

D5 CREATING A WORKFORCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

THE CURRENT POSITION

- D5.1 The future of the Black Country rests in a diverse, knowledge-based economy; this can only be delivered with a highly skilled local workforce. Yet the current situation is that far **too many local people have no qualifications and far too few possess higher level skills**. Nationally, 15% of adults have no qualifications. In the Black Country it is 22%. Similarly, 25% of adults nationally have higher level qualifications (Level 4+). In the Black Country it is just 16.8%.
- D5.2 Local young people are **underperforming at GCSE level**; the pass rate for five A*-Cs is 49.1% in the Black Country compared to 56.3% nationally. Following GCSEs, **fewer young people continue their education post-16**, and fewer progress into higher education than elsewhere in the country. There continues to be discernable differential rates of education achievement across communities, which is unacceptable. In some circumstances these gaps continue to widen.

Table D5.1 Education and Skills in the Black Country

Indicator:	Current (2005)		Scale of the Challenge
	Black Country	England	Number of Black Country Children and Adult Learners required to reach the national average
Children and Young People			
• % of 7 Years Old Achieving KS2 L2 Reading	81.5%	85%	502
• % of 7 Years Old Achieving KS2 L2 Writing	77.5%	82%	646
• % of 7 Years Old Achieving KS2 L2 Maths	87.3%	91%	538
• % of 11 Year Olds Achieving KS2 L4 English	73.3%	79%	520
• % of 11 Year Olds Achieving KS2 L4 Maths	68%	75%	846
• % of 14 Year Olds Achieving KS3 L5 English	68%	74%	838
• % of 14 Year Olds Achieving KS3 L5 Maths	67%	74%	985
• % of 15 Yr Olds Achieving the Equivalent of 5 GCSE's grade A*-C	49.1%	56.3%	1,043
• % of 15 Yr Olds Achieving the Equivalent of 5 GCSE's grade A*-C including Eng & Maths	34.5%	44.3%	1,419
Working Age Population:			
• % who have achieved NVQ Level 4+	16.8%	25%	52,000
• % achieved NVQ Level 3	13.4%	14.7%	8,000
• % achieved NVQ Level 2	15.1%	15.3%	1,000
• % achieved NVQ Level 1	15.9%	14.9%	-6,500
• % with Trade Apprenticeships	6.6%	6.2%	-2,000
• % with Other Qualifications	10.1%	9%	-7,000
• % with No Qualifications	21.7%	14.8%	-44,000

Source: Black Country Observatory.

The Key Stage data is taken from the DfEs and relates to 2005 data; the qualification data is taken from the 2003 Labour Force Survey.

- D5.3 Clearly, there is a great deal of catching up to do, but there are signs that initiatives are heading in the right direction. Young people's achievement rates at GCSE improved between 2003-2—4, with a higher percentage gaining five A*-Cs. Last year, 300 more 16-18 year-olds participated in full time education and each year a higher proportion of those who participate are succeeding.
- D5.4 The proportion of people Not In Employment Education or Training (NEET) fell from 10.6% in 2004 to 8.4% in 2005, although this was still above the national average of 7.9%. Moreover, adults have benefited greatly from the introduction of the Employer Training Pilot which reached over 5,000 learners in its first year of operation.
- D5.5 Despite the many successes of the four partner local authorities in relation to raising educational achievement, it is recognised that the sub-region is not closing the gaps at a sufficient rate of progress.

THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE - WHY THERE IS A NEED TO ACT

- D5.6 The Vision sets a bold agenda for growth of the economy towards knowledge-based activities with the aim of reducing the income gap with the rest of the country. The Economic Study identified the need for 160,000 new jobs by 2021 – 101,000 in the service sector. Many of these jobs will require specific high level skills, such as degree-level, managerial and professional qualifications.
- D5.7 Major skills shortages – particularly at higher levels – are in danger of prejudicing the Vision. Based on 2001 consensus data, there is a requirement for 80,000 more residents with NVQ Level 3+ by 2031, of which 60,000 will need NVQ Level 4 or above. A key challenge will be to stem the leakage of graduates and A/B income groups: Delivering on objectives for housing, centres, environment and the economy will therefore be critical.
- D5.8 The challenge for the Black Country is to ensure a workforce fit for the future that is able to take advantage of the jobs and opportunities arising from the planned scale of growth. This means ensuring that young people and adults possess the education and skills to meet the needs of employers in high value-added sectors.

MAKING IT HAPPEN: THE BLACK COUNTRY EDUCATION AND SKILLS STRATEGY

- D5.9 **"In 2033 the Black Country is a confident, 'we can do it' place. We are proud of our skills, our proficiency and our work ethic – these are key to our prosperity."** *The Draft Black Country Regeneration Framework "Shaping The Future".*

- D5.10 Local children entering the education system today represent the workforce of the Black Country in 2030. If they are to succeed, attitudes need to fundamentally change towards learning in many parts of the sub-region. From an early age, learning needs to be challenging and enjoyable to encourage more young people to stay on in education or training post-16. At the same time, high quality advice and guidance is necessary to help them make the right choices.
- D5.11 In an increasingly global, knowledge-based economy, young people must be equipped with the skills to succeed in a highly competitive economic climate. Basic writing, reading and numeracy skills are a prerequisite while science, technology and languages will become increasingly valuable. There is a need to foster a culture of enterprise and innovation from an early age.
- D5.12 The extent of the challenge locally means that the four Black Country LAs, University of Wolverhampton, LSC and other stakeholders, together with external partners, must look at strengthening collaboration; galvanising and focusing their energies on those key activities which will make the difference. The Black Country has a history of collaboration through the Black Country School Improvement Partnership. These collaborations need formalising and extending within a Memorandum of Understanding which clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of key partners to include a clear strategy for attracting the necessary investment and refocusing existing resources where appropriate to deliver the agreed Education and Skills strategy. Individual local authorities will also prioritise their own actions in relation to the strategy through their Local Area Agreements and LSP plans. Working together provides a stronger vehicle and enhanced leverage in relation to the campaign to build confident aspirational proficient and self-sufficient local neighbourhoods.
- D5.13 Sub-regional transformation will take up the challenges arising from The Green Paper “Every Child Matters” and the call to focus on transforming curriculum/learning experiences to facilitate personalised learning. These will be key components of local reform. The sub-regional strategy must mirror the national aims of:

Ensuring that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing levels of educational failure, ill health, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy, abuse and neglect, crime and anti-social behaviour among children and young people.

“Giving every single child the chance to be the best they can be, whatever their talent or background”. D.Milliband 2004

- D5.14 The Black Country will also strive for those outcomes regarded as important by local communities as identified through national consultation:
- **Being healthy** – *enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle.*
 - **Staying safe** – *being protected from harm and neglect.*

- **Enjoying and achieving** – *getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood.*
- **Making a positive contribution** – *being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour.*
- **Economic well being** – not being prevented by economic disadvantage.

- D5.15 The core themes of the Plan have been developed in partnership with the Local Authorities (Directors of Children and Young People's Services), the LSC, ConneXions, the University of Wolverhampton and the School Improvement Partnership. In future, their strategic planning will be set in the framework of the Plan. The recent mini visioning event marked a step change in commitment to taking a collective approach to raising aspirations for education attainment and developing skills to a higher level. This was accompanied with a new sense of urgency to translating the agreed Education and Skills Strategy "Enjoy and Achieve" into an innovative, radical action plan accompanied by a clearly costed investment strategy and robust monitoring framework. The Consortium have requested that Sir Geoff Hampton, Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton, should take the strategic lead upon the delivery of this plan.
- D5.16 While the Plan focuses on tailoring education and skills towards the needs of the local economy, the important contribution education and skills will make to other outcomes is clearly recognised. For example, young people who enjoy their learning are more likely to be high achievers. In turn, young people with high aspirations and self-esteem are more likely to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles and make a positive contribution to social regeneration.
- D5.17 This plan therefore will play a significant part in delivering the regeneration of our local neighbourhoods. To be successful in our endeavours there needs to be a significant reduction in the long term cost of education deficit: antisocial behaviour, crime, poor health and drug abuse. The plan will also exploit the opportunities/resources available through city region working and through Higher Education to include lifelong learning networks. It will also look to redress the impact change on potential loss of high skilled residents.
- D5.18 **The Black Country Education and Skills Plan** covers all phases of learning. It is divided into two sections:
- 1) **'Enjoy and Achieve'** sets out our priorities for early years development through to the critical 14-19 period;
 - 2) **'Every Adult and Business Matters'** covers adult learning and how we intend to make learning more demand-led;

In addition, a set of key indicators are agreed to measure success over the forthcoming years.

D5.19 The plan is:

- Focused on adding value to individual local plans in meeting the needs of local neighbourhoods;
- Being developed in partnership with that community and in a language that is accessible to all;
- The basis/rationale for developing new programmes and targeting funding;
- Built on pockets of excellence which can be extended/replicated across the sub-region;
- A vehicle for all stakeholders to develop and improve their provision;
- It needs to fully engage the local communities;
- Enlist effective partnership working with private providers;

D5.20 The plan will set out how agencies will:

- Provide options for transforming current learning opportunities from early years through to adulthood;
- Build capacity through establishing effective delivery networks;
- Include effective strategies to tackle the unacceptable numbers of disengaged learners;
- Ensure enhanced support/prioritise strategies to improve the life chances of vulnerable children and young people;
- Provide framework to help schools/learning organisations evaluate themselves honestly;
- Work with/for - local neighbourhoods;
- Address under-performance in learning organisations through a framework of support and challenge;
- Invest in e-learning to include the development of a sub-regional e-framework;
- Work to provide the very best learning environment for all learners to include maximum impact of both capital build and the Academies programmes;

- Provide an integrated planning framework for all education and skills partners within the Black Country, which includes non-negotiable commitment but allows for local responses;
- Facilitate clearer engagement of all parts of the learning and skills sector with the modernisation and diversification agenda, including the work around the knowledge economy;
- Include proposals for making available funding streams work better together (eg Regeneration Zones, Corridor Funding);
- Tie into the other key strands of activity emanating from the study in order to bring about a true renaissance for the sub-region;
- Build agreed priorities into local area agreements and ensure synergy between the work on education and skills and other priorities within the Black Country Study;
- Ensure that those who are most vulnerable in neighbourhoods, at whatever stage of their learning, will be included and that differential rates of education achievement across our communities are tackled effectively;

D5.21 A **Task Force** is being set up under the leadership of the University of Wolverhampton to develop the Action Plan including clear timescales and resource requirements. Following initial audit activity through the Black Country Observatory and self evaluation of local partners, the first focus areas for activity will be:

- Specific activity at key phases of education to include meeting the challenges at the new 14-19 implementation plan.
- Improving the numbers of young people progressing to Level 3 and beyond.
- Improving attainment in mathematics and numeracy at all phases
- Improving attainment through the use of new technologies.

D5.22 Cross-cutting strands in the Action Plan will focus on:

- Securing the very best workforce within Black Country learning organisations and maintaining high quality through a first class CPD framework;
- Developing leadership at all levels to include effective succession planning;

- Closing the gap: working to ensure all learning organisations perform as well as our best, providing additional support and encouragement as necessary;
- Developing cutting edge pedagogy to include maximum use of research, national and international links.
- Enhanced support for high achievers to include effective strategies for ensuring they continue to learn and work within the sub-region.
- A high quality, engaging curriculum which meets local needs, provides high quality learning pathways and engages and motivates learners at all levels.

Education and Skills Action Plan Initial Goals	
<p>1. Establishing a planning/consultation process through setting up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional Programme Board - Task Force to harness appropriate expertise - Working groups for each identified focus area - Establishing a range of visits/consultation events to engage key stakeholders 	<p>March 2006</p> <p>May 2006</p> <p>June 2006</p> <p>June - September 2006</p>
<p>2. Drawing up a three year costed plan for agreed focus areas/generic frameworks</p>	<p>July 2006</p>
<p>3. Setting out a clear investment strategy to include both realignment of existing funding and securing increased investment at both regional and national level. This will include a clear evidence base of the financial benefits resulting from successful delivery of the strategy in relation to impact on workforce and resulting economic regeneration. The investment strategy will focus on making a case for enhanced support for identified neighbourhoods experiencing particular challenges.</p>	<p>August 2006</p>
<p>4. Developing the role of external agencies/partners in supporting delivery.</p>	<p>August 2006</p>

- D5.23 Key strands of the strategy are currently being developed, consulted on and agreed. The agreed 14-19 strategy set out below demonstrate the commitment to collaborative step change.

Strategy for Raising Educational Achievement in the Black Country 14-19 - Priorities for Action

This part of the overall strategy is built around ten clear priorities for action, which will be delivered whichever form of institution the young person attends.

1. The planning of provision will be driven by:
 - An analysis of the needs of employers, and of the needs and aspirations of young people and their advocates.
 - An analysis and evaluation of the present provision.
 - A clear statement of what each young person can expect from the education system, alongside a statement of their responsibilities.
2. Coherent processes will be in place for monitoring, reporting and improving the quality of provision. These processes will be driven primarily by the internal performance management system of each provider, backed up by effective overarching performance management systems driven by the relevant planning authorities in each area. These will focus on the scrutiny of an organisation's self-evaluation. Local performance will be reported against a set of agreed targets and performance indicators. The systems will focus both on exchange of good practice and on challenge of under-performance, and will involve targets and a development plan for each provider. Bureaucracy will be minimised by ensuring quality management systems align with inspection frameworks.
3. Each learner will have an individual learning plan to provide support and challenge in order to raise achievement, and ensure that learning is purposeful and appropriate for the individual. Individual steps towards achievement will be celebrated and built upon and their programmes of learning will be personalised.
4. Providers of education and training will work together in collaborative consortia to ensure that young people have the widest possible choice of relevant learning opportunities at the right level. Opportunities to use electronic learning will be maximised to increase access to high quality relevant learning materials and progression information.
5. There will be an area prospectus of learning opportunities available to each young person. This will describe in a coherent format the opportunities available for young people.

6. There will be a coherent framework of high quality vocational learning opportunities commencing at 14, building qualifications between the different stages of education and maximising progression opportunities into employment with training, or into higher education.
7. Learners will make decisions on their learning programmes informed by high quality independent advice and guidance.
8. The aspirations of young people of all abilities will be raised by developing a network of guaranteed places in universities and employment linked to the achievement of individual learning plans. Awareness of progression opportunities will be maximised and young people will be motivated to achieve purposeful progression from 14-19 education into higher education or employment. This network will also commit to meeting the needs of young people with learning disabilities by providing appropriate progression routes and associated support programmes to ensure access.
9. There will be a programme of continued professional development for managers, teachers and trainers to ensure provision remains relevant to the changing needs of young people and their future employers in the Black Country economy.
10. The partners' investment strategies will be co-ordinated to provide young people with high quality stimulating and challenging learning environments. These will offer a choice of specialist facilities. Planning bodies will work together to maximise the opportunities for young people to take advantage of the specialist facilities and expertise available in schools, colleges, work based learning providers, universities and employers.

EVERY ADULT AND BUSINESS MATTERS: STRATEGY FOR TRANSFORMING ADULT AND EMPLOYER LEARNING

- D5.24 The Enjoy and Achieve Strategy (0-19) will work alongside the agreed strategy for raising the skills of adults and the workforce as set out below.
- D5.25 This strategy is built around eleven clear priorities for action and will be committed to by all organisations that deliver skills and learning advice and opportunities in the Black Country
- D5.26 Employment in the Black Country has traditionally been heavily dependent upon the Manufacturing Sector and much of the employment in the Black Country has been that of low skill, low pay.

- D5.27 However, this picture is changing radically right now, with a shift away from traditional manufacturing, increases in public and services sector and a demand for more knowledge workers.
- D5.28 The challenge for the Black Country is to ensure a workforce fit for the future that is able to take advantage of the jobs and opportunities of a local economy that requires higher-level skills. This means not only making a fundamental impact on the skill levels of adults in the Black Country, but ensuring that Young People come out of the education system equipped with the skills that employers want and that enable them to continue to progress their training and development throughout adulthood.
- D5.29 The Black Country continues to have a high number of people who do not have the essential skills they need in reading, writing and numeracy. There are insufficient numbers of adults with Level 2 qualifications. Agencies must tackle these two issues to ensure the workforce is equipped to support the diversifying economy of the Black Country. There will be many employment opportunities within the Black Country over the next 8-10 years but they will be of a very different order to historic skills and employment sectors. The Black Country needs to realise the human capital in its local economy and within its businesses in order to address the future demand for the knowledge workers needed into the future in the Black Country.
- D5.30 The other critical area that needs to be addressed is the enthusiasm with which local employers embrace training and development for their workforce and the investment they are prepared to make in the skills of those they employ. Very often skills shortage issues can be overcome by building the existing workforce to adapt to a diversifying business base. More employers will be encouraged to invest in their people makes to make a real difference to their profitability, their capacity and their competitiveness.

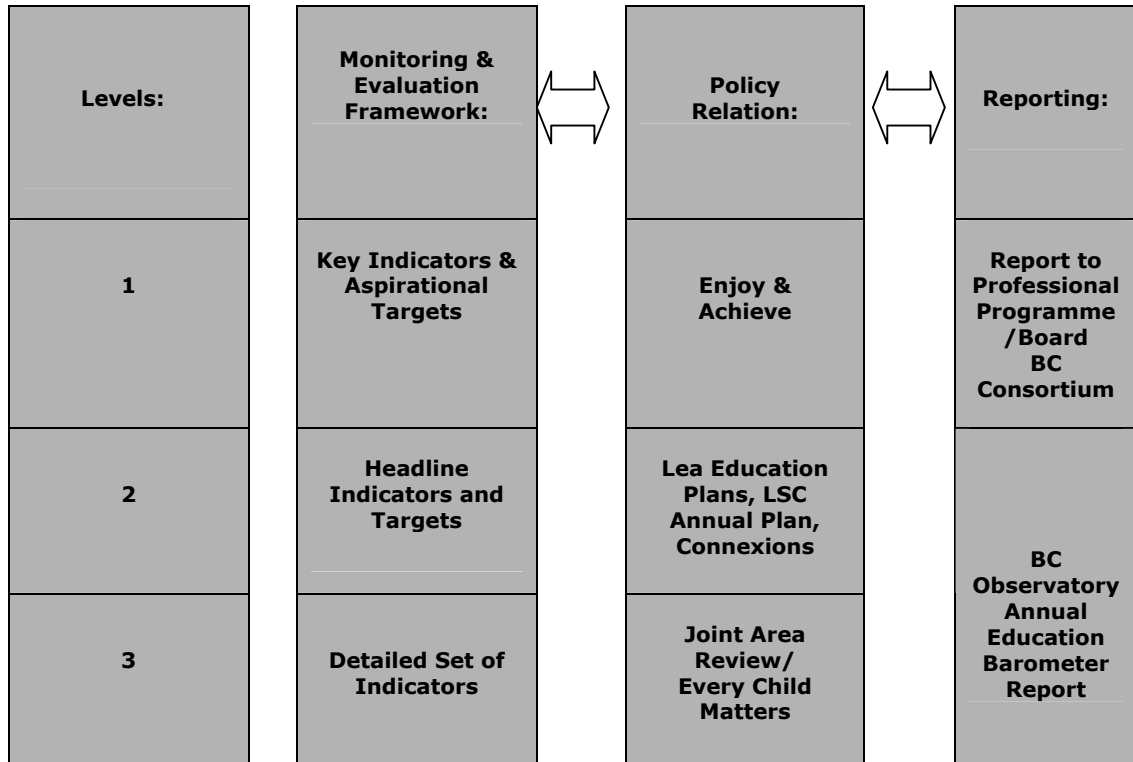
Strategy for Transforming Adult and Employer Learning

1. The LSC will commission changes to the supply of provision that will be driven by:
 - An analysis of the current and future needs of employers, in conjunction with the Sector Skills Councils.
 - An analysis of the needs of adults to ensure they are able to become or remain economically active and competitive within the workplace.
 - An Analysis and evaluation of present provision, particularly its responsiveness to its client base and adequacy to meet future skills needs.

- A determination to ensure that there is an appropriate range of specialist provision delivering training to the highest standards of good practice in industry and commerce.
 - Employers being able to directly influence the core provision of education and training that meets their needs.
2. Providers will work together to ensure employers are able to access relevant, high quality, flexible, responsive provision delivered at a time, pace and place to suit their needs.
 3. Building on the existing Skills Hotline a system will be in place, available through one portal, which enables access to a brokerage service that can source appropriate training provision from a comprehensive database enabling provision that can be designed and shaped to meet employers' needs.
 4. The highest priority will be given to ensuring that all adults will have access to learning opportunities available to them that enable them to be competent in essential skills and that these learning opportunities lead to a relevant qualification.
 5. All adults without a qualification to level 2 will have the opportunity to access learning to enable them to achieve this.
 6. There will be a local area prospectus of all provision available for adult learning across the Black Country.
 7. High quality information, advice and guidance will be easily accessible for those who most need it to ensure that they are aware of all of the progression and career opportunities available to them through further learning.
 8. First Steps learning will be increasingly designed to lead to accredited qualifications and further progression through to Level 2.
 9. High Quality and relevant Level 3 and Level 4 provision that is responsive to employer demand in priority skills areas will be in place and will be of a standard which meets employers' needs flexibly and which employers are prepared to invest in.
 10. The quality and location of adult training facilities will be enhanced via an active programme of updating and/or construction of facilities.
 11. Work with employers through employer networks to encourage and support employer engagement in 14-19 strategies to ensure people entering employment are prepared for the world of work.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION - NEXT STEPS

D5.30 The principles of the Education and Skills Plan will be embedded in all Community Plans and Education Plans. Partners will establish targets at five year intervals to coincide with milestones in the Black Country Study and the Black Country Observatory monitoring framework¹. The monitoring framework consists of three levels of detail as illustrated in the image below:



¹ Detailed information on the Monitoring Framework is available in the Black Country Observatory’s report : “Black Country Education Strategy, Monitoring & Evaluation Framework, April 2006, which is available on www.blackcountryobservatory.co.uk

D5.31 Key indicators to measure are agreed. These are:

- Level of development reached at the end of the Foundation Stage, including narrowing the gap in the 20% most disadvantaged areas;
- Percentage of 7 year olds achieving Level 2+ at KS1 in Reading, Writing, Maths and Science;
- Percentage of 11 year olds achieving Level 4 in English, Maths and Science;
- Educational achievement of 11 year old looked after children compared with peers in English, Maths and Science;
- Percentage of 14 year olds achieving Level 5+ in English, Maths, Science and ICT;
- Take up of sporting activities by 5-16 year olds;
- The percentage of children and young people who state they have been bullied in last 12 months;
- The percentage of children and young people participating in the social life of their learning institution;
- The percentage of institutions causing concern, or receiving reports from inspectorates indicating that provision is under performing;
- % of half days missed through absence;
- The percentage of 15 year olds achieving 5 A*-C grades at GCSE;
- The percentage of 15 year olds achieving 5 A*-C grades including English and Maths at GCSE;
- The percentage of 15 year olds achieving A*-C grades at GCSE in English and Maths;
- Educational achievement of 15 year old looked after children compared with their peers;
- Take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities among 16+ year olds;
- The percentage of 16 year olds not involved in employment, education or training (NEETs);
- The percentage of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities not involved in employment, education or training age 16 as a % of the 16 year old cohort;
- The percentage of young people participating in full-time post-16 education as a % of the 16 year old cohort;
- The percentage of young people participating in apprenticeships or advanced apprenticeships as a % of the 16 year old cohort;

- 16-18 Further Education participation;
- 16-18 Apprenticeship participation;
- 16-18 Entry to Employment participation;
- 16-18 School Sixth Form participation;
- Overall 16-18 Further Education Success Rate;
- Overall 16-18 Work Based Learning Success Rate;
- Average Advanced Level Point Score in School Sixth Forms;
- The number of young people from the Black Country entering Higher Education;
- Proportion of young people who attain level 2 at 19 years of age;
- Proportion of young people who attain level 3 at 19 years of age;
- Full Level 2 19+ participation;
- Full Level 3 19+ participation;
- Literacy, numeracy and ESOL achievements (all ages);
- Overall 19+ Further Education Success Rate;
- 19+ Full Level 2 Achievements;
- 19+ Full Level 3 Achievements;
- 19+ Level 4+ achievements;
- Percentage of establishments who funded or arranged training for staff over past 12 months;

D5.32 Attracting significant investment to support such a plan is a key task over the next nine months. This will need to reflect the building up of sustainable mainstream activity rather than purely a range of short-term project/pilots.

WHAT IS NEEDED FROM OTHERS

D5.33 A sustainable programme will be established that doesn't depend on 'one off' funding. However we should look to DfES/ODPM/regeneration to support a significant investment strategy in order to provide infrastructure/set up activity set in the context of longer-term sustainability. Some new solutions are needed as well as taking from the successful work emanating from successful programmes such as the London Challenge. The Private Sector also needs to be engaged as a key investor.

D5.34 Challenging/enabling relationships will be built with national bodies to support:

- QCA: critical friend in development of mathematics.
- MP: champion/advocate.
- ODPM: support of investment.
- TDA: support in recruiting/retaining a first class workforce for our learning organisations.
- NCSL: support for succession planning, high quality professional development for school leaders.

SSAT: cohesive approach to using skills, specialisms of schools,
enhanced professional development opportunities.