

ADULT LEARNING AND SKILLS STRATEGY FRAMEWORK for Cambridgeshire 2012-2020

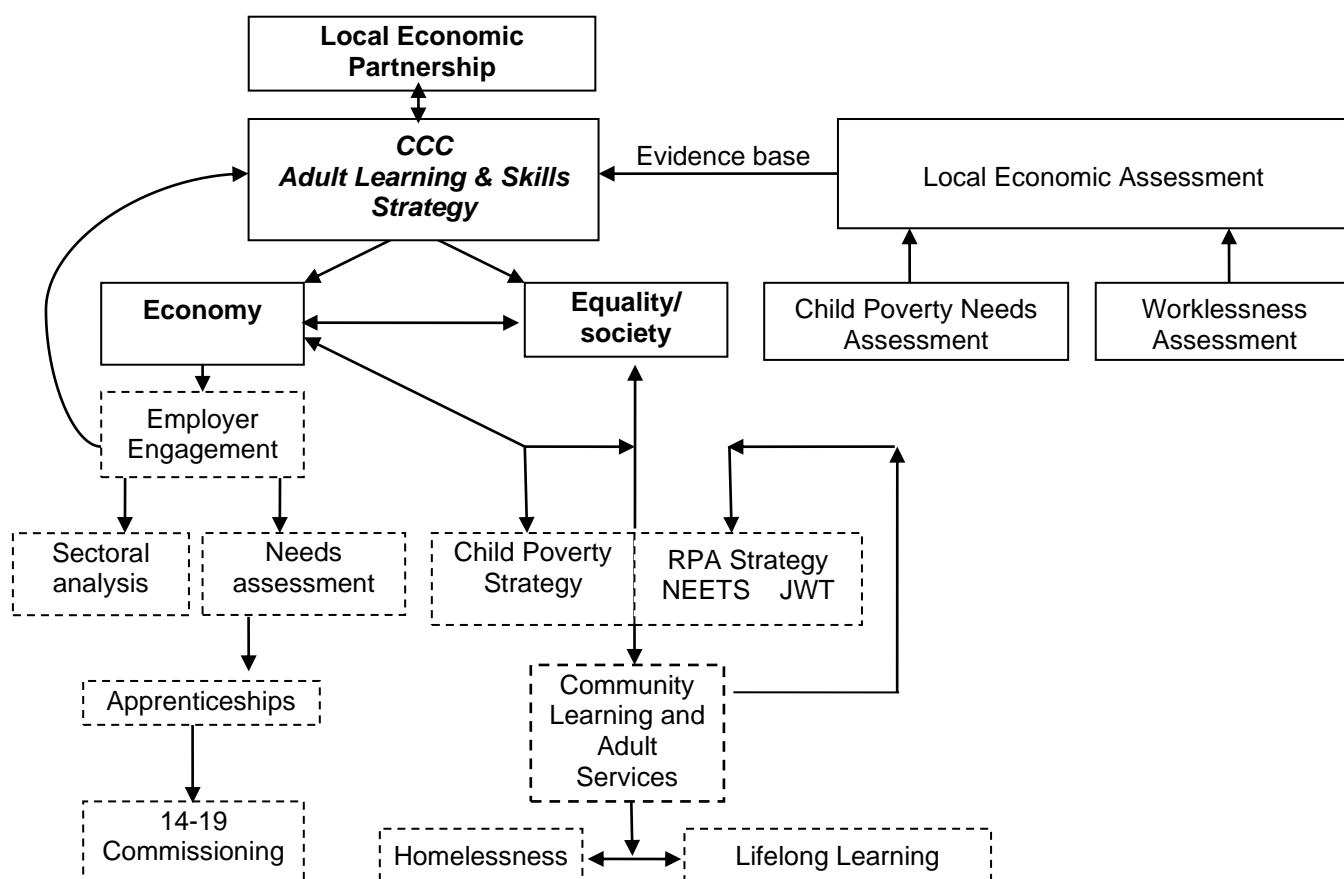
This strategy sets out:

- 1) Context and vision for Adult Learning and Skills in Cambridgeshire;
- 2) Where we are now and challenges for the future to address need; and
- 3) Priorities to address need, including clear outcomes, measures and key activities to 2020.

1. Context and vision for skills in Cambridgeshire

- 1.1. The vision for skills is to improve the skills of young people and adults across Cambridgeshire so that we support a fairer society and are proud of our productive contribution on a competitive world stage.
- 1.2. This strategy which aims to improve skills across Cambridgeshire, brings together the various strands of activity articulates key outcomes and activity, linked to impact.

Table 1: Links to other related work areas



- 1.3. We will have been successful by 2020 if we have:
 - improved skills (both qualification and employability)
 - increased productivity and therefore competitiveness
 - enhanced wage and income levels
 - enhanced the area's attractiveness for inward investment
 - provided greater social equality and a reduction in the potential for certain groups to be excluded from the benefits of a growing economy; and
 - reduced benefit and social service costs and lowered demand for services and the need for social care dependency

2. Where we are now and challenges for the future

- 2.1. The county's performance in improving skills to meet the needs of business improved before the recession and this has demonstrated an ability which we can build on. The percentage of the working population with various qualification levels increased and this needs to be accelerated to improve Cambridgeshire's competitive position in the global economy.
- 2.2. Alongside this, since the recession and subsequent cuts in publicly funded programmes linked to skills, a number of indicators point to future concerns.

Skills and participation in education, employment and/or training (EET)

- 2.3. With the recession, youth unemployment has increased and there will be a proportion of young people coming through with little or no qualifications at the age of 19.
- 2.4. We know that individuals with low skills levels are limited in their employment opportunities, which in turn limit income levels. Low skills are linked with poor health, crime and low social cohesion and also impact on the productivity and competitiveness of business and local economies. Consequently, the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is a major predictor of future economic and social exclusion.

The Department for Education (DfE) Statistical First Release (SFR) data suggests that in 2010, 98% of Cambridgeshire residents were in education or work based learning at age 16 and 88% at age 17. However, the SFR also suggests that 12% of Cambridgeshire residents aged 16 and 17 are in independent schools, double the national average of 6%. This data is distorted by the high number of independent schools in Cambridge City, which are attracting residents from other counties. In fact, only around 7% of Cambridgeshire residents are attending independent schools at age 16 and 17, which means that overall participation at age 16 and 17 is arguably significantly below the national and East of England averages.

- 2.5. Continued focus is needed on the NEET "hotspots" in our most deprived areas of Fenland and Cambridge City, where the proportions of 16-19 year olds in NEET are highest. In March 2011, there were 760 people who were NEET in the 16-18 year old population in Cambridgeshire. On average, 37 per 1,000 people in this age group are in the NEET group in the county. The rate is noticeably higher in Cambridge at nearly 58 per 1,000 population. However, we also know that over 70% of children in poverty in Cambridgeshire live in our less deprived areas – and that children growing up in poverty in Cambridgeshire achieve less well at school than almost anywhere else in the country.

NEET is relatively low in Cambridgeshire, around 5%, although this masks different geographic patterns across the county and higher levels of NEET within vulnerable groups, such as young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, teenage parents and care leavers. In addition, participation at age 17 in 2010/11 was more than 4 percentage points lower than at age 16 and year on year, drop out at age 17 in Cambridgeshire is higher than the East of England.

- Aside from the focus on NEET, the Raising the Participation Age legislation requires a focus on growing opportunities for employment with training for young people. In this regard, performance in apprenticeships is also below the national average. In 2010/11, less than 3% of 16 and 17 year olds in Cambridgeshire participated in apprenticeship programmes, likewise a significant number of young people were in jobs without training - 4.5%. In order

to raise participation and improve the skills of young people to meet the demands of the local economy it will be necessary to work with employers and providers to convert jobs without training to jobs with training, focusing particularly on apprenticeships wherever possible.

- Key to raising participation and meeting the demands of the local economy, will be having appropriate levels of provision in place that are flexible to meet the needs of learners and employers, growth in apprenticeships, robust IAG arrangements, early identification of young people at risk of dropping out (both pre and post 16), managing transitions and ensuring that appropriate targeted support is in place.

- 2.6. Leaving school with few qualifications means that Cambridgeshire's children in poverty are not prepared to enter the workplace. In Cambridgeshire, children in poverty are nearly 3 times more likely to be NEET. The lack of preparation for employment means that unemployment is much more likely. This leads to inter-generational effects which are prevalent in Cambridgeshire. 75% of children in poverty here come from workless households.
- 2.7. Although having generally very high levels of skills, Cambridgeshire also demonstrates some of the **highest levels of skills inequalities** with pockets of skills deprivation evident in a number of communities. Failure to invest in skills will increase demand for services, adding increasing pressure to already tight budgets.
- 2.8 The number of young learners is falling. By 2015 there will be 470 or 3% fewer 16-17 year old county residents than there were in 2009. This will require more young people to remain in education and training post 16 and for a greater proportion to achieve at Level 3 in order to meet the projected growth in demand by employers for new entrants at this level. In addition older learners will need to keep their skills up to date until they reach retirement.
- 2.9 The generally high levels of skills and earnings in the south and west of the county mask underlying pockets of poverty, and this is compounded by the relatively low accessibility of employment and training opportunities in rural areas. A higher proportion of Fenland's working age population has no qualifications than seen nationally. Across England, 12% of adults have no qualifications. This proportion is lower across all districts in Cambridgeshire except Fenland, where 14% of the population has no qualifications.

Table 2: Out of work benefit claimants as a proportion of working age population

Source: Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)(2010, Job Seekers Allowance claimants)

Area	Economically Active		Economically Inactive						Total Out-of-Work Benefits		
	Out-of-Work Benefits Claimants										
	Job Seeker		ESA and Incapacity Benefits		Lone Parent		Others on income related benefit				
Claimants	% of pop	Claimants	% of pop	Claimants	% of pop	Claimants	% of pop	Claimants	% of pop	Claimants	% of pop
Cambridge City	1660	1.8%	3420	3.6%	680	0.7%	180	0.2%	5940	6.3%	
East Cambridgeshire	1070	2.0%	1850	3.5%	440	0.8%	150	0.3%	3520	6.6%	
Fenland	2010	3.6%	4070	7.3%	890	1.6%	320	0.6%	7280	13.0%	
Huntingdonshire	2250	2.1%	4200	3.9%	1010	0.9%	360	0.3%	7820	7.2%	
South Cambridgeshire	1170	1.3%	2800	3.0%	570	0.6%	170	0.2%	4710	5.1%	
Cambridgeshire	8150	2.0%	16350	4.0%	3590	0.9%	1180	0.3%	29270	7.2%	
East	105680	2.8%	181630	4.9%	46740	1.3%	14840	0.4%	348890	9.4%	
England	1197090	3.5%	2104450	6.2%	516860	1.5%	160450	0.5%	3978850	11.8%	

- 2.10 Alongside this, increasingly ethnic minority groups are over-represented in the unemployed population.

- 2.11 Travel to learn: In 2010/11 86% of Further Education (FE) learners (16-18) accessed provision within Cambridgeshire, including at the College of West Anglia. A further 6% chose to access Peterborough Regional College, close to 650 learners. Similarly in 2010/11, 87% of school sixth form learners accessed provision within Cambridgeshire. Learners do not appear to be accessing provision that is unavailable in Cambridgeshire suggesting that ease of access may be the primary driver of choice. As a rural county, travel to learn distances and costs can be considerable and so act as a barrier to learning that could be accentuated as a result of the withdrawal of the EMA scheme.
- 2.12 Cambridgeshire Adult Learning and Skills Service provides learning opportunities for a very diverse population of learners across the whole of Cambridgeshire. Programmes targeted at the disadvantaged are successful in engaging hard to reach learners. Overall numbers have increased over 3 years by 15%. Management of Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) and the Development Fund is much improved with closer monitoring and evaluation, and data on progression is also improving. Achievement is good on the Family Learning Impact Fund (FLIF) programme with 68% of learners progressing to the targeted outcomes of employment or further training. Literacy, language and numeracy for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities (ALDD) students is good, 20% above the Minimum Level of Performance measure, and 1.5% above the national benchmark.

Demand for skills across Cambridgeshire

- 2.13. A **lack of skilled workers** and workers with sufficient employability skills, continues to be raised as an issue by manufacturing firms, even though labour market availability has increased. Technician recruitment in the life sciences sector is a particular issue, as are work skills in the food processing sector.
- 2.14. Pre-recession education and health, business services and construction saw the largest growth, however the recession has hit construction and business services hard and higher education budgets have recently been significantly reduced. In the short and medium term, health, retail and business services are likely to provide the greatest number of opportunities for employment, however vacancy levels are significantly lower than those previously seen, limiting the opportunities available for the unemployed. Longer term health, tourism, technology and creative industries, agriculture and high value manufacturing may be the sectors that help Cambridgeshire's recovery from the recession.
- 2.15. The government is committing to the lifelong learning budget, but there may not be the demand amongst learners to take up learning opportunities. Apprenticeship starts need to increase significantly to make up for the gap caused by the decline in other funded employee qualification routes, such as Train to Gain. Cambridgeshire County Council, as an employer, previously had one of the smallest Apprenticeship programmes in the country but has recently set stretching targets to improve this.
- 2.16 **Future key sectors for growth and their skills requirements:**
- **The Cambridgeshire Skills Priority Statement for 2011/12 identified the following priority sectors and technologies as key to the county's growth:**

Research and Development, software consultancy, high value manufacturing, lower value manufacturing particularly food processing, health, digital technology and digital content industries and construction are all key sectors that are predicted to remain important or increase their share of employment over the medium term. Building entrepreneurship skills would also provide a major boost to the economy, particularly in more rural areas.

- **Key areas of unmet demand articulated by employers and aligned with National Skills Audit priorities are:**

Specific management and technical skills related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the digital economy; skilled manual workers; low carbon building skills specifically targeted at small companies; English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision; intermediate technical and engineering skills; targeted operational and management training for Small and Medium size enterprises (SMEs) in the manufacturing sector; social workers and social care workers. These align with the following 'red' and 'pink' category skills priorities identified by the National Skills Audit (2010):

- Corporate managers, specifically in relation to ICT, digital economy and technological change
- Health and social care professionals
- Science and Technology professionals in pharmaceutical and medical technology industries
- Professional and technical roles particularly in manufacturing/process sectors and construction
- Customer service, particularly for the tourism and retail industries.
- Food technologists for the manufacturing and processing industries.

- **These are reinforced by the skills being sought for current vacancies available through Jobcentre Plus:**

Health and social work, retail, tourism, financial and business services, skilled and elementary trade, management and technical skills in ICT/digital economy.

- **The projected replacement and expansion demand by sector and occupations, including skills gaps and progression needs, identified in the Skills Priority Statement are:**

Professional occupations, managers and senior officials, caring personal service and associate technical and professional occupations have the highest projected replacement and expansion demand over the next five years. The engineering and health sectors also have high projected replacement demand in Cambridgeshire. Expansion demand is anticipated in business services, health, advanced manufacturing, tourism, digital content and clean technologies.

Supply of Skills

- The skills landscape is complex with a vast number of providers competing to meet demand. Training is provided by a mixture of state funded institutions such as schools, local authority adult learning providers and FE colleges, private sector training providers, in-house employer training and Voluntary sector and Social Enterprise providers.
- The providers' sector is further differentiated by sector specialisms and programme focus (e.g. apprenticeships, foundation learning, employability, vocational training, adult informal learning and client groups (e.g. unemployed, NEET, Learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD), employed).

- Training provision is typically demand led, requiring providers to assess demand and need and respond to this. Increasingly there is less central coordination or a planned approach to skills development.
- Multiple funders support skills development (e.g. self funded individuals, individuals sponsored or trained directly by employers, Jobcentre plus, Skills Funding Agency, Education Funding Agency, European Social Fund etc.). Generally the recent funding settlement has resulted in reduced funding or unit cost funding post-16 and 19+. There remain many examples of supply not meeting demand but it is extremely difficult to precisely determine this mismatch at the local level.
- Provision for people with disabilities needs more work regarding supported employment opportunities and job prep support from Regional Colleges or the private and voluntary sector, who may be able to play a greater role in supporting the journey for people between long term unemployment, towards job readiness and culminating in some degree of meaningful employment.

3. **Our priorities to address challenges and improve outcomes across Cambridgeshire**

PRIORITY ONE: We will improve individual aspirations and skills across Cambridgeshire so our young people and adults can succeed in the labour market.

Based on evidence of need

- 3.1 Youth unemployment has risen over the last few years and there will be a proportion of young people coming through with little or no qualifications at the age of 19.
- 3.2 A higher proportion of Fenland's working age population has no qualifications than seen nationally. Across England, 12% of adults have no qualifications. This proportion is lower across all districts in Cambridgeshire except Fenland, where 14% of the population has no qualifications.

Our key outcomes

- 3.3. We will help people to live independent and healthy lives in their communities by achieving the following:
- Young people achieve highly in education
 - Improved skills for young people and the adult working population, so that people are better prepared to get jobs
 - Narrowed the gap in attainment at 19 between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged groups, whilst widening access to higher education and higher level skills.
 - Understood the needs and aspirations of local communities better. Over the past year the Informal Learning Partnerships have developed with a focus on linking up the learning and a vision led by the Adult Learning service that they will provide a local planning opportunity.
 - Improved early identification of workless and vulnerable families with young children.

How we will measure success

- 3.4 We will look at the percentage of young people aged 16 – 18 who are not in education, employment or training to assess our success in supporting young people to stay in learning.
- 3.5 We will monitor the number of adult learners in Cambridgeshire and the number of employment guidance sessions we deliver. The overall skill levels of the working age population will also help us understand our progress in this aim.

Key actions for 2012/13 and beyond

- Use data and local knowledge to help support schools and colleges to understand the local employment and skills market.
- Consult communities and local employers about their Training and Skills needs.
- Engage learners through partnership working, give appropriate careers advice; ensure that apprenticeship opportunities are available and supported and result in employment.
- Help all adults who receive social care to have a clear personal budget and wherever possible, to receive it as a direct payment enabling personal choice in skills development.
- Identifying young people at risk or not achieving, we will focus support and ensure appropriate provision is in place to achieve and progress into work or continuing education.
- In the long term ensure, by undertaking needs analyses that local needs are met and that duplication and gaps are avoided.
- Make sure we intervene effectively so that workless and vulnerable families with young children can access the learning and advice services that they need, for example, working with the LEP to increase the availability of part-time family-friendly opportunities, targeted training opportunities for lone parents, etc. We will also work with Children's centres to offer advice and learning opportunities to parents.

PRIORITY TWO: We will make sure future employees know what employers are looking for.

Based on evidence of need

- 3.6. Although having generally very high levels of skills, Cambridgeshire also demonstrates some of the highest levels of skills inequalities with pockets of skills deprivation evident in a number of communities. Failure to invest in skills will increase demand for services adding increasing pressure to already tight budgets.
- 3.7. A higher proportion of Fenland's working age population has no qualifications than seen nationally-see paragraph 3:2 for detail.
- 3.8. Alongside this, increasingly ethnic minority groups are over-represented in the unemployed population.

Our key outcomes

- 3.9. We will support and protect people when they need it most by:
- Building family and people's resilience so they can access opportunities. We will reduce incidences of harm or abuse within vulnerable groups.
 - Developing mechanisms to promote with schools and academies, the value of working with local employers in order to prepare their young people for the workplace.
 - Bringing Workless Families back into employment
 - Targeting economic development activity and promoting apprenticeships in areas particularly affected by the recession.
 - Developing pathways to employment including through IAG, Children's centre workshops, external vocational training and qualifications.
 - Establishing a mode of agreement with parents to participate.
 - Ensuring synergy with ESF/DWP Job seekers project.
 - Engaging the voluntary sector through the fund to support neighbourhood learning in deprived communities, to reach the learners farthest from learning provision.
 - Developing the adult learning and community engagement taking place in libraries, as they are well placed in the community to offer spaces where people want to engage, to benefit local communities.
 - Ensuring there are opportunities for all communities to give feedback on the delivery of learning services and engage in the design of the delivery of learning.

3.10 *How we will measure success*

We will seek to measure success through the following indicators:

- Comparison with the profile of engaged learners
- Review of learner outcomes
- Feedback from learners
- Feedback from employers
- Progression data

Key actions for 2012/13 and beyond

- Targeted work with workless families and individuals which will include the Adult Learning and Skills and Children and Young Peoples services engaged in working to support workless families. We will develop clear pathways to employment and progression for workless and low-income parents in poverty by:
 - Working with workless parents of two year olds receiving the free entitlement, to help them into employment by the time their children reach 5 years old
 - Working with the successful bidders for the ESF programme for families with multiple problems, to ensure that the right families receive the right support at the right time in order to move into employment.
 - Offering progression-oriented community learning opportunities for parents, particularly targeted in the county's disadvantaged communities

The Adult Learning and Skills Board will engage with employers and broaden its remit to include a greater skills for employment focus.

- Use our data and knowledge to help schools to understand the local employment and skills market.
- Engage more disaffected learners by working with Voluntary sector and Social Enterprise partners on engagement strategies for local and pre-entry learners.
- Work with providers to encourage them to support equality, fairness and social mobility during an economic period where the vulnerable become even more so. Adult Learning and Skills will engage a broader range of providers, particularly voluntary sector organisations that can give access to the more disengaged learners.

Adult Learning and Skills has a facilitating and enabling role as well as being a deliverer of provision. It is a deliverer where it is strategically placed to be a preferred provider such as in Family Learning and ALDD (Adults with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities), providing a good quality service to those who are most vulnerable or at risk.

PRIORITY THREE: We will improve responsiveness of providers to labour market needs so that provision and learners skills acquisition are well aligned, particularly for our vulnerable groups.

Based on evidence of need

- 3.11 The recession hit construction and business services hard. In the short and medium term, health, retail and business services are likely to provide the greatest number of opportunities for employment, however current vacancy levels are significantly lower than those previously seen, limiting the opportunities available for the unemployed. Longer term health, tourism, creative industries, agriculture and high value manufacturing may be the sectors that help Cambridgeshire's recovery from the recession.
- 3.12 Participation rates in Cambridgeshire are actually significantly lower than the national average (having adjusted Statistical First Release data to reflect the attendance of Cambridgeshire residents in independent schools).

Our key outcomes

- 3.13 We will develop our local economy for the benefit of all by:
- Seeking new and encouraging existing businesses to expand and grow, and to increase employment opportunities in the county.
 - Creating a new impetus for colleges and learning providers to take a strategic leadership role in the economic and social development of localities.
 - Supporting the introduction of Raising the Participation Age in 2013 and 2015, ensuring suitable provision and employment opportunities with training are available and accessible to all young people post-16.

How we will measure success

- 3.14 We will closely monitor economic indicators such as the employment rate and the new business registration rate to assess the state of Cambridgeshire's economy and our progress in this objective¹.

Key actions for 2012/13 and beyond

- We will work with Partners to match schools and skills provision with local business needs and employment opportunities, so that the workforce – particularly the excluded and low attainers – has the skills to compete in the labour market. We will use our data and knowledge to help schools and colleges to understand the local employment and skills market.

¹ See LEP Growth Prospectus

- Promote ways of working with local employers to schools and academies. Support and encourage the local business community to play a role in shaping and or delivering elements of learning in schools, to better meet local business needs.
- Showcase existing best practice in school/employer partnerships, encouraging and facilitating the proliferation of best practice to other areas by:
 - Working with schools and partners, and promoting existing educational resources with employers, in particular the vocational skills facilities;
 - Using existing partnerships for facilitation, in particular the LEP, the Adult Learning and Skills Board and 14-19 educational partnerships.
- Connect businesses to local employment and skills programmes, such that there is incentive to do so as an investment in the workforce, as much as a corporate social responsibility activity by:
 - Working with Voluntary sector and Social Enterprise providers of key employment programmes such as the Prince's Trust, and Work Programme providers to promote and improve engagement
- Contribute to the Government's agenda regarding the increased participation of apprenticeship programmes within the county by:
 - Adopting a policy of apprenticeships being a preferred route of progression and a considered route of recruitment, within the Local Authority Workforce Development strategy within the County Council's Integrated Plan;
 - Advocating, through supply chain procurement and influence, the methodology of employing apprentices to develop the skills base of the local economy;
 - Working closely with our partners in the Local Enterprise Partnership, to help new and existing businesses to expand and grow, and to increase employment opportunities in the county
 - Committing, with partners, to generate 1000 new apprenticeships by the County Council's activities over the next twelve months
- Compile information for schools on the labour market and economic makeup of local areas, using the Local Economic Assessment, forecasting data and evidence from the local business community.
- Support the development of Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATA) and other mechanisms in the county to provide enhanced opportunities for SME take up of apprenticeships.

PRIORITY FOUR: We will support and enable partners to improve skills across Cambridgeshire.

Based on evidence of need

3.15. We need to improve the data collection and sharing we have, particularly of supply to enable the tracking of activity to improve outcomes. In addition, there is a task group in place to support collaboration and partnership in development and implementation of a skills strategy. We also need to improve accountability within the Council for delivery of outcomes.

3.16 *Our key outcomes*

- The Development of joined up strategies. Adult Learning and Skills are developing a LDD (learners with difficulties and disabilities) and Family Learning Strategy to share with other services to enable a more joined up approach. This involves working with new partners and is underdeveloped, but very useful new work.
- Improved data collection and sharing across Cambridgeshire, so supply is better known and locally driven.
- A range of quality assured provision is available to support the desired outcomes.

3.17 *How we will measure success*

Success will be measured through:

- An increase in the level of skills outcomes;
- Employer feedback on the preparedness of employees for the available roles.

Key actions for 2012/13 and beyond`

- Ensure that economic development activity is linked to improving skills in the area, promoting social mobility and addressing inequality.
- 'Proof' inward investments and economic developments (e.g. Alconbury Enterprise Zone) for their contribution to the wider socio-economic agenda (e.g through procurement, local recruitment and skills contributions).

PRIORITY FIVE: We will recognise that the value of skills development goes far beyond economic productivity and promote adult Learning for its contribution to people's quality of life

Based on evidence of need

"So the transformational power of learning is shown both in how learning spreads opportunity and in how it spreads civilisation. But it's also shown in the element of personal choice, personal responsibility and personal empowerment that learning entails. And that's especially true of the less formal types of learning." John Hayes speech at Transforming Lives.

From the County Councils Strategic Framework a priority is Helping people to live healthy and independent lives Evidence of a problem- Growing ageing population who need to be supported to live independently; life expectancy between most and least deprived areas; children living in poverty; disparity in health and educational outcomes of deprived groups; worklessness and skills gaps across the county

Our key outcomes:

- Improved access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances.
- Enhanced social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement.
- Enhancement in the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities, through community learning

How we will measure success:

- Improved digital, financial, literacy and/or communication skills.
- Parents/carers are better equipped to support and encourage their children's learning.
- Improved/maintained health and/or social well-being.
- Improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning.
- Reduced costs on welfare, health and anti-social behaviour increased online learning and self organised learning.
- Turned around the lives of our most troubled families.

Key actions for 2012/13 and beyond`

- Commission, deliver and support learning in ways that contribute directly to these objectives, including:
 - using the established Community Learning and Skills Partnerships to bring together key providers and relevant local agencies and services;
 - evolving planning and accountability to a local level, with local people involved in decisions about the learning offer through the Community Learning Trust model;
 - involving volunteers and Voluntary sector and Social Enterprise groups.
- Focus the Community Learning funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use it where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.

A dialogue with partners is key to the successful delivery of this strategy and we will work closely with all partners to improve outcomes across Cambridgeshire.

List of related strategies:

Apprenticeship Strategy 2012

Child Poverty Strategy 2011

Raising Participation Age Strategy 2012

Appendix 1

Action Plan