

## **Liverpool City Region**

### **Interim Work and Skills Plan 2010-11**

#### **Introduction**

This is the interim Work and Skills Plan for the Liverpool City Region for 2010-11 and should be seen alongside the recently approved Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Strategy, which provides the longer term direction of travel for employment and skills delivery in the City Region.

#### **Context**

The Liverpool City Region (LCR), with a population of just under 1.5 million, covers the local authority areas of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral. The City Region has an ambitious vision to be a thriving international City Region by 2030 and has identified (through the Multi Area Agreement and the draft Strategic Framework) four sectors which will supply the economic growth over the next 20 years. The Employment and Skills Strategy is set against the context of this forecast economic development and the delivery plans will be heavily influenced by the City Region Economic Assessment, which is due to be completed later in 2010. This will ensure that there is a supply of individuals and skills in future years to meet the demands from employers.

The Multi Area Agreement (MAA) acknowledged that whilst we have made progress towards achieving our vision in relation to particular measures and indicators, the scale of the challenge in relation to employment and skills mirrors the scale of our ambition. In particular, if the LCR current performance mirrored the current England average we would have:

- 26,400 more 19-59/ 64 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification or equivalent;
- 43,800 more 19-59/ 64 year olds achieving a level 4 qualification;
- 46,000 fewer 19-59/ 64 year olds who have no qualifications. Currently 145,000 people have no qualifications; and
- 120,000 more people in employment if we are to meet the Government's aspiration of an 80% employment rate. The current employment rate in the LCR stands at 66.7%.

The Employment and Skills Strategy and Commissioning Framework will help drive a step change in the City Region's employment and skills system for the long term benefit of individuals, communities and employers, supported by the more focused Work and Skills Plan. This belief is based upon the following firm foundations:

- Our comprehensive review of the state of the LCR labour market, set in its wider context;
- Consultation with individuals, employers and all other stakeholders to gather their views on the issues we should be addressing and the priorities we should be placing on different strategic interventions;
- Our approach builds firmly upon the analysis, vision and aims generated by the MAA; and
- We have designed a commissioning framework which we believe to be the most detailed and comprehensive statement produced by and of England's city region partnerships to date.

To ensure we remain on course and retain our focus, we have established a business-led City Region Employment and Skills Board to oversee implementation of the Employment and

Skills Strategy and provide the business leadership and challenge function that is undoubtedly required.

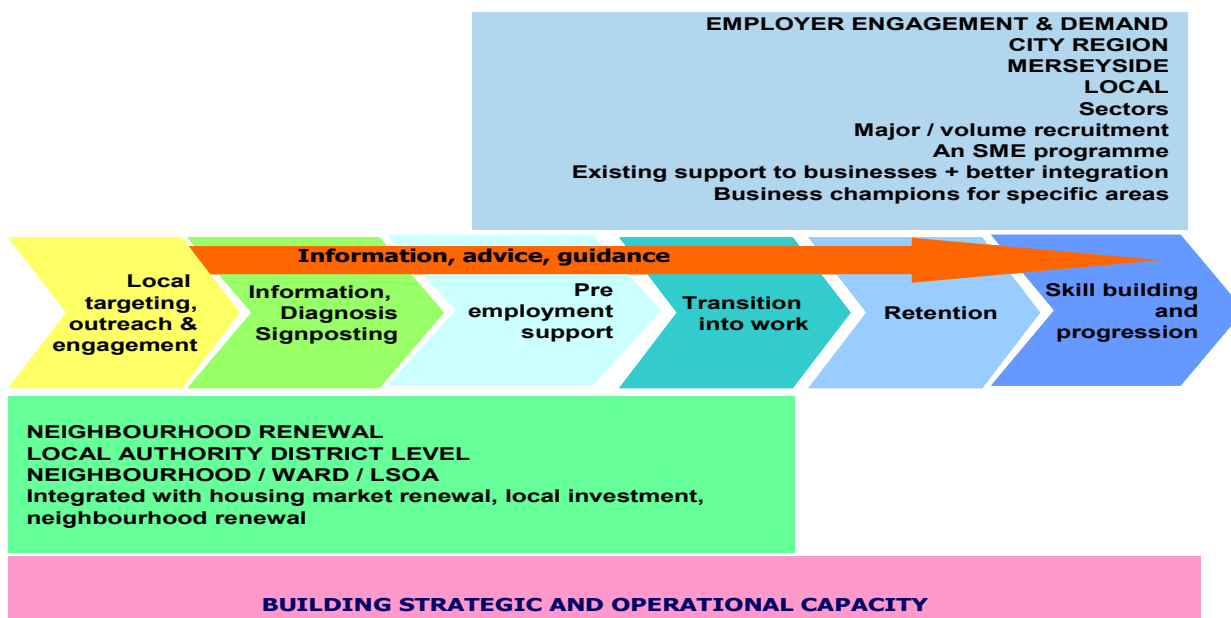
### Building on the City Employment Strategy Pathfinder

The City Region has a track record of effective partnership working in the employment and skills context, with well established working relationships between the 6 Local Authorities, Jobcentre Plus (both Merseyside and Cheshire, Halton and Warrington districts), Skills Funding Agency, Young Peoples' Learning Agency, North West Development Agency, Government Office North West, Connexions, Union Learn, Merseytravel, Universities and representatives of the charitable, voluntary and community sectors within the City Region. A City Employment Strategy Pathfinder was established here in 2007, and much of the good work that has been achieved is as a result of having had the Pathfinder in place.

The City Employment Strategy (CES) is focused on improving outcomes in those areas with the highest concentrations of worklessness and lowest skills levels and in taking this forward works to the following first principles:

- Getting people into jobs and keeping them in jobs
- Meeting the needs of employers and ensuring that people are 'job ready'
- Addressing culture, stigma and perceptions of workless residents
- Using resources smartly and more effectively to secure greater levels of operational efficiency and increased outcome levels
- Prioritising interventions for the benefit of the whole City Region..

These principles are integrated into the CES 'continuum model' for employment and skills which is represented below:



The key elements of this model are:

- A demand led approach which engages employers;
- Delivery of recruitment and training services which meet the needs of employers and provide progression across the full qualifications spectrum from Level 1 through to Level 4;
- Ensuring a good quality information, advice and guidance service is integrated within each stage of the journey;
- A routeway of personalised assistance to individuals from worklessness to employment, and
- Integration with neighbourhood and housing renewal.

The CES has provided the opportunity to pilot new ways of service delivery based on the above. The lessons from a number of these pathfinder projects have been taken and mainstream services changed as a result e.g. worklessness training with housing associations and support for newly released offenders with Create.

### **Future Jobs Fund legacy**

Partners in the City Region are in the process of delivering over 7,000 Future Jobs Fund jobs which are being taken up by long term unemployed people in the City Region. This covers those aged 18-24 and those older claimants in the hotspot areas of higher unemployment, which covers the City Region as a whole. All partners have committed to a minimum standard wraparound model, including targeted support for individuals, mentoring, jobsearch time and an exit interview: the delivery of this is being reviewed with partners at the moment.

Discussions are taking place with Jobcentre Plus to identify the pattern of referrals and appointments to Future Jobs Fund jobs with a view of determining whether particular groups have been included or not.

A common set of exit interview questions has been developed, which will allow the City Region to assess the impact of Future Jobs Fund jobs on those individuals. There will also be an opportunity for individuals to participate in a longitudinal study to assess the wider and longer term impact of their Future Jobs Fund employment on their future working prospects. The initial evidence suggests that the dropout rate from Future Jobs Fund jobs is around 3%, with  $\frac{1}{3}$  of these leaving to go to sustainable employment. Work is focused with the providers of the first leavers to determine the lessons that can be shared with partners in the provision of support to them.

There are a considerable number of apprenticeships being delivered, with Future Jobs Fund contributing an upfront element to the overall costs. Wherever possible, these have been linked to identified growth sectors or areas of skills shortages, where sufficient community benefit can be demonstrated.

Partners are also working with the Skills Funding Agency to identify the totality of the training provided whilst they are in their Future Jobs Fund job, and to enable the nascent Skills Funding Agency to identify the likely demand for their programmes. This granular detail (being reviewed at the level of individual jobs) will also inform the development of the City Region Work and Skills Plan for 2011-14.

### **Identification of resourcing**

The City Employment Strategy carried out an extensive mapping exercise in 2008 to identify the resources that are currently deployed on work and skills interventions in the City Region. This work was reviewed as part of the development of the City Region Employment and Skills Strategy. The evaluation commissioned by the City Employment Strategy has identified a number of areas of improvement, particularly around outreach and engagement. In addition, specific projects commissioned through the City Employment Strategy's programmes have evaluations conducted as part of their work, and these will be shared with partners as relevant.

Partners have commissioned additional activity in their areas, utilizing a range of different funding streams (including Working Neighbourhood Fund and Area Based Grant), in line with the overall Strategy for the City Region. Plans are in place to share the lessons from this delivery across the City Region and ahead of the development of more localised neighbourhood work and skills plans later in 2010-11. These local work and skills plans are informed by small area data from Department for Work and Pensions and will allow the City Region to adopt a Total Place approach to the delivery of employability and skills development services on the most deprived and needy areas.

### **Child Poverty work**

The City Region has drafted a Child and Family Poverty Framework, which will be subject to consultation during 2010. This covers wider issues, such as education, skills and health, and will enable the City Region as a whole, Boroughs and potentially smaller areas to be held to account in their focus on Child Poverty. This has been referenced in the City Region's drafted Strategic Framework and the City Region's submissions to the RS2010 consultation.

It has also committed to establish a formal City Region Child and Family Poverty Commission, which will be independently chaired and will act as the driving force behind the City Region's approach to addressing poverty issues. This will be the forum which will review the City Region wide Child Poverty assessment and action plan, and have wide representation from geographical areas and policy themes.

### **Completion of Work and Skills Plan 2011-14**

The City Region is conducting a City Region Economic Assessment, which is due for completion in late 2010. The worklessness assessment will be completed as part of this process. This will then be reviewed by the Employment and Skills Board along with the City Region Employment and Skills Strategy progress report to determine the priorities for investment for the Work and Skills Plan, which should be completed in early 2011.

In taking this forward, discussions are planned with JobCentre Plus, Skills Funding Agency, North West Development Agency, Young Persons' Funding Agency and National Offender Management Service to determine when their individual commissioning cycles can be influenced. This includes directing ESF investment and ensuring individual co-financing plans are consistent with the City Region's overarching Employment and Skills Strategy and Commissioning Plan.

### **Additional documents provided for background**

Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Strategy and Commissioning Plan and summary of objectives

Liverpool City Region draft Strategic Framework

Liverpool City Region draft Child and Family Poverty framework  
Wraparound services – report to City Employment Strategy Consortia Board, April 2010  
Future Jobs Fund Exit interview questions