sector	Employment Growth/Decline	Main Location	Skills Issues
Business and Financial Services	Growth	Chester, Macclesfield, Warrington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT & website skills. • Technical skills.
Retail	Stable	Warrington, Ellesmere Port, Chester, Macclesfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing importance of sale skills and customer service skills. • Increasing demand for ICT skills to meet the needs of e-tailing and e-distribution.
Tourism, Hospitality, Leisure	Short Term Decline but Long Term Growth	Present across all areas, tourism concentration in Chester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaknesses in generic skills (see key below). Lack of ICT skills, demand for qualified chefs and cooks outstrips supply. Skills gaps in fund-raising, operational management and audience generation in cultural heritage sector.
Engineering and Technology	Subject to restructuring	Crewe, Ellesmere Port, Congleton, Warrington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of new technologies, new product developments, new ways of organising and managing work. • Local shortages in machine engineering and electronic assembly.
Care & Health	Growth based on demographic trends, longer life expectancy.	Located across the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a general shortage of nurses, ideally 1 in 5 of the working population is needed to fill all the nursing positions. (both public and private sector). • IT training to enhance and develop nursing roles improving networking and sharing good practice. • Training in Managed Care Pathways, enhancing evidence based decision making. • More consultant nurses in clinical practice and developing the teaching and research role.

Sector	Employment Growth/Decline	Main Location	Skills Issues
Education	Growth	Present across all areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shortages: lecturers and support staff with the requisite levels of expertise in IT, engineers and construction lecturers and suitable staff to compete for promotional posts. • Skills gaps: teaching the disaffected, business development, pedagogic and research skills and teaching of basic skills. • New mandatory qualifications, from September 2001 new lecturers who are unqualified will have to embark on an endorsed programme of teacher training.
Construction	Marginal growth	Vale Royal, Warrington, Macclesfield, Congleton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a shortage of suitable younger workers to replace mature workers who are retiring. • Improving the qualification of the existing workforce in order to improve retention rates. • Shortages result from a general lack of applications and a lack of skills amongst those who do come forward. • There are development needs of adult entrants and existing workers. • A major recruitment drive for new entrants, including women and ethnic minorities.
Wholesale, Warehousing and Logistics	Growth	Warrington, Vale Royal, Crewe and Nantwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry specific Management skills. • Sales knowledge.
Electricity, gas & water	Stable	Warrington,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaknesses in generic skills, (see below) • Multi-skilling provision is expected to lead to requirements in multi-skilling as it strives for greater efficiency (Electricity/ Gas) • Difficulty in recruiting management and technical posts due to adequately skilled and qualified applicants (electricity).

Sector	Employment Growth/Decline	Main Location	Skills Issues
Chemicals	Fluctuating due to changes in world demand	Warrington, Congleton, Macclesfield, Vale Royal, Ellesmere Port	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New working practices needing new skills. • Demand for replacement labour.
Public Administration	Stable – slight increase	Present across all areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The drive towards being at the forefront of the new e-economy has wide ranging human resource implications. • Skills for service delivery, project management, business planning and risk management, shortage of individuals with high quality policy skills and customer service skills and stakeholder relationship management. • Recruitment and retention of staff with ability, enthusiasm, skills and vision.
ICT	Growth	Macclesfield/ Warrington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business awareness and commercial knowledge. • Employers from all sectors rated technical skills very highly. Technical skills considered more important than academic learning.
Property and Estates	Stable	Present across all areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT & website skills. • Technical skills.
Biotechnology and Pharmaceuticals	Buoyant- growth in both production and numbers employed	Macclesfield, Ellesmere Port	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work unsupervised. • Employees able to work as part of a team, many employers looking for staff with at least a first degree in a related discipline.
Food and Drink Manufacturing	Some sectors in decline as a result of problems in Agriculture	Congleton, Warrington, Vale Royal, Crewe & Nantwich,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic and key skills e.g. communication and teamworking. • Technical and practical skills. • Vocational knowledge. • Generic management skills. • IT skills among skilled workers. • Motivation and attitude.

Sector	Employment Growth/Decline	Main Location	Skills Issues
Agriculture and Horticulture	Decline overall – employment in sub-sector is expected to increase notably in environmental conservation, equine, horticulture and landscaping. The net result is a projected modest increase nationally of 12,600 in the total land-based workforce by 2006.	Rural Cheshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher level job-specific skills supported by generic skills such as communication, customer care and initiative, use and application of ICT. Higher level business and management skills.
Textiles	Stable - decline	Macclesfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for new and innovative product development. Manage change in the market.
Rail Manufacture	Decline/ slowdown	Crewe, Congleton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craft and technical staff to have IT and electronic skills as well as their own main mechanical engineering specialism.
Transport	Slight Growth / slowdown	Warrington, Macclesfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased demand for the number of drivers and rising expectations of the length and breadth of skills drivers as they are increasingly expected to deal with new technology and be more responsive to customer requirements Generic Skills High staff turnover, particularly in areas of low unemployment where higher paid alternative employment may be available. Lack of clear development opportunities. Little opportunity for managers and owners to upgrade their management knowledge and skills.

Sector	Employment Growth/Decline	Main Location	Skills Issues
Creative Industries	Growth	Macclesfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific technical skill gaps around software developments and programming, multi-media, digital technology and TV. • Presentation and key skills. • Difficulty in sourcing high quality trainers, reflection of 'industry needs'.
Mining & Quarrying	Static	Winsford, Middlewich, Macclesfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving business management and enterprise skills for the owner-managers. • Raising and broadening the skills levels of the workforce from level 2 to level 3. • Recruitment drive for high calibre new entrants.
Aerospace	Decline	Macclesfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for high value work, require additional skilled technical and professional employees in the future. • ICT skills in particular will be in increased demand, at all levels in the aerospace industry, from clerical staff through to design engineers, as IT and communication technologies become increasingly linked to running a business.
Medical Equipment and Technology	Marginal growth	Small employers located across area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for commercial awareness as technologies change and develop.
Environmental Technologies	Growth - driven by legislative changes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic skills.
Voluntary sector	Limited growth	Across the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management, financial planning/fundraising, IT skills

Key: Generic skills - Numeracy, Literacy, Multi-skilling, Decision making, Team working, Communication, Organisation and Management, Business awareness, Problem solving, Team working, Customer Service Skills, Product Knowledge, Flexibility.

A6. Inspection Grades for Cheshire & Warrington Learning & Skills Council Providers

Private Training Learning Providers	Inspection Date	Equal Opportunities	Trainee support	Management of Training	Quality Assessment	Agriculture	Business Administration	Construction	Engineering	Foundation	Hair and Beauty	Health Care and Public Services	Hospitality	Leisure, Sport and Travel	Life Skills	Management and Professional	Manufacturing	Media and Design	Retail and Customer Services	
**** Career Steps Ltd	25/06/01												2							
Charter Training Services Ltd	06/99	3	2	3*	3		2									3				3
DDI (Chester) Limited	04/99	3	3*	3	3*		3			3			2							
\$Equestrian Skills	23/01/02	3			4	3														
FFE&VTS Ltd	10/98	2	2	3	3*									2						
GoSmart Ltd	No inspection carried out to date																			
Hospitality Plus	18/04/01	2	3	2	2		3						2	3						3
HCTC Limited	No inspection carried out to date																			
Martin Dawes	05/05/99	2	2	1	2															2
Mid Cheshire College of Further Education	04/08/99	2	3	2	2		3			2										
National Council of YMCAs (inc)	30/08/00	2	2	3	2*	3*	3	2		1			2			2		2		3*
North Lancs Training Group Ltd	04/99	2	3	3	3		4*	2					2				3			2
Pertemps CBS Ltd	08/99	3	3	3	3		2													3
Reaseheath College	03/99	3*	3	3	3	3*														

Private Training Learning Providers	Inspection Date	Equal Opportunities	Trainee support	Management of Training	Quality Assessment	Agriculture	Business Administration	Construction	Engineering	Foundation	Hair and Beauty	Health Care and Public Services	Hospitality	Leisure, Sport and Travel	Life Skills	Management and Professional	Manufacturing	Media and Design	Retail and Customer Services		
																				Recently inspected – No grades released to date	
§ Sandbach School Training & Development Centre	29/01/02	4			3		4														
SBC Training & Consultancy	09/99	3	2	1	2		2	3				3				2	3			2	
**SDA Training Ltd	05/01					3	3					4	3	3			3			3	
Protocol Skills Ltd	24/09/01	Recently inspected – No grades released to date																			
Technical Training Enterprise Ltd	26/08/98	2	1	3	2				2												
***Total People Ltd	12/01/00	2	2	2	2		1	2	2	2	1	3	3			1	1	3		2	
§TTC Training	05/11/01	4			4		4		4				5							4	
United Utilities	03/03/99	2	2	2	3				2												
Vale Royal Borough Council Training Centre	21/01/01	3	2	4	4		3	3	2	4		2									
Vale Royal Training Trust Ltd	24/02/99	3	3	2	3		2	2	3												
Warrington Borough Council	16/05/01	2	3	3	3		3													3	
Warrington Collegiate Institute	No inspection carried out to date																				
****Learning Connection	30/07/01					4	4	5	5												
West Cheshire College	11/99	2	3	3	2		2		3		3			2*							

* re-inspection grade **SDA Inspected by Wales Inspection Board – Generic Grades are Planning & Management Training SDA – 4; Equality of Opportunity & trainee support –SDA – 3; Resources for training SDA – 3; Management of quality, SDA – 4.

***Total People gradings based on inspection on previous company South & East Cheshire TEC Training Services

****Career Steps and Learning Connection recently inspected within new Ali framework. Career Steps graded 3 for Leadership and management, with contributory grades for Equal Opportunities – 4, and Quality assurance – 4. Learning Connection were graded 4 for Information and Communication Technology, 4 for Leadership and management, 5 for Equal Opportunities and 4 for Quality assurance.

§Equestrian skills. Sandbach School and TTC Training all graded 4 for leadership and management.

Macclesfield College	Inspection Date	98/99	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
	Support for Students		3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
	General Resources		3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
	Quality Assurance		3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
	Governance		2	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
	Management		3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
	Science		4	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
	Admin, Business & Management		3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
	Health, social & Childcare		2	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
	Art & Design		2	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
English, modern foreign languages and EFL		3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	
Provision for students with learning difficulties		2	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	

Mid Cheshire College of Further Education	Inspection Date	98/99	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
	Support for Students		2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
	General Resources		2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
	Quality Assurance		3	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
	Governance		2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
	Management		2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
	Science & Mathematics		3	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
	Engineering		3	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
	Business		2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
	Leisure & Tourism		2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
Art & Design		1	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	
Humanities		3	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	

Priestley College	Inspection Date	97/98	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2
	Support for Students		1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2
	General Resources		2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2
	Quality Assurance		1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2
	Governance		2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2
	Management		1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2
	Science		2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2
	Leisure & Tourism		3	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2
	Art and design/ performing arts		2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2
	Humanities		2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2

Reaseheath College		Inspection Date	1	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	3
Grades		May 97	Responsiveness & range of provisions	Governance & Management	Students' recruitment, guidance & support	Quality Assurance	Resources: Staffing	Resources: equipment/ learning resources	Resources: accommodation	Agriculture	Animal care & Equine	Engineering	Business & management	Countryside, horticulture & arboriculture	

Sir John Deane's		Inspection Date	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Grades		99/00	Support for Students	General Resources	Quality Assurance	Governance	Management	Mathematics, Computing & I.T.	Business	Geography, History, Politics, R.E.	Art, Performing Arts, Design Technology, Textiles

South Cheshire College		Inspection Date	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	1
Grades		98/99	Support for Students	General Resources	Quality Assurance	Governance	Management	Science & I.T.	Business Administration	Catering & Hospitality	Leisure & Tourism	Child, health & social care	Creative and performing arts	English

Warrington Collegiate Institute	98/99	Support for Students	3	General Resources	3	Quality Assurance	3	Governance	3	Management	3	Mathematics, computing & I.T.	2	Engineering	3	Business & Management	3	Health & care	3	English	2	Adult basic education & provision for students with learning difficulties/disabilities														
												3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3					
												3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3			
												3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3		
												3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
												3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
												3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
												3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
												3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
												3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

West Cheshire College	97/98	Support for Students	3	General Resources	2	Quality Assurance	2	Governance	3	Management	3	Science & mathematics	3	Engineering	2	Hair & beauty	2	English & modern foreign languages	2	Business administration, management & prof. studies	2															
												3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2					
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N.B. Schools inspection report data is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk

A7. Glossary

ABSSU	Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit
CASH	Cheshire Association of Secondary Head Teachers
CoVEs	Centres of Vocational Excellence
CWEA	Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance
CFO	European Co-financing Organisation
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EBLO	Education Business Link Organisation
EO	Equal Opportunities
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MDA	Mersey Dee Alliance
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
NWDA	North West Development Agency
PIU	Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit
SMEs	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
SSCs	Sector Skills Councils (formerly NTO's – National Training Organisations)
Ufi	University for Industry
WASH	Warrington Association of Secondary Head Teachers
WP	Widening Participation

Summary of NVQ levels

NVQs are allocated to one of 5 levels, which range from competent performance at a very basic skill to competent performance at a senior management level.

- **Level 1:** The most basic, GCSE grade D-G / Foundation GNVQ. The candidate would be competent in a range of work activities, which are routine; the candidate would require supervision.
- **Level 2:** Broadly equates to GCSE grade A*-C / Intermediate GNVQ. The candidate would be competent in a significant range of work activities some of which are not predictable or routine. A degree of autonomy is given; the candidate would not require supervision.
- **Level 3:** Broadly equates to 2 A Levels / Advanced GNVQ. The candidate would be competent in quite a broad range of activities, which would cover a variety of contexts. The work would be complex; the candidate would be supervising other staff.
- **Level 4:** Broadly equates to higher professional graduate and postgraduate level. The candidate would be competent in a broad range of work activities, which are technical and require significant responsibility; the candidate would be managing other staff.
- **Level 5:** Broadly equates to higher professional graduate and postgraduate level. The candidate would be competent in a significant range of complex techniques across a wide range of unpredictable contexts; the candidate would be managing or co-managing an organisation.

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