

LEARNING ELEMENTS OF THE SINGLE REGENERATION BUDGET

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Foreword

Learning throughout life has never been more important. We live in an increasingly competitive world where skills are crucial to maintaining and improving our standard of living. But lifelong learning has other benefits. It contributes to our quality of life, promotes active citizenship and can help to end social exclusion by giving people and communities real hope of future prosperity and well-being.

The potential of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) to enable more people to undertake effective learning in a range of different contexts has long been accepted. This study brings together real examples and activities within the framework of lifelong learning for the first time. It draws together valuable strategic and process lessons for Government and for its partners involved in social regeneration and learning issues.

It is clear that initiatives like the SRB offer invaluable opportunities to develop and, in the longer term, to disseminate good practice and expertise. Many of its outcomes are highly relevant to mainstream policy development and practice.

Many of the issues raised here are being addressed through other governmental studies and reviews, and this study has helped inform these, including most notably the recently published White Paper, *Learning to Succeed* (Cm 4392) (The Stationery Office, 1999).

If you have any comments on the report, these can be posted on DfEE's Lifelong Learning website (www.lifelonglearning.co.uk where this document, executive summary, case studies and thematic good practice notes are available electronically) or sent to:

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Information on where to obtain copies of the other outputs of this study can be found on p45.

Introduction

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) commissioned *The Learning Elements of Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) study* to review the learning elements of the SRB. The research was designed to review the direct contribution and added value which the SRB is making to the Government's lifelong learning aims.

Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)

The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions is responsible for the SRB which became operational in 1995/96, drawing together resources from 20 former programmes from five Government Departments. The SRB is now administered by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in all regions except London where the Government Office will continue to administer it until the Greater London Authority is established in April 2000.

The SRB provides resources to support regeneration initiatives in England carried out by local partnerships. It is for partnerships to decide their local priorities, which projects to fund and how they are implemented.

Methodology

This study examined 24 projects from 17 schemes, mostly drawn from the third round of the SRB (approved in 1997). The study - largely based on interviews with scheme co-ordinators, project managers and beneficiaries, rather than detailed quantitative analysis - offers some valuable messages and lessons. Project selection was designed to provide a varied rural and urban spread, by region, of DfEE priorities.

The focus on Round 3 SRB schemes inevitably means that the projects are still at a relatively early stage in their life-time, and it is therefore premature to form final judgements about impact and outcomes. However, it has been possible in this study to draw out valuable indicative information.

Round 3 SRB schemes were conceived, at the latest, in the first few months of this Government. Nevertheless, the learning projects address many of the issues that have subsequently emerged as government priorities - including, for example, attracting adults to post-compulsory education, promoting family learning and making the post-16 syllabus more attractive to disaffected students. The schemes reviewed here are therefore of relevance to the design and implementation of policy across a range of DfEE priorities.

This report:

- summarises the study's key findings, focusing in particular on *key themes* within the Government's lifelong learning priorities;
- describes some of the key *process* lessons arising from the research, and which may be of relevance beyond the SRB;

- discusses the notion of *added value* in this context, offering some specific examples of how schemes reviewed have enhanced mainstream provision; and
- sets out *conclusions*, makes *recommendations* to a variety of audiences and offers a brief summary of each project (22 full case studies and six thematic good practice texts are published separately. See p45 for details of where to obtain copies.)

Section 1: Substantive Policy Lessons

Introduction

Almost all the projects, and the programmes of which they are a part, address a wide range of the DfEE's lifelong learning priorities.

The schemes and projects selected for this study display a remarkably high degree of consensus about the priorities for promoting learning *within programmes of regeneration and in disadvantaged communities*. While there are many similarities between these and the Department's lifelong learning priorities as set out in *The Learning Age Green Paper* (CM3790) (The Stationery Office, 1998), the regeneration context leads to a distinctive emphasis. In almost every case, the priorities of the SRB partnerships reflect perceptions of under-achievement (of individuals, businesses and communities), the consequences of which include economic disadvantage, a lack of competitiveness, poverty, and often social exclusion. This leads to a local awareness of the inter-relationship between educational performance and the wider socio-economic circumstances.

Observations

"In areas of high deprivation, it is vital that we tackle the problems of educational low attainment and under-achievement in the round. It would be facile to pretend that poor social conditions, lack of jobs, difficult family circumstances and lack of money and therefore opportunity, do not affect a child's education. To deal with the three Rs without looking behind the child to see what the major factors causing under-attainment are, is to waste money and resources. In what we have tried to do in Speke Garston, the child has been set within the community and we have begun to harness the community systematically to the education and learning process."

Former Director of Speke Garston Partnership

This Section assesses the contribution of the SRB to DfEE priorities and the following discussion is structured around the key themes as they emerge from our case studies:

- improving access to learning - widening participation;
- basic skills development;
- routes and attitudes to work;
- improving motivation and tackling disaffection; and
- schools management and classroom practices

1.1 Improving Access to Learning: Widening Participation

One common element running through the analysis of issues on which many of these programmes and projects is based, is the low level of attainment and skills, associated with low rates of participation. Identifying and overcoming barriers to participation is thus a key theme of many, if not all, of the schemes reviewed here.

There are perhaps three distinct sets of approaches adopted by the SRB schemes in this sample.

- i) Providing 'hooks' into learning, both to attract those not participating, and to retain those in danger of dropping out. Examples include:
 - attracting parents (and other carers) back into learning through their children - family literacy schemes, ostensibly designed to improve children's reading, also help develop reading skills among parents, grandparents and other family members;
 - giving incentives to undertake vocational training through the direct offer of employment opportunities that customised training provides; and
 - building the self-esteem and confidence of disaffected school students through the provision of activities outside the range of formal education.
- ii) Designing and funding project activities to overcome specific obstacles to participation in learning. Examples include:
 - perhaps most obviously, providing childcare support to enable parents (and especially lone parents) to take up learning opportunities;
 - supporting language training for minority ethnic groups as a first step towards equipping them for participation in wider training and education; and
 - overcoming lack of knowledge about provision, and the lack of confidence to pursue inquiries, by providing financial support for outreach workers to liaise with particularly excluded communities.

Examples of these two categories are dealt with elsewhere in this Section.

- iii) Projects to improve the *accessibility* of learning opportunities. Within the sample there are examples of two kinds of response:
 - establishing (or extending) physical centres within which accessible learning activities take place; and
 - promoting wider access to learning through electronic means.

Those schemes that have improved the accessibility of provision include:

- *Sowerby Bridge Forum's Carlton Mill*: The original local adult education facility was run down and the closest provision was therefore some miles away in Halifax. The solution was to bring back into use part of a disused mill as an adult and community education facility.
- *Barnsley Highway to Success Priory Campus*: Opened in 1995 as a flagship under City Challenge, Priory Campus provides a wide range of resources for a broad spectrum of users, including adults and local schools.
- *Medway Ruler's Bridge Wardens' College*: The scheme places learning, particularly higher education, at the heart of business and economic development. A combination of need and opportunity in the Medway towns led to the decision to establish a college as part of the University of Kent (which previously had a limited presence in the west of the county).
- *Digital Learning Community*: The fourth 'access' project (though it is much more besides) is the Digital Learning Community, an extraordinarily ambitious proposal that seeks to 'harness the digital revolution for South West London'. The scheme aims to promote better understanding of ICT, and to make the technologies accessible to, all sections of the community.

While it is too early to evaluate some of the projects reviewed in this study, there are already in all the cases, some impressive achievements in terms of outputs or 'interim objectives'. It is therefore possible to draw some key lessons from the design of these 'widening participation' projects.

Key Lessons

- Within disadvantaged communities, motivation to participate in learning is low. This is partly because the lack of job prospects diminishes the perceived return. However, it is possible to build in direct incentives to participate, provided the learning is clearly linked to tangible outcomes (for example, parents' reading abilities and their children's literacy).
- The learning 'system' is fragmented and confusing, particularly for those whose confidence in their own abilities is low. Pro-active techniques, including intensive outreach work, are needed to engage those most removed from learning.
- The importance of *locally* available provision, particularly for basic skills, cannot be exaggerated.
- Perhaps the single most important lesson of all these projects concerns the capacity of educational institutions to extend their use throughout the community.

1.2 Basic Skills Development

The report of Sir Claus Moser's Working Group, *Improving Literacy and Numeracy: A Fresh Start*, (DfEE 1999), was a powerful reminder of the low level of basic skills attainment that characterises the UK generally. Indeed, many of the areas covered by the schemes in this study display levels of literacy and numeracy below the national average. This is often compounded by limited proficiency in English where there are concentrations of minority ethnic and refugee populations.

These limitations impede broader progress in school, restrict formal qualifications, and affect access to (at least some types of) training. For many of the SRB partnerships, tackling low basic and core skills is a fundamental prerequisite for significant progress in any other area of activity.

Improving basic skills and competences is therefore a common strand running through the majority of the schemes reviewed for the study. Indeed, it is the main focus of five of the case study projects. In four cases the focus is on early years and primary school children; the fifth is designed to embed a comprehensive strategy for core skills development across the whole of a city - in this case, Birmingham. In every case, alongside the focus on early years, projects attempt in a variety of ways to take opportunities to improve the basic skills of the adults alongside their children's.

Evidence

A particularly innovative example of the use of regeneration funding is the Birmingham Core Skills Partnership (BCSP). This Round 2 scheme (total value of £39 million, of which £29 million comes from the SRB), is a partnership which aims 'to raise the platform of literacy and numeracy across all sections of Birmingham' by:

- enhancing (and informing) wider strategies;
- creating a set of whole organisation/ whole city changes; and
- establishing a 'joined up' strategic and systemic approach.

The main rationale for programmes like the SRB is that the injection of relatively modest sums can exert a catalytic effect that produces longer term changes in the design and delivery of main programmes. It is extremely rare, however, to see this explicitly recognised at the scheme level as in the BCSP example. The full case study gives more details of how this is being achieved.

As always, it is not easy to demonstrate an unambiguous causal link between any particular intervention and improved performance. However, there have been significant improvements reported in the early years of the BCSP's operation. For example, in Key Stage 2 SATs, the percentage improvement between 1996 and 1997 was twice the national average in Maths, English and Science.

Evidence - Early Years

A focus on early years and primary school learning provides one of the strands in the BCSP strategy and is increasingly common in many regeneration-funded interventions. The projects in this study address early needs in a variety of ways.

- Among a variety of educational projects in the *'Working Communities in the Erewash Valley'* scheme is one tackling family literacy. The project focuses on working with parents (or other adult carers such as grandparents) to support children's learning, while at the same time helping adults to improve their own communication skills.
- One of six strands in Hattersley's *'Towards a Learning Community'* Scheme concentrates on early years development including:
 - childcare provision - pre-school, early years reading and breakfast and after-school clubs;
 - childcare training, involving parents in the education and care of their children; and
 - Homestart, a voluntary organisation providing support to families under stress in their own homes;
- *Raising Attainment in the National Curriculum* in Coventry and Warwick is aimed at pupils whose academic performance is affected by poor command of English. Activities include: collaborative work with class and subject teachers to deliver language support across the curriculum; bilingual approaches to learning in the early years; and developing mother tongue language skills in children from ethnic minorities and seeking recognition and accreditation for the achievements.

None of these projects reports difficulties achieving outputs at this early stage, and in every case there is favourable anecdotal evidence. A few quotations from some of the participants in the Hattersley project indicate high levels of customer satisfaction.

Observations

Customer comments on the Hattersley scheme

'This is my Butlin's.' (seven year old on Holiday Play Scheme).

'I love kids – this will help me get a job at the end.' (parent on NVQ childcare course)

'I want my kids to do better than me. I've never had a job – I was pregnant at 16 and have always looked after my kids.' (32 year old mother of four)

*'I use to **** myself when someone put a piece of paper in front of me but not now.'* (parent on family literacy schemes).

Key Lessons

Even at a relatively early stage in their development, these schemes and projects display some important lessons for others.

- SRB special funds can influence the shape, quality and degree of linkages within main programme provision.
- The involvement of a wide range of partners throughout project design and implementation means that the achievements of short-life projects are more likely to continue beyond the end of funding.
- The interests of the children offer powerful incentives to engage related adults, with limited basic skills, in learning.
- In addition to work with adults, tackling under-achievement requires intervention at the earliest possible age.

1.3 Routes and Attitudes to Work

Regeneration agencies have been providing assistance to projects to ease the transition to work for far longer than any other kind of learning intervention. School-industry links were central to Compacts during the 1980s and remain at the heart of Education-Business Partnerships (EBP). The case for structured school-industry links is as strong as ever, and the frequency with which they appear in SRB strategies suggests that there are still insufficient resources to fund adequate levels of activity (or perhaps, adequate activities) from mainstream resources. It is therefore unsurprising that many of the projects in this sample tread familiar ground.

Evidence

This theme is represented by a fairly disparate range of projects.

- Adur Industry First's *Education to Industry* project was designed to: (i) make teachers aware of the needs of employers in the Adur district; (ii) identify local skill shortages and work with schools to meet the shortages; (iii) to make local employers aware of the possibilities within the curriculum; and (iv) to enhance the image of manufacturing in the eyes of their pupils and their parents.
- Speke Garston's *School Business Links*: provides a relatively conventional range of school-industry activities but uses SRB resources to extend the activities to primary schools.
- The *Education Business Partnership* in Coventry and Warwickshire is an extension of standard EBP activities that pre-date the SRB. One interesting feature is the operation of a series of 'Partnership Centres' based in major local companies and providing a resource centre for schools.

- Bristol's *Northern Arc Regeneration Scheme*: Two linked projects are designed to enhance the employment prospects, education and skills of local people - particularly the young and those at disadvantage - and to promote equality of opportunity by:
 - offering professional, informed and independent education, training and careers guidance (particularly for those who are unemployed and the low waged) - 1
 - referrals to other support; and
 - providing accredited guidance skills training within the area.

The two activities reviewed for the study are the *Guidance Project* and the *Employment Project*. The first provides a relatively standard set of guidance activities but reflects an interesting rationale developed by Learning Partnership West (which leads the project).

The second project resembles the Joblink and Jobsmatch projects initiated by Task Forces in the 1980s and continued under City Challenge. The *Employment Project* is designed to '...provide a link between unemployed people with skills and employers with job vacancies and, by using customised and existing training provision, equip people for the jobs which are available'. Although based at a Job Centre, the brokerage is delivered through outreach workers and drop-in centres based in the community. The scheme originated to promote the use of local labour in the construction industry, but then broadened its focus.

Observations

Rationale for the Northern Arc Community Based Guidance Service

The development of the project was informed by three sets of observations. Partner organisations identified that more guidance staff were needed to meet the needs of residents. Additional guidance would help support other activities in the area, such as the Youth Start mentoring project and community education provision. Many individuals already working in the community in a variety of capacities (including as volunteers) are already fulfilling a guidance role, but without training or accreditation.

Key Lessons

A variety of good practice elements emerge from these schemes, some of which are reflected in recent or emerging main programmes like New Deal.

- In many areas the endemic nature of unemployment in households and communities constitutes a barrier both to pursuing employment and placing any value on learning.

- Work experience, work shadowing and a structured approach to school-work transitions can have a positive impact.
- The concentration of unemployment, low skills and qualifications that characterises many of the areas on which the SRB is focused, often leads to 'postcode discrimination'. Involving employers in school-industry programmes helps overcome mutual suspicions.
- The prospect of work - that is, a specific, identified vacancy - has been shown in numerous Joblink or Jobsmatch schemes to be a powerful motivator for learning. The kind of customised programmes of training being developed directly with employers by Northern Arc offer further confirmation of this proposition.

1.4 Improving Motivation and Tackling Disaffection

The consensus about priorities, referred to in previous paragraphs, reflects an analysis of the issues which are explicitly or implicitly shared by most of the schemes reviewed. Many of the bidding documents allude to the cycle of low expectations and low achievement, and the links to educational attainment. This analysis reflects a mutually reinforcing cycle of factors which include:

- parents placing a low value on learning;
- poor core skills;
- poor performance in other areas of curriculum;
- low expectations by parents and teachers;
- low aspirations, reflecting perceptions of local opportunities;
- low motivation;
- low standards of behaviour and attendance;
- little participation in vocational training;
- vulnerability to unemployment; and
- associated poor parenting skills and little contact with schools or involvement in children's learning.

In School

The sample includes a variety of projects designed to tackle the linked issues of motivation, disaffection and participation. These are often seen as critical, particularly since they are associated with truancy, exclusion from school and drop-out from post-16 education and training.

Evidence

In Speke Garston, two projects (from a much wider suite of educational interventions) directly address these concerns.

- *Invest in Excellence*: a training programme designed to help participants improve their self-esteem and thus become more effective in their personal and professional lives. There are different versions of the programme for staff (whose experience of teaching in depressing environments, particularly where schools may be judged as 'failing', frequently undermines their confidence) and for students in Years 10 and 11.
- *A Quiet Place*: aimed largely at children whose family circumstances create stress and anxiety which impedes their learning. A *Quiet Place* is a dedicated room in which a variety of counselling, emotional and therapeutic activities take place.

Similar concerns have put pupil motivation at the centre of learning strategies in the *Co. Durham Partnership for Young People Scheme*. Again there are two linked projects.

- *Positive Intervention and Enrichment Links (PIEL)* - this is a multi- strand programme with secondary, primary and special schools to support young people who are at the edge of disaffection, are underachieving and may be disrupting classes.
- *Looked After Children (LAC)*: aimed at children in care or otherwise involved with Social Services. It offers a variety of discreet, individual support to help them realise their potential. The process of establishing this service has brought together, in partnership, agencies that previously had little to do with one another.

Tyneside Challenge uses short bursts of vocational experience to stimulate the interest and motivation of under-achieving Year 11 pupils. The experience also helps them to develop and apply their abilities in school, for example, by building their confidence and communication skills.

Interventions to maintain motivation and to keep at-risk students participating in learning are not necessarily restricted to areas of extreme disadvantage or to the disruptive and those at risk of exclusion. The *Hertfordshire County Programme*, for example, has established a series of local 'Study Centres', which offer co-ordinated programmes aimed at pupils thought to be at-risk of under-achievement or dropping out.

Based on the observations of teachers or students, all of these projects are showing encouraging early signs of making real impact, and offer some important lessons.

Key Lessons

For all their variety, there are common strands running through the projects which suggest some of the key elements of good practice.

- Provided they are properly structured and integrated within a wider programme, non-educational interventions can contribute to the achievement of educational goals.
- Tackling disaffection and demotivation is assisted by a multi-agency approach. 'Joined up thinking' is important, but 'joined up working' is critical.
- The early identification of problems and early intervention can lead to significant subsequent savings.
- Programmes work best where students participate voluntarily and are treated as equal partners.

1.5 School Management and Classroom Practices

As this section has demonstrated, there is a high degree of consensus among SRB partnerships - and, importantly, among their supporters - about the underlying priorities and therefore the appropriate policy response. There is also an undercurrent running through many schemes which recognises the need to improve the delivery and management of provision - for example, through acknowledging the importance of:

- strong and effective leadership within schools;
- classroom management practices and teaching styles which are challenging;
- developing approaches to performance measurement which genuinely help improve techniques and standards; and
- a partnership approach which involves, alongside students, teachers and parents, the wider community and employers.

Evidence

A number of projects in the sample directly or indirectly address issues associated with school and classroom management and practice.

- Waltham Forest's *Towards Employability* scheme has two (of four) strategic objectives which emphasise the improvement of school performance as the mechanism by which the overall scheme goal will be achieved. The supported activities include the sponsorship of Investors in People for all schools in the borough, and the provision of management training for headteachers and other senior staff.
- Speke Garston's *Invest in Excellence* project is designed to influence teachers' expectations of students, by improving their own self-esteem.

- The Coventry *Raising Attainment* project is negotiated with individual participating schools to ensure real ownership of activities and strong links to priorities identified in the school development plan. In-service training (INSET) is also enhanced to ensure that there is improved curriculum planning and resource development.
- Sandwell's *Quality Starts - Primary Standards Scheme* seeks to improve attainment explicitly. It enhances support for teachers by providing professional development and classroom support on project themes consistent with school development plans, and uses the project as a mechanism for developing links with other organisations, including the: Educational Technology Unit, Child Psychology Unit, Early Years Support Team and Library Service.
- Although schools and other learning institutions are becoming accustomed to the 'technology' of the competitive bidding process, the project-based approach remains alien to many education and training professionals. Barnsley's *Charter for Transitions* has developed a wide range of learning materials designed to assist teachers and others develop their skills in project co-ordination, management, monitoring and evaluation.

Key Lessons

- The SRB offers opportunities to influence the attitudes and behaviour of practitioners - and thus make a real difference to standards of performance.
- With some schools and colleges there may be the danger of 'initiative overload'. It is essential that regeneration initiatives relate to the school or college priorities (for example, as identified in a school development plan) and that the institution takes ownership of proposed interventions.
- Wherever possible, the lessons of regeneration-funded interventions should be transferred to the mainstream through staff development provision including INSET.

Section 2: Process Lessons

Introduction

The previous Section focused on *what* SRB partnerships are doing to support DfEE's objectives for lifelong learning. Ensuring that the response matches the issue is one key step in developing effective practice but is not enough by itself. The effectiveness of any project intervention is critically dependent on *process issues*, i.e. how projects have been developed and put into practice. Furthermore, understanding how project achievements have been secured, rather than just knowing what they are, is the key to replicating successful strategies.

This Section identifies the processes that appear to characterise effective project interventions. It focuses on:

- strategy and project development;
- building partnerships and networks;
- setting targets and measuring performance; and
- exit strategies - disseminating the lessons and influencing the mainstream.

2.1 Strategy and Project Development

The overall objective of the schemes looked at within the study (and their learning programmes in particular) was to use the relatively modest resources available from the SRB as a catalyst to improve participation in, and outcomes from, learning for individuals, businesses and communities. To secure the maximum impact from comparatively limited resources requires a highly focused strategy-

As discussed later in this Section, evidence of impact is generally limited because the schemes and projects explored are often at a relatively early stage. However, preliminary indications suggest that those schemes deploying a piecemeal, project-based approach are unlikely to achieve the same kind of impact as schemes with a clear strategic focus.

Evidence

Where strategies were evident, the processes by which they were developed varied, although there were common features.

- Baselines were established to identify priority issues, drawing on:
 - published data on performance including SAT scores and post-16 participation;
 - progress towards National Learning Targets;

- exploring key socio-economic or demographic characteristics relevant to skills and qualifications (often referred to as 'contextual data'); and
- using resident and employer surveys to illustrate local skill levels in terms of availability and shortages.
- Key partners were consulted. Without doubt the most successful initiatives were those in which the design was based on the views both of the proposed deliverer and the target audience. Unfortunately, the latter group was often ignored.
- Priorities were identified which were consistent with mainstream priorities (for example, of college or school development plans), while simultaneously demonstrating clear additionality.

Weaknesses

Although much of the evidence presented in the study suggests that the mechanisms are working well, there are some aspects of the strategy- project development process that cause difficulties in the context of learning objectives.

- The relationship between proposed project activity and analysis of issues is not always clear. For example, many of the schemes reflect an analysis in which the absence of parental involvement is seen as a factor contributing towards low standards of attainment. Projects to encourage parental involvement are therefore developed (for example, higher profile parent evenings or a dedicated parents' room). But the question of what precisely it is about parents' lack of involvement that contributes to poor performance is not thought through - and neither therefore is the response.
- In a number of cases there is a marked mismatch between the objectives of a scheme and the activities by which they were to be pursued. This is illustrated by one of the school-industry link programmes. The project includes relatively standard school- industry activities (such as work placements, industry days, teacher placements). Outputs are being achieved and there is anecdotal evidence that those involved are satisfied. But it is not clear specifically how the project will meet a diverse and ambitious range of outcomes (including 'increased resources available for teaching and learning' or 'increased student motivation'). It is also unclear how anyone will be able to tell since the scheme only monitors a limited range of outputs.
- There are examples where the analysis and rationale are robust, the proposed project activities appropriate - but where the resources available fall (significantly) short of aims and ambitions.
- Finally, there is some confusion and inconsistency about the definitions of 'scheme', 'programme', and 'project' (and the relationship between them). This may just reflect differences in the use of language. But there were cases where the 'technology' and culture of the SRB, which requires activity to be parcelled up into discrete projects, may be a distraction from the promotion of effective

programmes. For example, both in Sowerby Bridge and County Durham, there were cases where projects, previously put forward as separate strands of activity, were in practice so inter-linked that they were amalgamated.

Key Lessons

There is no shortage of good practice. This is discussed in Section 4 below, but a brief summary of the key points follows.

- Projects should ensure that their baseline research is sufficiently robust to confirm that their solution is tackling the right problem.
- The involvement of key actors at an early stage - particularly to ensure the commitment of the delivery agencies - is essential.
- Targets and performance indicators that go beyond SRB outputs should be devised, ensuring that they can be measured and genuinely relate to learning objectives (some examples are provided in 2.3 below).
- Customers should be asked about their needs - if they are not, it is not surprising to find that demand is low.

2.2 *Building Partnerships and Networks*

A key feature of the projects in this study is the extent to which they were not only designed and delivered through partnership but how, in many instances, the project was used explicitly as a device to build partnership and influence partner behaviour. There are many outstanding examples.

- *Medway Ruler*, a collaborative project, brings together a number of local higher and further education institutions and local authorities and key local employers;
- *Birmingham Core Skills Partnership* includes partnership development as an explicit strand of project activity.
- *Sowerby Bridge Forum*: now involving the local TEC, Calderdale MBC, and Calderdale College, the Forum is a partnership instigated by business. In 1995 a number of business people agreed to spearhead action - including, critically, promoting the updating of skills and learning - to reverse their town's decline.
- *Co. Durham PIEL and LAC*: the absence of networking between agencies was part of the rationale for the project.

Key Lessons

Promoting learning objectives needs to be a collaborative activity, particularly within disadvantaged communities. Participation in the design and implementation of a regeneration-funded programme can provide a stimulus to partnership working that

survives the funding itself. Some of the ingredients required for the effective promotion of partnerships in this context include the following:

- involving key partners from the outset - sharing in scheme or programme development helps develop a sense of ownership;
- establishing a clear understanding of both the potential and the limitations of individual partners' contributions to the learning agenda; and
- ensuring that there are sufficient resources devoted to staff development to enable partners to gain some sense of each other's professional disciplines.

2.3 Setting Targets and Measuring Performance

The performance targets set within the sample fall largely within two categories:

- output and expenditure targets on which SRB funding depends; and
- scheme lifetime targets derived from baseline indicators, as illustrated in the example from Barnsley below.

Good Practice Example

Barnsley's Highway to Success: Performance Targets

Scheme lifetime targets include:

- *to improve take-up of further education among school-leavers from 47 per cent to 62 per cent;*
- *to reduce the percentage of students dropping out in first year from 17 per cent to 10 per cent;*
- *to increase the number of schools offering GNVQ from 3 to 13 (out of 14);*
- *to increase the skill levels of Barnsley managers;*
- *to increase those with qualifications at NVQ level 3 from 55 per cent to 61 per cent;*
- *to increase those with qualifications at NVQ level 4 from 42 per cent to 46 per cent.*

Both sets of indicators are necessary but also have their limitations, particularly as tools of project or scheme management. SRB output definitions largely relate to throughput or input measures (e.g. 'number of training weeks') or are imprecise (e.g. 'number of pupils benefiting from projects to promote personal and social development').

Scheme life-time impact measures are more likely to relate more closely to learning objectives. However, there are a number of factors to take into account.

- By the time the evidence is collected, it may be too late to adjust the programme (though this can be eased by interim evaluations).
- A wide range of external factors invariably have an impact - for example, skill levels of managers or college staying-on rates - and it is therefore not easy to disentangle the scheme's impact from all the other influences.
- In some cases the scheme may simply be incapable of delivering the impacts identified.
- There is at best an indirect relationship between improvements in these high level impact measures and specific projects. It is rarely possible to identify particular individuals responsible for achieving a given impact indicator.

At the time of the research for this study, only a few partnerships had identified measurable performance indicators (beyond SRB outputs) that could be related to project performance.

- *Looked After Children*, which tracks changes in the *relative* performance in exam results of its highly specific client group, and the county average;
- White City Partnership's *CASE (Raising Achievement in Primary Schools)*, where the project team undertook its own baseline testing of the pupils to ensure consistency across the ten participating schools;
- a self-assessment of the impact of *Investment in Excellence* by participating teachers; and
- Hattersley's *Early Years Project* that has developed a 'Co-ordinated Individual Record System' (CIRS), designed to co-ordinate and up- date information held separately by the local Education Department, Social Services and the Health Authority.

Most of the schemes have plans for formal mid-term evaluations, although many are unclear about the approach to adopt. When the research for this study was undertaken, only one external evaluation was available (for the *Co. Durham Partnership Scheme for Young People*). This largely relied on a combination of output review and key actor interviews in order to assess perceptions of performance. These are critical, as the views of those most closely involved are most likely to illuminate how results were achieved (or impeded), as well as *what* those results were. Nevertheless, there is scope significantly to improve the understanding of, and approach to, target setting and monitoring as a tool of project management.

Key Lessons

There remains much work to improve regeneration partnerships' approach to the design and use of performance indicators. These need to be readily measurable during the scheme's lifetime, to provide a guide to progress towards the scheme's ultimate objectives. They also need to go beyond the SRB outputs and their concentration on throughput measures. This issue is discussed further in Section 4.

2.4 *Disseminating SRB Lessons and Influencing the Mainstream*

A central assumption underpinning the SRB is the proposition that 'special', modest, short-term funding, if carefully designed and targeted, can catalyse longer term processes of change. One of the key mechanisms by which it is presumed this happens is through the influence the availability of special resources can exert on other players. For schemes and projects addressing learning objectives, promoting the sustainability of the project and its achievements is a key element in determining added value. There are perhaps three levels at which this has to take place:

- the project's exit strategy, to ensure the survival of projects requiring long-term revenue support;
- influencing others: programmes to disseminate the experience and lessons of the project beyond those immediately involved; and
- perhaps most importantly of all, ensuring that the lessons of the project are embedded in mainstream practice.

Since the 1997 General Election a number of new funding strands have become available, either to absorb or provide forward strategies for activities currently funded through SRB. In a few instances SRB projects have been linked to approved (or proposed) Education Action Zones. One of Tyneside TEC's projects is now part of mainstream post-16 provision. In another instance, the two Co Durham projects reviewed here have combined as part of a Round 5 bid.

Evidence

There are clear signs from the projects assessed for this study that the SRB schemes are increasingly looking at exit strategies at an early stage. Some elements within specific exit strategies are described below.

- Introducing charges: *Priory Campus* introduced small charges for some services, disks etc, partly to accustom its clients to the need to pay for the service in the longer-term.
- Seeking sponsorship: Adur Industry First's *Education to Industry* programme expects to sustain many activities through sponsorship by local businesses.

- Local partners with the capability to provide long term financial support are involved at an early stage.
- Tapering grant funding: Medway Ruler's *Skills to Succeed* project (which targets skill development activities on the area's minority ethnic community) tapers off towards the end of the scheme. While it is too early to say what the alternative sources will be, scheme design ensures attention will be paid to the longer term.
- In the case of Birmingham's *Core Skills Partnership*, there is no formal exit strategy because of the stress on integration with mainstream practice. Similarly, the Coventry and Warwickshire *Raising Attainment* project builds in enhanced INSET to spread the lessons.

Key Lessons

For many of the schemes and projects, the key is to ensure that the practices and approaches developed through SRB-supported programmes and projects become firmly grounded in mainstream practice. One of the most encouraging features of this study is the frequency with which the stress on multi-agency working and on influencing mainstream practice is to be observed.

Very importantly, the study encountered some resistance within mainstream education institutions to innovations generated through regeneration funding. As this study shows, effective participation in learning is affected by many factors, outside as well as within the education and training system. Nevertheless practice in the classroom exerts a major influence over the improvement of attainment, however defined (which is the ultimate objective for most of the SRB partnerships). Ensuring that the lessons of regeneration-funded activity are absorbed by practitioners is therefore an important component of any exit strategy. It is equally important to ensure that teachers are given appropriate support rather than additional burdens (for example, through INSET and help with baseline testing or mentoring).

Section 3: Securing and Measuring Added Value

Introduction

An important element of this study is to review ways in which learning interventions of the kind discussed here could be said to add value and, if possible, to identify ways in which this could be measured. Some specific ideas that emerge from the case studies are set out below.

SRB funding brings together the different tracks of education, housing, transport etc, so as to encourage joined-up thinking and the development of innovative and imaginative solutions. It kickstarts initiatives which may otherwise not be developed. Gaps in the mainstream provision are identified as a result of this approach and SRB provides an opportunity to address these issues. It fills a range of gaps including:

- insufficient scale of provision;
- ineffective targeting;
- failure to recognise or provide for special needs within the mainstream;
- uniformity of provision - the 'one-size-fits-all' syndrome;
- lack of scope for experimentation; and
- insufficient contacts between agencies - so projects funded through regeneration funds become the glue that forms and holds together networks.

3.1 *Enhancing Main Programmes: Illustrations of Added Value*

The six types of gap set out above can all be said to lead to discrete examples of added value.

i) Insufficient Resources

The insufficiency of mainstream resources is in many ways the most difficult gap to bridge, since Treasury rules have never allowed the use of special funding to substitute for main programme budgets. However, there are a number of legitimate examples within the sample where the SRB has enabled the provision of some service or service enhancement that could not have been funded through mainstream provision:

- The Birmingham *Core Skills Partnership* estimated that the combined value of resources available within the city from all relevant sources (the City Council, further education, Birmingham TEC) were adequate to tackle, at the very most, a fifth of the city's literacy and numeracy demands. In this instance, one aspect of the added value lies simply in the ability to provide services on a scale commensurate with need.

- Some of the 'improved access' projects showed how important it is to have accessible, and above all local, facilities, to attract adults into learning. The *Sowerby Bridge Forum* project offers an example where there were insufficient resources available from the mainstream to establish a local community education centre; and where the 'travel- to-learn' distance to the nearest centre was a major disincentive. The added value here arises from the provision of a local facility enabling mainstream provision to reach out into the community.

ii) *Ineffective Targeting*

Ineffective targeting is one of the areas where the flexibilities of the SRB have been most successful in enhancing the impact of main programmes. There are examples of such added value in this sample.

- Bristol Northern Arc's outreach counselling programme has linked individuals to learning opportunities previously unconnected with them.
- Medway Ruler's *Skills to Succeed* programme (designed to increase the participation of ethnic minority communities in learning) is building links to community organisations and refugee groups, as a means of reaching its target client group.
- The variety of 'hooks' into learning approaches described earlier, in which reluctant learners are attracted indirectly, through their children or through offers of job interviews.
- Both the Barnsley *Highway to Success* programme, and the AZTEC *Digital Learning Community* use a variety of outreach techniques to attract adults to learning in information and communication technologies - concentrating particularly on those for whom 'technophobia' is a barrier.

iii) *Providing for Special Needs*

The SRB has demonstrated the value of flexible funding which can enhance or supplement mainstream provision to cater for the specific needs of particularly disadvantaged groups.

- The Looked After Children project provided intensive support to assist the learning of children in care.
- The attainment of children whose first language is not English is raised by supplementary language support, integrated within the curriculum.
- Speke Garston's *A Quiet Place* project provides counselling for children and families in stress, to support their progress in learning.

iv) *Uniformity of Provision*

The special needs measures described above often involve introducing flexibilities into national provision. There are other examples where flexibility offers added value.

- The *Positive Intervention Links and Enrichment (PIEL)* project in Co. Durham provides individualised programmes of support for children at risk of exclusion.
- Enhanced vocational elements are introduced into the curriculum for disaffected young people, for example under the *Tyneside Challenge* project.

v) *Scope for Experimentation*

Many of the projects reviewed have innovative elements, and in most cases there are plans to embed innovative good practice into the mainstream.

- The Birmingham *Core Skills Partnership* has developed new ways of working that will be incorporated across the whole of main programme provision.
- *Bridge Wardens' College* in the Medway Ruler programme will be absorbed in to the University of Kent's mainstream provision.
- Hattersley's Co-ordinated Individual Record System, piloted through SRB, and subject to performance assessment, will become a tool used by all the relevant agencies.

vi) *Building Partnership*

The added value to be secured through programmes like SRB is as much to do with the influence it can exert on the attitudes and behaviour of main programme providers, as with more immediate outcomes for particular groups of beneficiaries. However, as this Section has shown, there are plenty of examples of these. Many of the projects have demonstrated the need for greater co-operation between agencies if the learning opportunities for disadvantaged communities are to be maximised. A major component within the added value to be observed from the SRB is the stimulus of partnership and collaboration between agencies. A feature of almost all the projects, this is particularly in evidence in the case of:

- *Looked After Children*, which has brought together social workers, care workers and educationalists, who previously had little contact;
- Birmingham *Core Skills Partnership* has a critical objective to develop partnership ways of working; and
- Adur Industry First's project, where key local businesses are now centrally involved in the development and implementation of learning strategies for the town.

3.2 Measuring Added Value

The examples of added value identified by the study are so diverse that there is plainly no simple or single way to measure them. This issue is further discussed in Section 4 below, since it relates to the measurement of performance more generally.

However, it seems that the design of measures of added value is a function of the project development process that would involve answering the following questions:

- what are the problems this project is designed to solve - or, put differently, what are its objectives?
- what evidence is there of the extent of the problem - what is the baseline?
- what would be the sign that the project had succeeded, that it had made a difference - and, critically, in relation to each of the objectives?
- what indicators could be used to measure that and how would they be collected?

The following example illustrates the procedure and its implications for data capture.

Measuring Added Value

Example: Looked After Children (LAC)

Problems: include lack of co-ordination of support activities by the various agencies with responsibility for children in care.

Baseline measures: for example, numbers of care homes with staff member responsible for education.

Objectives: (among others) to develop a network of agencies that expect to collaborate on issues to do with the education of children in care.

Signs of success (or added value): in addition to measures of children's performance, these would include evidence that teachers and care workers expect to (and do) work together.

Indicators: for example, attendance at case conferences, identification of staff with responsibility for inter-agency co-operation.

Since the creation of partnership approaches is one of the objectives of the scheme, it is legitimate to treat it as an example of added value, and to attempt to measure its achievement. However, partnership building is only an operational objective (though no less important for that). But the LAC example demonstrates the difficulties inherent in measuring the added value of outcomes.

In part, this is a function of the complexity of issues tackled through project interventions. LAC offers a good, if extreme, illustration. There is a wealth of evidence to show links between a history of care and subsequent homelessness, risk of criminality and vulnerability to drugs and prostitution. Part of that cycle is explained by low levels of educational achievement, and the subsequent lack of employability. If LAC interventions are successful in improving participation in learning for this highly vulnerable group, the downstream added value is likely to be substantial, but:

- the added value emerges (potentially many) years later;
- savings accrue to other parts of the public sector budget (criminal justice, social services, DSS etc); and
- it may be difficult to attribute the added value directly to the project.

As Section 4 discusses, the key is to define measures of performance (including added value) that both illuminate a project's achievements in a meaningful way, and are reasonably available during the project's lifetime.

Section 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This Section summarises the main findings and conclusions arising from the study and sets out the recommendations. In most instances the recommendations are generic, rather than aimed at specific audiences or institutions. However, where it is appropriate, the distinct implications of the recommendation from the separate perspectives of, for example, the SRB partnership or the funding body are separated out.

4.1 Key Findings

The themes and issues addressed by the projects reviewed for this study offer a remarkably good fit with the DfEE's priorities, subject to one qualification: the disadvantaged communities within which SRB schemes are typically developed lead to an over-riding stress on tackling under-achievement. In turn, this also leads to a recognition of the interactions between social and economic circumstances, and individuals' capacity to engage in, and benefit from, learning opportunities. An implicit theme of many of these interventions therefore is the levelling of the playing field.

Few of the projects or programmes reviewed here would have proceeded in the absence of SRB resources. In consequence there is a high degree of additionality. Inevitably, given the project selection procedures, there is enormous variety in the range of objectives, activities, and scale of the case studies. Moreover, as noted earlier, in most cases projects are too young to permit judgements about outcomes and impacts and further evaluation may be beneficial in the future to inform such assessments. Nevertheless, there are some common features running through most of the projects, which offer encouraging signs both about the prospects for achieving added value, and for the ultimate sustainability of the projects and their achievements. In particular, these include:

- an emphasis on partnership development within project design;
- in most cases an emphasis on enhancing what is already being provided through mainstream resources; and
- early attention to exit strategy and sustainability issues.

The previous Section argues that, wherever it was genuinely additional, SRB funding represented a gap in mainstream provision. Analysis of the substantive issues these projects and programmes seek to address provides some insight into partnerships' perceptions of where the mainstream, by itself, is not equipped to tackle the effective promotion of learning within disadvantaged communities.

Key Emerging Issues

- Low levels of attainment in disadvantaged communities are associated with (among other things) low levels of motivation towards, and therefore participation in, learning. This applies across the age ranges. A powerful contributory factor is the 'traditions of unemployment, which reduces the perceived value of learning.
- In those areas where unemployment is the norm, well-structured work experience becomes critical, since young people may have limited experience of employment, even second-hand, from family or peers.
- The education and training system itself is often confusing: duplication and fragmentation (perceived, if not actual) constitute an additional barrier to participation in learning.
- For many communities, the barriers may be compounded by the lack of local provision.
- The precise nature of the barriers to learning vary among disadvantaged groups. In addition, for many groups, there are multiple barriers. Action to tackle some barriers is likely to prove ineffective, whilst others are left in place.
- Most of the areas covered by these projects display levels of basic skills substantially below the poor national averages described in Sir Claus Moser's basic skills report. This represents a major barrier to participation in vocational training (and therefore employment prospects).
- The importance of participation in post-compulsory learning is recognised by the Government. However, the priority for many regeneration partnerships is increasingly on early years interventions. In some cases, this reflects the perception that intervention at adult level is ineffective.
- Many of the schemes reflect the recognition that for many children, their difficulties with basic skills acquisition are associated with their parents' limited literacy and numeracy.
- The promotion of learning opportunities and their benefits in disadvantaged communities requires close collaboration between a diverse range of agencies.
- Involving employers in all aspects of learning development within disadvantaged communities can help overcome the 'postcode discrimination' which is often held to categorise them.
- With the increasing range of competitive bidding, there is a danger of 'Initiative overload'. There are growing demands among practitioners for greater stability within main programmes.

As is discussed in Section 3, there is a range of good practice to be found in these partnerships' approach to project design and implementation. The main areas where partnerships encountered difficulties in the design or management of learning-related programmes and projects include:

- the selection of appropriate baseline measures;
- consulting with project beneficiaries in advance (i.e. talking to the customers); and
- setting targets and measuring performance.

4.2 Recommendations

The wide range of recommendations which emerge from this study can be categorised under three headings:

- widening participation in learning;
- improving outcomes from learning; and
- improving project and programme design.

i) Widening Participation in Learning

Even in those areas where lack of basic and vocational skills represents a major obstacle to the improvement of individual and local competitiveness, the motivation to engage in learning can remain low. For example, a survey in low skill, high unemployment Hattersley showed that only 11 per cent perceived that their lack of qualifications was impeding their access to employment. This study suggests a variety of possible and appropriate responses.

- *DfEE and DETR should encourage regeneration partnerships to invest greater resources in promoting the critical importance of learning to individuals, businesses and communities.*
- *Providing 'one-stop-shops' or investing in outreach-based promotional techniques are common features of SRB-supported projects - offering testimony to the perception that the fragmentation of the education and training system constitutes a barrier to learning. DfEE should review ways in which the appearance of fragmentation can be reduced within the mainstream.*
- *DfEE should encourage Learning Partnerships to consider, as an early priority for action, how the messages about learning opportunities can be simplified and improved.*
- *The precise nature of the 'barriers' to participation varies between groups. Partnerships need to ensure firstly that there is a rigorous analysis of the nature of local barriers and secondly that all are tackled. The Ufi and supporting*

network of local learning centres will have a key role to play in removing barriers to adult learning.

- *The 'customised training' approach was first introduced to the UK in the mid-1980s. However, it remains relatively uncommon, although it offers an excellent 'hook' into learning since the training is associated with a particular vacancy. DfEE and DETR should consider issuing good practice guidance on this approach.*
- *This study has identified a range of examples where partnerships have improved the local availability of provision, through diversifying the use of school and college premises. DfEE should explore what incentives could be established to extend this practice beyond SRB funding.*

ii) Improving Outcomes from Learning

Low levels of literacy and numeracy represent massive barriers to economic and social inclusion in many areas. The case studies in this report demonstrate the need for action to tackle poor basic skills and for an appropriate level of investment.

- *DfEE should explore the Birmingham Core Skills Partnership approach and strategy. This, and other SRB projects, may serve as models which could be widely replicated.*
- *On the evidence of this study family literacy schemes and other interventions which try to tackle parents' basic skills needs through their children provide effective 'hooks' into learning. DfEE should explore ways to promote their use more widely.*
- *While the importance of early years intervention is clear, DETR and DfEE should encourage SRB partnerships to continue to promote basic skills among adults.*

For many SRB partnerships the principal objective in promoting learning is to improve employability. The value of the customised training approach has already been discussed. In the context of disadvantaged communities, there needs to be assistance (at all ages) in making the transition to work, either as part of, or as adjuncts to, learning processes.

- *DETR and DfEE should ensure schemes engage and involve employers in the design and management of local learning strategies as this is critical in achieving improved employability*
- *In those communities where unemployment is the norm, work experience is a prerequisite for employability, and this understanding should be built into scheme design.*

Many of the schemes reviewed here recognise the links between domestic circumstances and educational attainment, and have attempted to tackle the former as part of strategies to improve the latter. There is scope to extend the availability of the

kind of programmes to assist with individual and family stress pioneered in Speke Garston's *A Quiet Place* and elsewhere.

iii) Improving Project and Programme Design

The study sample divides between those schemes embracing a relatively large number of small projects, and those focusing resources on a limited number of key themes. There is room within regeneration-funded portfolios for small-scale pilots, but these only make sense if there are clear arrangements for the evaluation and dissemination of lessons. Otherwise, schemes need aims commensurate with the scale of the issues - rather than simply bringing benefits for a limited number of beneficiaries.

- *Partnerships should be encouraged to develop, and Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) / Government Offices (GOs) to approve, programmes of activity rather than projects. Partnerships should be required to explain how regeneration-funded activity will be rolled out into the mainstream.*

If programme impacts are to be maximised, they need to reflect a rigorous analysis of the underlying problems and a strategic assessment of priorities. Among other things, this should indicate how SRB-supported activity relates to mainstream provision.

- *RDAs should be satisfied about the strategic justification for proposed learning activities funded by the SRB.*

The whole thrust of this report reflects the importance of seeing the SRB as a catalyst for influencing mainstream provision - for acting as a change agent. This remains implicit in SRB guidance rather than explicit.

- *SRB outputs should be extended more directly to reflect the influencing, catalytic dimensions discussed in this report.*
- *Partnerships should seek, wherever possible, to design interventions with those responsible for their implementation, so that regeneration-funded activities go with the grain of local learning priorities. This necessarily means involving colleges, schools and other providers in programme design from the outset.*
- *Partnerships should use every opportunity provided by the design and implementation of regeneration-funded programmes to develop partnership working for the longer term.*
- *These case studies show the complex interplay between participation in, and achievements through, learning and the wider community context in which the projects are taking place. This emphasises the importance of engaging local communities in the design and delivery of learning activities, of promoting multi-agency working and of employing local people in learning-related projects wherever possible.*
- *Forward strategies need to be built into programme and project design from the start - particularly where projects are likely to need a 'foster home' when the regeneration funding ceases.*

Most projects reviewed here are achieving their output targets, which are assiduously monitored; and most have end-of-scheme impact targets. However, few have sufficiently well developed performance indicators in between these extremes. The evidence of this study suggests that improving the measurement of performance in regeneration-funded learning projects is a priority, for both DfEE and DETR. There are a number of discrete dimensions.

- *The definition of outputs for overall scheme monitoring purposes needs to be amended to provide a closer reflection of progress towards learning objectives. For example, at present 'pupils benefiting' is largely a euphemism for 'pupils undergoing' - there is no attempt to assess whether there have been 'benefits' (nor any expectation that there should be). DfEE and DETR should jointly review the learning-related outputs to identify some modest additions that are consistent with the broad-brush requirements of scheme monitoring, but which provide a better guide to learning objectives. This might be done by bringing practitioners together in a working group.*
- *DfEE should encourage partnerships to develop more imaginative approaches to performance measurement as a tool of project and programme management. Whilst challenging to put into practice, these approaches would obviously have to vary according to programme and project objectives and activities. However their design should follow these principles:*
 - *they should relate to baseline positions;*
 - *where projects have multiple objectives, they should normally have multiple performance indicators;*
 - *objectives and their appropriate performance measures should be defined with the aid of the question: 'how will this project make a difference?';*
 - *in some cases it may be necessary to adopt performance measures with a variety of time-scales; but, wherever possible, there have to be some which give guidance on progress during project lifetimes - so that corrective action can be taken if it is needed;*
 - *they should be readily collectable; and*
 - *in most cases they are likely to reflect changes in the relative position of the client group against an appropriate comparator.*

4.3 Conclusion

The study has raised a number of wide ranging issues and has helped to inform the development of policy, including the Review of Post-16 Education and Training and the work of the Policy Action Teams. DfEE is reviewing the recommendations made in the report and will take appropriate action with DETR and other key partners.

Appendix: Case Study Summaries

East Herts Study Centres: County Programme, Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire's County Programme is divided into seven geographical areas and addresses four strategic objectives. One of the latter is to improve educational attainment, especially among young people aged 14-19. This project represents East Hertfordshire's means of addressing that objective. The project is divided into three areas: a revision programme for students approaching their GCSEs; a thinking skills programme aimed at students in their first year of A-levels; and a programme that targets students of high ability in Year 7.

The project seeks to change students' attitudes to learning, and to encourage more collaborative learning. As well as the benefits to students, the project also contributes to staff development by improving project management and delivery skills.

Education to Industry: Adur Industry First

Adur's Education to Industry project aims to develop a co-ordinated programme to make teachers, pupils and parents more aware of the needs of local industry, particularly the manufacturing sector. It also seeks to remove any stigma that may be attached to manufacturing in the area.

The project does this through three strands of activity. The World of Work Project involves pupils, their parents and their teachers in a range of activities designed to raise their awareness of manufacturing. Lower secondary school pupils are targeted by the Industrial Awareness Project, which provides a progression from the introduction to manufacturing provided by the first project to a broader and more informed understanding of the sector. Finally, the Careers and Work Experience Enhancement Programme provides quality work experience for 15 year olds in key companies requiring skilled young people.

Bridge Warden's College/Skills to Succeed: Medway Ruler

The main emphasis of the Medway Ruler SRB programme is the economic regeneration of the Medway Towns area of Kent, where 400,000 people face 'employment restructuring' following the closure of the Naval Dockyards. This project seeks to put the local university, the University of Kent, at the centre of this regeneration and the attendant community development, through a co-ordinated programme of education and training, as well as business support.

The focus is on learning, whether academic or vocational, from uncertified courses through to postgraduate awards. The project also aims to target community and voluntary groups, as well as the local ethnic minority communities. These goals are to be met through four sets of activity: Economic Regeneration in Medway; Business Support; Community Development; and Skills to Succeed. In practice, the first three of these have been merged into a single project.

Investment in Excellence: Speke Garston Partnership, Liverpool

Investment in Excellence is a programme developed by the Pacific Institute, a privately-funded international educational organisation, which aims to help participants form a positive view of themselves and to provide strategies for coping with change. Although not specifically targeted at educational institutions – being applied throughout commerce, industry, military, sport and social sectors – it is used widely by local education authorities in this country.

In Speke Garston, Speke Comprehensive School introduced the programme to try to combat the poor self-image held by students and teachers, which in both cases was hindering educational development and attainment in the area. The activity begins with work with teachers. The benefits to them then trickle down to the classroom, resulting in gains for students too.

A Quiet Place: Speke Garston Partnership, Liverpool

This is a project to provide emotional and therapeutic support in primary schools through the establishment of a safe environment in which a variety of types of counselling and therapy are provided to children and parents from families in crisis. By the early diagnosis and treatment of vulnerable children, the project aims to minimise inappropriate behaviour, classroom disruption, and the eventual risk of temporary or permanent exclusion.

The project offers counselling and support which can take a variety of forms, including talking, foot, hand or head massage, and even aromatherapy. This is offered not only to children, but also to parents and teachers, to relieve stress and so that they are aware of the potential strengths of the activity.

School/Business Links: Speke Garston Partnership, Liverpool

This project co-ordinates and manages the arrangement and development of education-business links between local employers and primary and secondary schools in the Speke Garston area of Liverpool. It aims to improve motivation and to increase understanding of industry and economics among older primary school pupils, while improving knowledge of commerce and industry in the approaches taken by schools. This is achieved through a combination of visits to schools from representatives of employers, and opportunities to experience workplace environments for pupils. By improving relationships between schools and local industry, it seeks to encourage businesses to take on students for training and employment.

Early Years Project: Hattersley – Towards a Learning Community

The project is one of six strands that make up the education activity of Hattersley's SRB Programme. It seeks to provide comprehensive early years activity for the

children and parents in the area, by enabling the community to provide a wide range of quality childcare services, and providing support for families of young children. There is also an emphasis on increasing educational attainment, through improving literacy and numeracy skills, and increasing parental awareness of, and involvement in, all areas of their children's education.

Five sets of activity make up the project. There is both provision of childcare, and training in parenting and childcare skills. Homestart is a scheme that offers support to young families under stress, while Bookstart aims to introduce children to books at a very early age. Finally, the project has introduced a co-ordinated system for recording information about all aspects of a child's development.

Birmingham Core Skills Partnership

The project consists of four core programmes that work to foster a culture of learning among all sections of the community, through motivation and support activities and materials. They seek to develop strategies to improve core skills in pre-school and school age children, their parents and associated voluntary and community networks, and to emphasise core skills in education and training provision among unemployed and employed adults. The Partnership aims also to carry forward employers' skills agendas. A company is set up to run these projects to enable partners to plan together, to agree activities to be funded, and to follow the progress of those activities and their use of the funding.

Education and Business Partnership: Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership

The project aims to link education provision with the world of work. These links enable employers' future requirements to influence ideas about pupils' longer-term development, and to inform their education and employment prospects. Since there are two education authorities in the TEC area – Coventry and Warwickshire – this is in effect two projects in one. Both are overseen by management committees/steering groups, and receive strategic direction from the local Learning Partnership. This is facilitated by the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise.

The unifying mission for the project is 'to enhance and support education, training, and employment opportunities through a partnership between the education and business communities'. Much of the work activity is focused on Partnership and Learning Resource centres at major local employers, which schools can book through the Education Business Partnership to use for curriculum provision. There is also a wide variety of other activities which aim to raise pupils' and schools' awareness of the needs of local industry and the opportunities it offers.

Raising Attainment in the National Curriculum: Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership

The project provides support for pupils whose academic performance has been adversely affected by poor command of English. The project has recruited staff to provide direct support, particularly in the development of English language skills. Pupils are targeted in partnership with individual schools, for the purpose of raising achievement and attainment across the whole of the curriculum.

Working practices for the activity in individual schools are negotiated with each school to permit maximum ownership and flexibility. This also ensures that the support is integrated into the overall priorities of the school. As part of this process, agreement is reached with each school on the contribution which the project will make to its development plan objectives and attainment levels.

Inter Learn: Amber Valley Partnership – Working Communities in the Erewash Valley

The project provides an Information and Communications Technology information, awareness and entry-level training service to small companies in the Amber Valley in Derbyshire. It is part of a wider set of initiatives by South Derbyshire College to develop participation in learning by local companies and their workforce. Through all of these, ICT is seen both as a 'hook' to interest companies in learning and development, and as a tool for cost effective learning.

The project has two main strands of activity. The first seeks to raise ICT awareness, and offers a diagnostic service for businesses to identify how the technology could be of benefit. This element has just completed its second year of activity, advising around 15 companies each year. The second is a planned open access IT-based learning centre in Belper. This is a priority for the coming (third) year, and investment is about to begin. There are five years of activity in total under the SRB programme of funding.

Family Literacy: Amber Valley Partnership – Working Communities in the Erewash Valley

The project provides family literacy support to primary schools in two communities, Ironville and Langley Mill, in Amber Valley. Both are former mining villages, with poor levels of local amenity and community support. The family literacy activity is, therefore, part of a multi-agency response to a range of issues, including unemployment, advice and guidance, and community organising. All of the activities are under the leadership of the Adult and Community Education Team in Amber Valley.

The core of the project is family literacy, where work with parents (or in some cases related adults, like grandparents) and children is the core focus. Support work is provided in the school setting, where children who are under-achieving are targeted

together with their parents. This leads to a mixture of sessions in which children, parents and teachers all work together, and others in which the elements for parent and child are discrete but connected.

Charter for Transition: Highway to Success, Barnsley

This project is designed to improve both pupils' progression through school life and their performance – especially results at the end of Key Stage tests – and the liaison between phases of education (in particular Key Stages 1 & 2 and 2 & 3). It also aims to develop systems for measuring pupils' progress through the main transition stages (Year 2/Year 3 and Year 6/Year 7) on a consistent, borough-wide basis, and to target support for those identified as at risk of regression during transfer between phases.

The project began with a research phase that both examined good practice in transfer procedures elsewhere, and established a baseline in Barnsley. This was followed by development work on local authority policy and also in schools, with work on skills and procedures as well as a programme of small grants for mini-projects that contribute to the overall goals.

Tyneside Challenge: Effective Progression to the Labour Market, Tyneside

The scheme aims 'to engage young people in opportunities for learning and support their progression to the labour market', principally using vocational experience as a motivator. Tyneside Challenge is one of the pre-16 initiatives this scheme supports. Schoolteachers identify Year 11 students who have the ability to achieve GCSE grade C or its equivalent, but are under-achieving. The project then seeks to motivate and stimulate the interest of these pupils through a ten-day programme of vocational experience and training. This in turn helps them to develop and apply their abilities in school as well as on their chosen placement.

There is a strong emphasis in the programme on willingness to participate. Although students are nominated by their teachers, they are required to sign a contract with the school, the training provider and their parents that ensures attendance, punctuality and good behaviour.

Positive Intervention and Enrichment Links (PIEL): County Durham Partnership Scheme for Young People

This is one of several projects run through the County Durham Partnership Scheme for Young People, which aim to improve the quality of life and prospects of young people in the area. PIEL is a multi-stranded programme that includes work with primary, secondary and special schools. It aims to support young people who are disaffected or disillusioned with school, who are underachieving, and who in some cases are disrupting classes.

Schools identify pupils who may be at risk, who are then given access to alternative, more supportive learning opportunities which may be more appropriate. This activity

is supported with a range of services, which include counselling, assessment and advice for children, parents and teachers. A mentoring scheme supported by private companies runs alongside this, to provide role models, interview experience and personal careers advice to help develop more positive attitudes.

Looked After Children (LAC): County Durham Partnership Scheme for Young People

The project is a programme of intensive support for young people in Social Services care in the county, who may be in danger of not realising their personal and educational potential. It seeks to address the vicious circle of children not being cared for or developed properly, and subsequently becoming uninterested in school and dropping out.

The work takes the form of counselling, group work and activity to maintain the beneficiaries' interest in education. There is an emphasis on co-ordination between all relevant agencies, and the project has links with about sixty separate agencies. It has also developed a clear system to record and monitor the education of young people who are being looked after, which enables immediate intervention where problems are identified.

Carlton Mill: Sowerby Bridge Forum

Carlton Mill is the flagship project of the Sowerby Bridge Forum's SRB scheme. It is a community facility in a converted mill in the town centre which aims to contribute to the town centre's regeneration and to provide access to information about educational opportunities and public services. This is delivered through a 'First Stop Shop' staffed mainly by the Housing Department, creating a single point of contact for the public to receive information and guidance. There is also a new, more accessible Further Education Centre to encourage lifelong participation, offering targeted courses without the need to travel away from Sowerby Bridge. The project has also carried out a survey of local businesses' training needs, to which it is now responding.

CASE - Raising Achievement in Primary Schools: White City Partnership

This project, part of the White City SRB Partnership's seven-year programme, aims to raise core skills achievement in primary schools. In ten schools, teachers of children at Key Stage 1 (there is a Key Stage 3 project in another school) work with small groups from their class on a weekly basis, using materials developed by the project to work on a range of numeracy and science topics. The benefits of these sessions are seen to be much broader than this, though - children are encouraged to develop their thinking processes and their communicative, analytical and cognitive skills; and to articulate their learning. The project also provides teachers with an opportunity to work closely and intensively with all their pupils. Teachers have felt benefits to their own development as well to the children.

Digital Learning Community (South West London)

The Digital Learning Community aims to make information technology available to all students and residents, particularly the disadvantaged, across the boroughs of Merton, Wandsworth and Kingston.

There are four main programmes under the scheme. A Digital Learning Centre will raise awareness of the benefits of IT among teachers, and increase its use in schools so that all school leavers are literate and proficient in IT. Satellite Centres of Excellence in schools demonstrate best practice in the integration of IT into the curriculum, acting as an exemplar to Digital Learning Partner Schools. These will implement improvements in software, training and hardware to enable IT to contribute to improved learning. Finally, Community Access Centres provide state-of-the-art computer technology and free access to the Internet in community centres, to enable training in IT skills as well as the delivery of basic and key skills training.

Priory Campus: Highway to Success, Barnsley

This project aims to 'enhance attainment levels of local pupils at GCSE and Key Stages'. There are two strands. The first aims to maintain and develop the Priory Campus Information and Resource Centre, which provides free access to computers and the Internet; a library with CD ROMs and cassettes in addition to conventional printed material; and a range of support services. These are used both as part of the school timetable – every class visits regularly as part of the curriculum – as well as informally by schoolchildren at lunchtime and after school.

The second part of the project, the Priory Homework Club, is a well-resourced service at the centre that provides various types of homework and revision support during term time, with a reading club during the summer holiday.

The Guidance Project: Bristol Northern Arc

This project offers community-based guidance to enhance the employment prospects, education and skills of local people, especially the young and those at disadvantage, thereby encouraging sustainable economic growth and wealth creation in the area. The main target group for this project is young or single mothers, though it works with a range of people seeking guidance.

Working with local community organisations (for whom it will provide training in guidance skills), the project offers education, training and careers guidance to residents across the area. This is carried out on an outreach basis at a number of local drop-in centres. Through these, the aim is to help develop individuals' confidence, skill levels and community involvement, thus benefiting the whole community. The project links with other SRB schemes in the area, and networks with key organisations to ensure that the project has a broad impact.

The Employment Project: Bristol Northern Arc

The main aim of this project is to provide a link between unemployed people with skills and employers with job vacancies. It also seeks to equip people for the jobs which are available, through existing and customised training. Much of the activity centres on outreach work: the project worker holds advice sessions at drop-in centres in each of the three wards covered by the project. These aim to identify clients' employment or training needs, and to match these either with an appropriate job vacancy or with training that will improve employability.

The project has also created a network of other groups working in the area, which have related concerns, including groups working in education, training, employment, health, housing, and youth and community issues. This enables the project worker to direct clients to appropriate services offered by other providers, and facilitates the identification of training courses and job vacancies in the area.

Other Projects included in the Research

Professional Development and Classroom Support: Sandwell – Quality Starts – Primary Standards

The project is one of a number addressing learning objectives, designed in total to improve the skills and employability of children and young people in the borough. This project aims to raise standards of achievement in primary schools with a critical emphasis on:

- focusing on the skills of the teacher as promoter of a broad curriculum;
- extending the resources available for learning;
- providing professional development and classroom support on project themes consistent with school development plans;
- enhancing the skills of parents as first educators;
- using the project as a mechanism for developing links with other organisations, including the Educational Microtechnology Unit, Child Psychology Unit, Early Years Support Team, Library Service etc.

Improving Schools' Performance: Towards Employability – Waltham Forest

Funded under the first round of the SRB, this scheme is designed to help young people to develop the skills needed to benefit from emerging local employment opportunities. However there is a strong project emphasis on improving a variety of aspects of school performance as one of the key mechanisms by which its objectives will be achieved. Its objectives include 'improving the quality of leadership and management', to be achieved by:

- management training for 300 senior staff including headteachers;
- assisting all schools to secure Investors in People status; and
- increasing the recruitment of school governors from ethnic minority communities and the business sector.

The project also seeks to 'improve the quality of education delivery' by developing programmes of staff retention, and establishing an information system to link all schools to the local Education Department.

Additional copies

Copies of this report, the executive summary, case studies and thematic good practice texts are available on the DfEE's lifelong learning website at www.lifelonglearning.dfee.gov.uk and through Regen.Net, (a website developed and managed by the Planning Exchange with the help of funding from the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, DETR).

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