

Members of the Regeneration & Economy Improvement Committee

Elected Members

Cllr Val Slater (Chair)

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Contents

Section	Page Number
Chair's Foreword	4
Chapter 1 – Introduction	5
Chapter 2 – Findings and Recommendations	6
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference	19
Appendix 2 – Profile of the current skills base across the district	22
Appendix 3 – Suggested Employment and Skills Board model	27
Appendix 4 – Hearings and witnesses	28

Chair's Foreword

Last year the Regeneration and Economy Improvement Committee carried out a substantial piece of work looking at the issue of worklessness in the District. It quickly became apparent that worklessness was closely tied to the issue of skills levels within the district which are relatively low compared to other districts in West Yorkshire.

If we are to achieve the economic prosperity that has been forecast for the Bradford District then we must tackle this key issue. The expected growth in higher skilled jobs and the decline in some of the lower skilled areas of work have implications for skills levels within the workforce. There is likely to be the need for more people qualified to at least NVQ level 3 reflecting the need for higher skills within companies looking to move up the value chain and increase competitiveness.

I hope that the work we have done will contribute towards the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy (The Big Plan) and the Economic Strategy.

Whilst carrying out the scrutiny we looked at a wide range of issues and took evidence from a number of people; mainly in their professional capacity and I would like to express my thanks for their input. I would especially like to thank the Nottingham employment and skills board for allowing us to visit them and freely sharing with us their knowledge and experience. We were very impressed by what we saw and have drawn from their good practice whence drafting this report.

I regret that timescales and amount of work prevented us from talking to a wider range of people especially those receiving learning interventions.

I owe my thanks to the members of the Committee for giving up their valuable and scarce time and also to the Council officers who ably supported the Committee throughout. I also wish to publicly express my thanks to the then portfolio holder Andrew Mallinson who has dealt collaboratively and effectively with the Regeneration and Economy Improvement committee not only throughout this scrutiny but during the whole period he held the portfolio and I for one will miss his input and support.

The main focus of the scrutiny has been towards reducing worklessness and towards developing workforce potential. However, we must not forget that learning development is a life-long aspiration and one that should be encouraged and supported.

Councillor Val Slater

Chair, Regeneration & Economy Improvement Committee

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Background

In June 2007, the Regeneration and Economy Improvement Committee completed its scrutiny of Worklessness across the District. Whilst working on the scrutiny it became apparent that there were several “skills gaps” within the District’s workforce.

As a result the Committee decided to undertake an enquiry into skills across the Bradford District. The Terms of Reference were agreed by the Committee and are included as Appendix 1.

The Scrutiny Process

This scrutiny has been carried out in accordance with the arrangements detailed in paragraph 2, Part 3E of the Constitution of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

Members have received and gathered a range of information from a number of different sources, including:

- 5 briefings and ‘public hearings’ gathering information and views from Bradford Council (Education Client Team), Bradford Council’s Economic Development section, Skills at Work, the University of Bradford, Bradford College, Shipley College, and Park Lane College Keighley, West Yorkshire Employer Coalition, Job Centre Plus, and Careers Bradford.
- Visit to the Industrial Services Group
- Visit to the Greater Nottingham Partnership
- Meeting with the Learning and Skills Council

The primary objectives of the Committee were:

- To understand “skills” terminology, alongside the profile of the current skills base across the Bradford District.
- To examine the nature of the projected future needs for skills, in the context of the Council’s Corporate Priorities and the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy.
- To examine skills development across the District, including the current / proposed delivery structures and the roles of the agencies involved.
- To specifically consider the role of the Council in skills development, as a provider of training and employment support, an employer, and as a community leader.
- To make recommendations which bring about an improvement to skills development and the skills base across the District, with a particular focus on basic and vocational skills that will make a significant contribution to the economic prosperity of the area.

Chapter 2 – Findings and Recommendations

This report presents the findings and conclusions the Committee has made as a result of its research. It also makes a number of recommendations for action by the Council and others. The review of skills is now complete, but it is important that a programme of monitoring and evaluation of all recommendations contained within this report is undertaken.

Main Findings / Recommendations

1. The current skills base across the District

The focus of this scrutiny has been on skills in order to reduce worklessness and progress economic prosperity. However, Bradford's ultimate aspiration should be to become a learning district committed to life long learning, and so we must not overlook the benefits of informal and life long adult learning.

Recommendation 1

The Council should make a firm commitment to lifelong learning, and this should be reflected in the Sustainable Community Strategy (The Big Plan) and Local Area Agreements.

Current Position

- Bradford District residents have lower levels of qualifications than both regional and national averages, with a higher proportion having no qualifications and fewer highly skilled.
- Poor basic skills were highlighted as an issue for the Bradford District in the 2003 Basic Skills Survey.
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups are least likely to have any qualifications, and women in these groups in particular have very low levels of qualifications.
- Participation in adult learning and job-related training is lower for the Bradford District than regionally or nationally

Further statistics relating to current position can be found at Appendix 2.

For Bradford to bring itself up to national standards for skills levels and employment rates, we need to get each year:

- 762 more Year 11s through the 5 GCSEs at A* - C (including English and Maths). This is equivalent to the cohorts of three large secondary schools
- 16000 people into work
- 12400 non-white people into work
- 25000 people through basic literacy training (meaning, to bring our "Literacy at Level 1 or Below" proportion down to England's figure)
- 30000 people through basic numeracy training (as for literacy above)¹

¹ "Towards an employer led employment and skills system in the Bradford District" – Jeremy Walker

Bradford District has a problem with the high number of people not even achieving a level 1 qualification, and this is where the Bradford District's needs diverge from Government and regional priorities. We feel therefore that this needs to be the main focus of any interventions.

- More employers in the Bradford District report recruitment difficulties and skills gaps within their workforce than the national average, with a greater proportion of the skills gaps being in higher-level occupations gaps than average.
- Despite this, and the lower skills base among the Bradford District workforce in general, fewer employers provide training for staff.
- Job forecasts predict that growth will be most significant growth within high and medium skilled jobs, posing an increasing challenge for the Bradford District's workforce.

However in order to attract high-achieving businesses, skills above level 3 also need to be developed.

Recommendation 2

That the Council should make it a priority to increase the number of people achieving a Level 1 qualification. Steps should also be taken to assist those seeking to achieve qualifications above Level 3.

2. The role of the Council in Skills development

There is still much to do to ensure we improve the relative position and reduce the gap in performance for young people in the District at both Level 2 and Level 3 with regard to West Yorkshire, Regional and National performance. We would hope that any focus on success rates for 16 to 18 year olds would be across the full range of provision including schools, colleges and apprenticeship providers. This will allow the young people of the District to be able to contribute more effectively to the local economy.

Recommendation 3

The Strategic Director of Services to Children and Young People together with other relevant bodies be asked to ensure that there is a focus across all types of provision for 16-18 year olds where success rates need to improve.

The current focus on correcting low level skills achievement in young people is at secondary and further education level. We feel that intervention needs to take place at an earlier stage and that unless work is done at primary level we will continue to let our young people and the district down.

We are aware from the work that has been undertaken by the Council's Young People & Education Improvement Committee on the scrutiny of Primary Education that there are centres of excellence within the Bradford District which do excellent work in raising basic skills and driving up standards.

Recommendations 5 and 8 of their report are particularly pertinent to this review.

Rec 5. Urgent action is needed to ensure that all schools have in place rigorous and robust systems of assessing pupil baselines, target setting, and tracking progress and that these are being used effectively to drive up standards.

Rec 8. That the Authority:

- a) Identifies ways in which to share good practice throughout the Districts schools, designating beacon status for particular activities.*
- b) Supports the dissemination of this information.*
- c) Establish centres of excellence in each cluster*

Recommendation 4

The Committee urges that recommendations five and eight from the Young People & Education Improvement Committee scrutiny of Primary Education are promptly actioned.

One of the key recommendations in the Leitch report “World Class Skills” (presented to Parliament in July 2007) is that employers be encouraged to demonstrate their commitment to the development and progress of their workforce. By making the Skills Pledge, employers commit to support all their employees to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills and work towards a full level 2 qualification equivalent to five GCSEs A* to C.

Nationally, more than 150 employers have made the Skills Pledge, covering more than 1.7 million employees.

Staff training by employers is particularly low for the Bradford District, with only 59% of employers funding or arranging some kind of training, compared to 66% nationally.

We are disappointed that the Council hasn’t shown leadership on this issue by signing the “skills pledge” as outlined in the Leitch report.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Strategic Director Corporate Services take immediate steps to ensure that the Council signs the skills pledge.

Following the signing of the skills pledge the Council should take a wider leadership role and work with other Councils in the Yorkshire & the Humber region and partner organisations to encourage other employers large and small to follow suit.

Recommendation 6

That the Council works with regional partners to organise an event which will showcase and highlight the importance of workforce development to employers in the District and region.

We understand that the Council's Human Resources department has recently developed a Pay and Workforce strategy, although this has not yet been implemented. During our investigation concerns were expressed about the level of resources available within the Council for both management and member development and it was felt that this area must be improved and progressed, but not at the expense of the wider workforce.

Recommendation 7

The Strategic Director of Corporate Services should give priority towards implementing the Pay and Workforce Strategy and that consideration is given to increasing the resources for and commitment to both management and member development.

Most of the trades unions (TU) are committed to the learning and development of their members and some have allocated resources to this by the use of Learning Mentors. Learning mentors are usually local TU officials who have been given the necessary training and skills to be able to help their members gain confidence and new skills. These interventions are usually targeted towards those members of the workforce who have very low or no formal qualifications and who have been out of the learning environment for a long time. The TU learning mentors provide an additional resource and this partnership working has proved to be quite effective in Leeds Council. We are not however aware of this happening in the Bradford District.

Recommendation 8

That the Strategic Director of Corporate Services works with the relevant trade unions locally to develop a union learning mentoring scheme within Bradford Council.

When the Committee investigated worklessness it became apparent that offering apprenticeships to young people was one way that the Council could demonstrate leadership and be a good role model - *"As a major employer and procurer, the Council should lead by example and exploit and develop opportunities to 'grow our own' through for example, traineeships, apprenticeships and placements"*.

We should also seek to strengthen our role as an employer and ensure that disadvantaged groups are given access to Council vacancies wherever possible. The model provided by the Government's Local Employment Partnerships operated by Jobcentre Plus will provide an ideal opportunity to link local people to our vacancies through collaborative working. The benefits of this would be twofold:

- Access to candidates who are ready for work, with a minimum of risk and cost. Local training providers (including Skills for Work) would prepare potential recruits for identified vacancies using our specifications to run preparatory training programmes.
- Being an LEP employer will help demonstrate to our local community that we have faith in the local workforce, and that we want to provide job opportunities for local people, particularly those most at risk of social exclusion.

The Council needs not only to act as a good role model, but also to do everything we can to raise skill levels and provide opportunity for peoples' skills to be used in the District.

However, it appears to us that other policies and strategies in parts of the Council seem to make it difficult for them to do this.

For instance legal and procurement practices appear to put constraints in the way for individuals or small providers when bidding for contracts with the Council. This can apply both to learning providers and to employers and entrepreneurs.

Sometimes this is not within the control of the Council, for instance where national funding bodies are moving towards having regional rather than local contracts. We feel that this is an unfortunate move which doesn't meet the needs of the Bradford District. We are aware that the Adult Information and Guidance contract (nextstep) is now being tendered on a regional basis, and it is important that we look at how this will be delivered to meet our local needs.

We should do our utmost to ensure commissioning models don't exclude small providers within the district.

Recommendation 9

The Committee welcomes the progress that has been made in relation to apprenticeships and the outreach strategy but urges the Council not only to continue the good work done so far but to actively seek to extend the programme. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the Strategic Director Corporate Services enters the Council into a Local Employment Partnership agreement with Jobcentre Plus.

Recommendation 10

The Chief Executive ensures that the appropriate Directors do more to facilitate local providers wherever possible by examining the existing constraints that currently prevent individuals and organisations successfully accessing Council contracts, exploring good practice elsewhere in the country and implementing ways to overcome these constraints.

Planning is no longer an exercise in land use alone. Under the new system brought in through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, it must take full account of social and economic issues and produce a wider "spatial Plan" (the Local Development Framework). Low skills in the population have already been recognised as a major issue for the LDF, but it has not yet been fully recognised that the development process can make a contribution towards skills development.

The Council needs to consider a more creative use of the planning system and Section 106 Agreements.

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a Local Planning Authority to enter into a legally binding agreement or planning obligation, with a land developer over a related issue.

Such agreements can act as a main instrument for placing restrictions on developers, often requiring them to minimise the impact on the local community and to carry out tasks which will provide community benefits, and can include the payment of sums of money.

Examples of Section 106 agreements could be:

- the developer will create a children's play area
- the local authority will restrict the development of an area of land or permit only specified operations to be carried out on it in the future e.g., amenity use
- the developer will pay a monetary contribution towards providing extra places at local schools (via Education Bradford) within the catchment area of the development where it is expected that by the nature of the development there will be additional numbers of children attending the said schools .

How far the Council is able to impose conditions on developers who are successful in their bids to acquire land for development is open to question. Nevertheless, as part of the development of the LDF, one of the pillars of the core strategy is the need to increase the skills level of the District. It is pointless to include this as a desirable outcome of the long term planning framework without suggesting the means with which the LDF can achieve this.

The use of Agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act is currently restricted by government advice. However, a number of London Boroughs and the Thames Gateway are seeking to relate the provision of training to the grant of planning permission for larger scale development proposals. The London Development Agency has also produced guidelines for its legal officers to review their Section 106 Agreements and to introduce more requirements for developers to include vocational training plans into their development proposals.

If the above approach was adopted by Bradford Council, then the possibility of linking section 106 skills agreements to agreements being requested by Education Bradford should be explored. This would mean that there would be one overall 106 agreement for Education purposes and that this could then be shared out proportionally between the relevant schools and also the Employment and Skills Board.

In addition, where a Council owns development land, additional influence can be exerted. Therefore, it may for example, be possible to require the chosen developers to identify vocational training for a specified percentage of their workforce.

Recommendation 11

That the Strategic Director Regeneration be requested to research the feasibility of a pilot scheme which uses Section 106 monies and the Local Development Framework to develop the skills level of the District.

3. Agencies involved in Skills development

A lot of work has been done throughout the District on the provision for adult learning; but the overall picture is fragmented and there is possibly overlap. This has arisen from the competitive framework that skills providers have had to work to over recent years. We feel that the delivery of skills should be focussed to best meet the needs of the Bradford District.

The Economic Strategy for the Bradford District recommended the setting up of an Employment and Skills Board and work has been undertaken by various people looking at different models.

We recognise that it is vital that there is employer involvement and commitment towards skills development in the district, especially at strategic level. We are not in favour of the "Fair Cities" Employment and Skills Board model referred to in the Walker report which is dominated by senior executives from the private sector. We believe that the board must be carefully balanced to reflect the needs and realities of both public and private sector employers in the District.

We feel that the Fair Cities model demonstrated that, whilst employers want to be involved in strategic planning and the prioritisation of investments, they do not want to get into the minutiae of bureaucratic processes involved in delivering skills improvement. We therefore feel that the Employment and Skills Board needs a separate and effective delivery mechanism if it is to make a significant difference.

It became apparent during the worklessness scrutiny and has been reinforced in the skills scrutiny, that employers and users alike are confused by the multiplicity of providers and options and this understandably can be time consuming and off putting.

We felt therefore that if we are to make a significant difference within the Bradford District that both businesses and learners should be able to contact one single point which should then be able to deal with the relevant skills issues. We appreciate that behind the scenes there will still be a number of relevant agencies involved, but as far as the customer is concerned it will appear to be a seamless service.

The Committee were impressed with the format of the Nottingham Learning Partnership - "Making the Connection", which was in effect the delivery arm of the Employment and Skills board. "Making the Connection" is made up of a loose coalition of operational partners and delivery vehicles.

In particular we liked the fact that some of the key operational people worked together for part of the week based in the same office, helping overcome potential barriers such as the sharing of information.

Evidence from the hearings we held revealed that skills providers would welcome greater co-ordination of skills development and opportunities to be involved in priority setting in order to establish a better focus. In order to facilitate this we believe that consideration should be given to the approach that Sheffield has followed which involves the establishment of an Innovation Panel. The function and membership of a Bradford District Innovation panel should be adapted from the Sheffield model and tailored to meet local needs. This would provide a forum for skills providers to meet and exchange ideas and influence skills priorities; this should include schools, especially those involved with enterprise education.

Currently, there seems to be a lack of clarity as to how the Skills and Employment Board would relate to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Some of the existing partners are concerned that the effective mechanisms and partnerships that have been developed under Bradford Vision (the previous LSP) may be lost.

We should seek to ensure that existing partnerships including those involving schools are considered when setting up the Innovation Panel.

Taking the above points into account we have drawn up a suggested model for the Bradford Skills and Employment board which can be found in Appendix 3.

Recommendation 12

That the Strategic Director Regeneration

- i) Works to establish an Employment and Skills Board that reflects the balance of public and private sector employers in the District and should also include other key strategic players including the voluntary sector and trade unions. He should consider the strengths of the Nottinghamshire model when establishing the Board.
- ii) Establishes an “operational arm” to implement the actions and priorities set by the board and provide a one stop seamless approach.
- iii) Ensures that the Employment and Skills Board produces a co-ordinated learning and delivery plan for the district, which is owned by employers, providers and learners, as a matter of priority.
- iv) Should consider establishing an Innovation Panel drawing together providers and consumers of learning which would make recommendations to the Employment and Skills Board.

A key task of the Employment and Skills Board would be collecting intelligence and forecasting future employment trends within the District in order to ensure that the right skills are available at the right time. The Bradford Observatory is one mechanism that should be used to deliver this. We are aware that there are plenty of examples of good practice concerning the collection and use of intelligence across the country and that it may speed the development of the observatory if these were investigated.

Recommendation 13

The Committee urges the Assistant Director Strategy and Performance to consider what can be learnt from some of the intelligence and profiling models that are used elsewhere in the country as he establishes the Bradford Observatory.

4. Meeting need

We welcome the good work done in the district to reduce NEET² but feel that more needs to be done. We note that Bradford Council’s Regeneration Department has successfully won national funding in order to co-ordinate work in this area. We are aware that the

² *Young people who are not in education, employment or training*

Council has been unsuccessful in the recent bidding process for DWP³ European Social Fund Provision, despite having carried out effective work in this area and we hope that this will not have a detrimental effect on progress we have made in this area.

The national approach to learning is primarily focussed on achieving National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) levels which, in themselves follow a particular format and require concentrated investment of time by the learner and, if appropriate, the employer. This doesn't always meet the needs of employers and learners in the Bradford District.

From the learner's perspective they are not always in a position, or are motivated enough to follow a structured regimented approach to learning such as NVQ or attending a college course. So we welcome the Qualifications Credit Framework and feel that it could successfully meet the needs of adult learners.

The National Qualifications Credit Framework takes a "patchwork" approach to learning in that it captures a series of learning experiences which may be sporadic, into an overall framework.

One of the barriers to people accessing learning is that it is mainly offered away from the person's normal environment and in a way that doesn't address their needs.

A better way would be to adopt the approach, "**on their terms, on their turf**". We feel that this is a key principle which, if adhered to, could be instrumental in raising aspiration and standards across the district and especially in the more disadvantaged areas.

The Committee recognises the good work that is taking place across the district with regard to "learning within neighbourhoods", in particular the work that Shipley College have undertaken, and would like to see this good practice develop and spread to other areas of the district.

The Bradford District has high numbers of people who have few skills and it is unrealistic to expect that these people will automatically be ready to engage with learning experiences. In order to get them to engage a lot of preparatory work has to be undertaken with the learner, building up their confidence levels, sometimes establishing some very basic skills such as time keeping. This can be very time consuming and resource intensive but if we are to make a difference for this very key group it is a necessary element.

One key element is effective impartial information advice and guidance. The term information, advice and guidance (IAG) originally referred to services aimed at helping people make decisions about learning and careers, but recently it has come to refer additionally to services offering advice on broader issues such as personal relationships and health.

Providing high quality IAG for young people is vital. The Government has stated that it wishes to develop "personalised learning" which it describes as including "clear learning pathways through the education system".⁴ Young people can only be expected to navigate an increasingly complex educational landscape with the help of high quality IAG.

³ *Department for Works and Pensions*

⁴ *"Inspiration and Aspiration – Realising our potential in the 21st century" – Skills Commission*

In 2004 the Government took the decision that Local Authorities should be handed the responsibility for commissioning and managing IAG services for young people in their areas. The new arrangements will be fully in place from April 2008. Local authorities must ensure that they devote sufficient funds to Connexions and that the service delivers high quality, impartial careers guidance for young people. The National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee will be monitoring commitment to this policy area.

It is important to ensure that during the development of IAG services the focus continues to remain on the impact of the service in terms of the 5 Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes and that we also factor in its role in influencing influencers. By that we mean that due consideration needs to be given to how the service engages and support the various parties that influence young people so as to ensure that young people make informed choices in the knowledge of the available support to guide them through the key change period when they are between 13 and 19 years old. These influences can be parent/carers, teachers, young people themselves in a peer led setting and providers of opportunities.

It is also very important that adults have access to high quality IAG. Recent research indicates that 31% of adults are dissatisfied with their job, and the greatest source of frustration is lack of career progression or challenge. Evidence shows that when told about learning and career opportunities, a high proportion of adults improve their skills. For IAG services to be truly effective, individuals need to know how to access and use the IAG provided. They need to gain the knowledge and skills to plan and manage their journeys through learning and into work.

High quality IAG is vital if we are to meet the Government's ambitious targets to improve skills levels.

At present, a complex service landscape means many adults are confused as to where to go for IAG, and this must be tackled within the Bradford District. We feel that robust IAG arrangements should be part of the Skills and Employment Board model organisation.

As part of the scrutiny we visited the Nottingham Skills and Employment Board and were impressed by their system of "learning champions". Learning Champions are client focussed and operate across nine of the most disadvantaged wards in Nottingham. There are three learning champions based in each ward, each work roughly 16hrs per week, funded through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

They are recruited from the local community, which means they have a good understanding of the area and are accepted by the community who otherwise might reject outsiders. Their role is to canvass the community using all means possible including going door to door and approaching people in supermarkets to encourage people to engage with learning opportunities and then signposting them to relevant providers and courses. The Nottingham learning champions have an impressive success rate encouraging people into learning.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that help and guidance towards learning and the provision of learning is provided on a local or neighbourhood basis, especially in areas of high disadvantage and to groups who encounter multiple barriers.

Recommendation 15

That the Strategic Director Regeneration investigates the possibility of establishing a system of learning champions across the district based on the Nottingham model.

Neighbourhood renewal funding has now been replaced by the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF). We are aware that there are no detailed criteria yet laid down by government with regard to the new funding regime. When allocating WNF, priority should be given towards addressing the skills balance within the district especially to fill funding gaps and to address the “peaks and troughs” which often occur as a result of short term funding regimes.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the additional resources required to implement recommendations 14 and 15 should be provided from WNF and that the WNF should be prioritised towards addressing skills gaps and dealing with peaks and troughs in skills funding.

5. Identifying and learning from best practice

During our visit to Nottingham we discovered a number of areas of good practice.

Resident's grants

We visited the Renewal Trust which is a charity run job shop. The Renewal Trust offers help with all sorts of issues via means of a Resident's Grant which helps to remove some of the financial barriers to obtaining skills which will lead to work. The funding for this is provided by the Council, through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the European Social Fund.

Examples of the types of aid offered by way of a resident's grant:-

- Paying exam board fees (the unemployed receive waivers for course fees, but are still expected to pay the exam board fee).
- The purchase of tools required for people on starting on construction courses.
- Help with child care by providing Childcare vouchers that offer 52 weeks of childcare support.

We recognise that there is often resistance to introducing a grants system as this is seen as a retrograde step and something which can be open to misuse. However there are ways to minimise misuse, for instance by ensuring that payments are made to the

supplier on production of an invoice rather than directly to the individual concerned and by having a robust checking system in place.

Taking a partnership approach to learning

It was recognised that lack of skills is not only an issue for the council and for employers but that a lack of interest in life long learning and worklessness also has a health impact. In order to tackle this, a partnership was set up with one of the Nottingham PCTs where doctors were encouraged to give “learning prescriptions” rather than medication. The “learning prescription” would consist of a referral to one of the learning champions who would then talk to the patient and signpost them towards an appropriate form of learning or other development opportunities.

Volunteering

It was recognised that especially for people who had been workless for a long period, that taking part in volunteering could be a useful first step to build confidence and skills which could then ultimately lead them into work.

Travel to work information

One of the barriers to learning or employment can be a lack of knowledge about transport routes and accessibility, and Nottingham have done a great deal of work in this area. They have produced comprehensive easy to understand maps and travel information specifically targeted to access employment opportunities from specific residential areas.

Recommendation 17

The Committee request that the Employment and Skills Board should give urgent consideration to setting up pilot schemes as follows:

- (i) a learning fund scheme to help with costs that might otherwise prevent skills development.
- (ii) working in partnership with the PCT with a view to setting up a pilot learning prescription scheme in Bradford.
- (iii) investigate ways of encouraging people who have been workless for a long period to consider volunteering as a first step towards finding work.
- (iv) develop specific maps and travel information as per the Nottingham model.

6. National Consultation

There are two key national consultations currently underway; one on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)⁵ and one on informal adult learning.

We are aware that the funding and focus of ESOL has changed and it is currently focussed towards ESOL for work purposes (for people in work) and, although this is good, we think it overlooks specific need in the Bradford District for ESOL to be targeted

⁵ “Focusing English for Speakers of Other Languages on Community Cohesion” – Dept for Innovation, Universities & Skills – January 2008

at a much earlier stage in specific communities to ensure local people can begin to fully participate in everyday life including starting on a learning journey.

The second consultation is entitled “Informal Adult Learning - Shaping the Way Ahead”⁶ and this seeks to readdress some of the concerns that were raised when funding streams were refocused away from this area into dealing with worklessness. Whilst we have not gone into this area into any depth we feel that if we are to achieve our overall aspiration of making Bradford a life long learning district then this issue must be addressed.

We feel that some of the recommendations that we make in this report especially in relation to pathways to progression and the National Qualifications Framework as well as the principle “on their turf and on their terms” highlight ways in which we can address this issue.

Recommendation 18

That the Learning Partnership forwards this report as part of the Council’s response to both these consultation documents.

⁶ “*Informal Adult learning – Shaping the Way Ahead*” - Dept for Innovation, Universities & Skills – January 2008

Regeneration and Economy Improvement Committee

Creating a Skilled Workforce

Terms of Reference

Overall Aim

To make recommendations which bring about an improvement to skills development and the skills base across the District, with a particular focus on basic and vocational skills that will make a significant contribution to the economic prosperity of the area.

Objectives

- To understand 'skills' terminology, alongside the profile of the current skills base across the Bradford District.
- To examine the nature of the projected future needs for skills, in the context of the Council's Corporate Priorities and the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy.
- To examine skills development across the District, including the current /proposed delivery structures and the roles of the agencies involved.
- To specifically consider the role of the Council in skills development, as a provider of training and employment support, an employer and as a community leader.

Interested parties

An indicative list of interested parties is detailed below.

Organisation / body / department	Name
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Andrew Mallinson
Strategic Director, Children and Young People (Skills for Work)	Kath Tunstall
Head of Service, Skills for Work	Avril Austerberry
Assistant Director for Economic Development	Mike Cowlam
Strategic Director, Corporate Services	Becky Hellard
Local Schools (Secondary)	
Local Colleges	
University of Bradford	
Learning and Skills Council	
Careers Bradford	

Organisation / body / department	Name
Chamber of Commerce	
Local Employers	
Job Centre Plus	
A range of employees	
Young People (representatives from Bradford and Keighley Youth Parliament (BKYP))	
Town and Parish Councillors	
Ward Councillors	
Students	
Learners	
Union representatives	
Training and Skills Providers	

Methodology

The Committee will receive and consider a variety of evidence/ information provided by a range of interested parties. The Committee may adopt one or more of the following methods to collect evidence/ information:

- Request specific briefing materials and/or reports from officers of the Council;
- Invite written evidence from other selected interested parties;
- Consider (available) historic customer survey / feedback information – including any relevant information from the ‘Speak Out’ Panel;
- Commission specific research and consider any subsequent findings;
- Hold open meetings at which members of the public or interested organisations can present their views and evidence;
- Facilitated focus group(s), where invited interested parties can present their views and evidence;
- Undertake site visit(s) to relevant organisation(s);
- Hold “committee hearings” i.e. meetings in public, with specific interested parties invited to give a brief presentation (with a previously submitted written submission), followed by questioning by the committee;

Timescale

It is intended to complete this inquiry and present the outcome report by March 2008. To achieve this target date, the following sets out a staged approach and provides an indicative timetable:

Committee Activity	Provisional Date
Understand 'skills' terminology, alongside the profile of the current skills base across the Bradford District.	17 October 2007
Examine the nature of the projected future needs for skills, in the context of the Council's Corporate Priorities and the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy.	30 October 2007
Examine skills development across the District, including the current /proposed delivery structures and the roles of the agencies involved.	20 November 2007
Explore the role of the Council in skills development, both as an employer and as a community leader.	18 December 2007
Consider information/ evidence base and prepare findings, recommendations and draft report.	January 2008
Consult on draft report and recommendations.	February 2008
Agree and launch the final report.	March 2008

NB *These Terms of Reference have been prepared to reflect the Council's procedure rules relating to 'Arrangements for the scrutiny of matters', set out in Part 3E, paragraphs 2.1 to 2.11 of the Council's Constitution (June 2007).*

Revision date: 02 October 2007

PROFILE OF THE CURRENT SKILLS BASE ACROSS THE DISTRICT

Key Stage 2 Attainment

The national PSA target is for 85% of 11 year olds to achieve Level 4 or above in English and Maths by 2006, with this level of performance sustained to 2008.

Bradford falls behind the regional and national averages for the proportion of pupils achieving at least Level 4.

Table 1 Key Stage 2 Results - Percentage of Pupils achieving Level 4 or above

Area	English			Maths		
	1997	2006	% points difference	1997	2006	% points difference
Bradford District	54	73	19	50	68	18
Yorkshire & Humber	60	77	17	60	74	14
England	63	79	16	62	76	14

Source: DCSF

2007 results due to be published on DfES website on October 18th

Key Stage 4 Attainment – GCSE Level

Success at this level is measured by achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, which is equivalent to NVQ Level 2 qualifications. The national PSA target is for 60% of pupils to achieve five or more A*-C GCSEs or equivalent by 2008.

Although GCSE attainment levels in Bradford remain below the regional and national averages, they are improving. Between 1997 and 2006 the proportion gaining five GCSE grades A*-C in the District increased from 28.9% to 50.2%, a faster improvement than nationally, and thus continuing to reduce the gap between the local and national average pass rates.

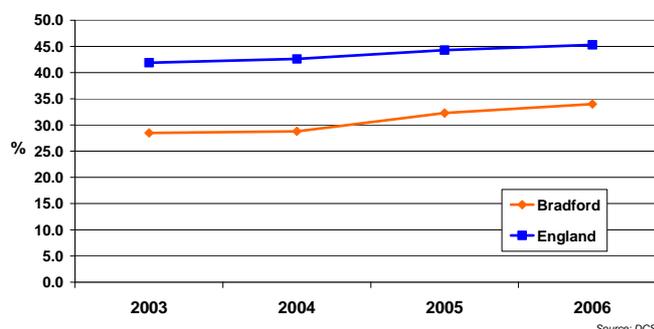
From 2006 the DCSFs preferred measure of attainment at GCSE level is five passes grade A*-C including English and Maths. On this measure, the gap between the District pass rate and the national rate is wider at 34% (Bradford) compared with 45.8% (England) - although the gap has reduced since 2003.

Table 2: % of 15 year old pupils achieving 5+A*-C (and equivalent) including English and Maths

Year	Bradford	England
2003	28.5	41.9
2004	28.8	42.6
2005	32.3	44.3
2006	34.0	45.3

Source: DCSF

Percentage achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C (and equivalent) including English & Maths



Source: DCSF

GCSEs and Employment

The Learning and Skills Council has published new figures indicating the financial returns to obtaining GCSE qualifications at grades A*-C in relation to an individual's starting salary. Calculations suggest that an individual with five GCSEs or equivalent can expect to command a starting salary of £2,261 more than that of someone with no qualifications. Research also

indicates that a significant proportion of employers consider five GCSEs to be the minimum level required in order for recruitment – 22 per cent would not employ someone with fewer qualifications than this; with 14 percent indicating that they would not recruit someone with fewer than two A level A-C grades or equivalent.

Key Stage 5 – GCE ‘A’ Level

Key Stage 5 is more usually known as GCE ‘A’ level. ‘A’ Level attainment is measured using a point score per candidate.

In 2006, the average point score for Bradford students was 239, lower than the Yorkshire and Humber and the national averages.

Progression to further and higher education

The proportion of Year 11 pupils staying on in full-time education has increased from 64.7% in 2004 to 73.1% in 2006. This is higher than the average for West Yorkshire (72.9%) and similar to Yorkshire & Humber levels (73.4%), but still falls short of the national figure (77.9%).

Nearly 52% of Bradford’s Year 13 pupils moved into higher education in 2006, this a lower rate than the national average.

In 2005/06 there were over 13,000 students studying at Bradford University, which graduates around 2150 undergraduates and 1300 postgraduates each academic year. The University has achieved high ranking in the annual Times League Table for employment in the last three years and ranked No1 University in Yorkshire for employment.

Figures from the University of Bradford (May 2007), indicate that graduation retention is good - around 32% (around 300 per year) of graduates leaving the university are engaged in paid work in the Bradford postcode districts with a further 10% (approx 90 per year) in Leeds. However, there is a concern about the shortage of suitable jobs locally to engage this volume of qualified graduates in higher level professional work. Locally based graduates are more likely to be unemployed and more likely to be underemployed if they remain in Bradford compared to the rest of the UK. Underemployment of Bradford graduates (i.e. those in non graduate, non professional jobs) is 15% nationally yet 18% in the Bradford district.

Qualification Levels of 19 year olds

National targets are around increasing the number of 19 year olds reaching NVQ Level 2 standards.

Figures provided by the LSC show that in West Yorkshire, Bradford has the lowest proportion of 19 year olds in achieving this threshold, at only 61%.

Table 3: Proportion of people at aged 19 that reach NVQ level 2

Area	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Bradford	55%	59%	61%
Calderdale	64%	65%	70%
Kirklees	60%	66%	66%
Leeds	57%	60%	63%
Wakefield	61%	63%	63%

Source: LSC (Figures are supplementary to the DfES SFR released on 27th February 2007 entitled "Level 2 AND 3 attainment by young people in England")

Skills for Life

Basic Skills are now referred to as Skills for Life. The Skills for Life survey, published in 2003 by the DfES, was a national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. It profiled working age people according to 5 broad levels of competency reflecting the National Standards for adult basic skills.

Skills for Life at level 2 is the desired threshold, and is broadly comparable to NVQ level 2, and is therefore comparable to an A*-C grade GCSE in English (Literacy) or Maths (numeracy). The table below shows the proportion of people in Bradford who have not reached this level, 64% in literacy and 85% in numeracy. On both measures, Bradford performs below the regional and national levels.

Table 4: Proportion of Working Age Adults with Basic Skills Needs

	Bradford		Yorkshire & Humber	England
	Number	%	%	%
Literacy - % below level 2	187,264	64	61	56
Numeracy - % below level 2	248,710	85	79	75

Source: Basic Skills Survey 2003, DfES

Number Estimate Based on 2005 working age population. Level 2 is comparable with a high level GCSE (A-C), Entry Level is below a low level GCSE.*

Findings from the WY Household Survey 2005, carried out by the LSC, showed that a larger proportion of respondents from Bradford perceived that their skills were below average in reading, written and spoken English, and maths than in West Yorkshire as a whole. They were also more likely than respondents from West Yorkshire as a whole to indicate that this had held them back in life.

Working Age Qualification Levels

Headline figures

Skill levels within Bradford's resident population can be measured using the NVQ-based classification of skills (see glossary for explanations).

The latest Annual Population Survey 2006 gives estimates of the qualification attainment of the working age population.

Table 5: Qualification Attainment of Working Age Population 2006¹

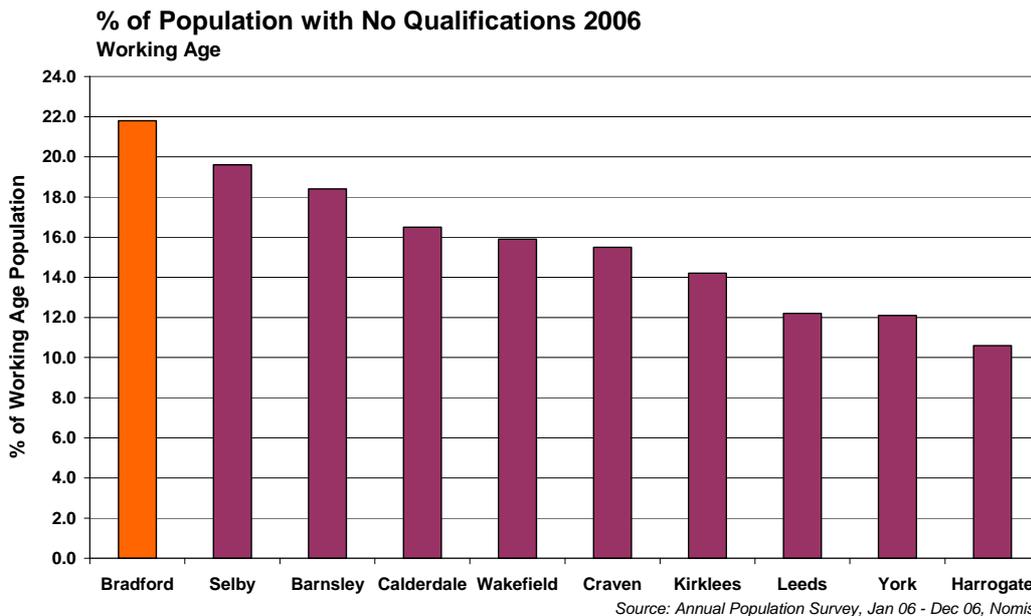
Area	Working age qualified to at least NVQ level 4		Working age qualified to at least NVQ level 3		Working age qualified to at least NVQ level 2		Working age without an NVQ level 2 qualification	
	Number (000s)	%	Number (000s)	%	Number (000s)	%	Number (000s)	%
Bradford	57	19.6%	107	36.9%	172	59.6%	117	40.4%
Yorkshire & Humber	694	22.7%	1,290	42.2%	1,970	64.5%	1,085	35.5%
England	8,319	27.1%	14,032	45.8%	20,637	67.3%	10,031	32.7%

Source: DfES Figures, based on Annual Population Survey 2006.

Bradford has a substantial number of skilled people living in the District. Around 172,000 people of working age have NVQ level 2 qualifications or above and of these 57,000 have NVQ level 4 or above⁷.

However, skill levels of Bradford residents fall below the regional and national average. Around 60% of the working age population are qualified to NVQ level 2 or above, compared to 65% in Yorkshire & Humber, and 67% in England.

Bradford has 63,000 people without qualifications, 22% of the working age population, the highest proportion of all Districts within the City Region.



Trends

Qualification levels improved significantly in Bradford over recent years to 2005. However, latest Annual Population Survey data for 2006 shows a slight decline in qualification levels in Bradford, despite the continuing upwards trends in the region and nationally. The proportion qualified to NVQ level 2+ fell from 61.4% in 2005 to 59.6% in 2006.

Having low or no qualifications appears to be a particular problem for young people and older people. Around 22% of 16-24 year olds have no qualifications while for older people (50 years to retirement age) the proportion without qualifications is even higher at 29%. Despite this, the West Yorkshire Household Survey 2005 highlighted that the 50+ age group were least likely to report the need to gain new qualifications and most likely to report that they were happy with the qualifications they do hold.

By Economic Activity

Qualification levels are higher among those who are in the workforce, i.e. are economically active (either in employment or classified as unemployed), compared to those who are economically inactive. Only 12.2% of the workforce is without qualifications, compared to 49% for economically inactive people.

⁷ Qualification figures from the DfES are based on APS figures but they apportion counts for 'unknown' qualifications to a qualification level. Therefore counts and proportions between the tables in this section may not match

Looking at the data another way, the propensity to be economically active increases with qualification attainment. 86.2% of people with higher level qualifications (NVQ4+) in Bradford are economically active, compared to only 41.4% of people with no qualifications.

However, economic activity rates for people with no qualifications are lower for people in Bradford than the regional and national average. Those with at least NVQ level 2 qualifications have a similar propensity to be economically active, but the most highly qualified people in Bradford again have slightly lower economic active rates than regionally and nationally.

Results for Bradford from the West Yorkshire Household Survey revealed that of the employed respondents, full-time workers were more likely to hold qualifications than either part-time or self employed. However, full-time workers were less likely to want to gain new qualifications.

Unemployed respondents were most likely to feel the need to gain new qualifications, while the self employed were least likely to feel the need to gain any new qualifications.

Adult Learning & Training

Participation in Learning

High levels of participation in learning and training are increasingly seen as vital for economic and social progress. As an economic input, training is vital to enabling the uptake of more advanced methods and the achievement of higher productivity and competitiveness. Socially, learning is important for personal and social development.

Data for adults participating in learning comes from the Annual Population Survey. An adult learner is someone aged 16-69 who has done some taught and/or non-taught adult learning over the previous 12 months. Figures for 2006 show that 191,000 adults participated in some form of learning, 63.4% of the adult population. While this figure has risen slightly over the last 3 years, this rate falls below regional and national averages, and is the lowest participation rate of all the West Yorkshire Districts.

Further analysis of adult learning comes from the West Yorkshire Household Survey, 2005. The survey showed that:

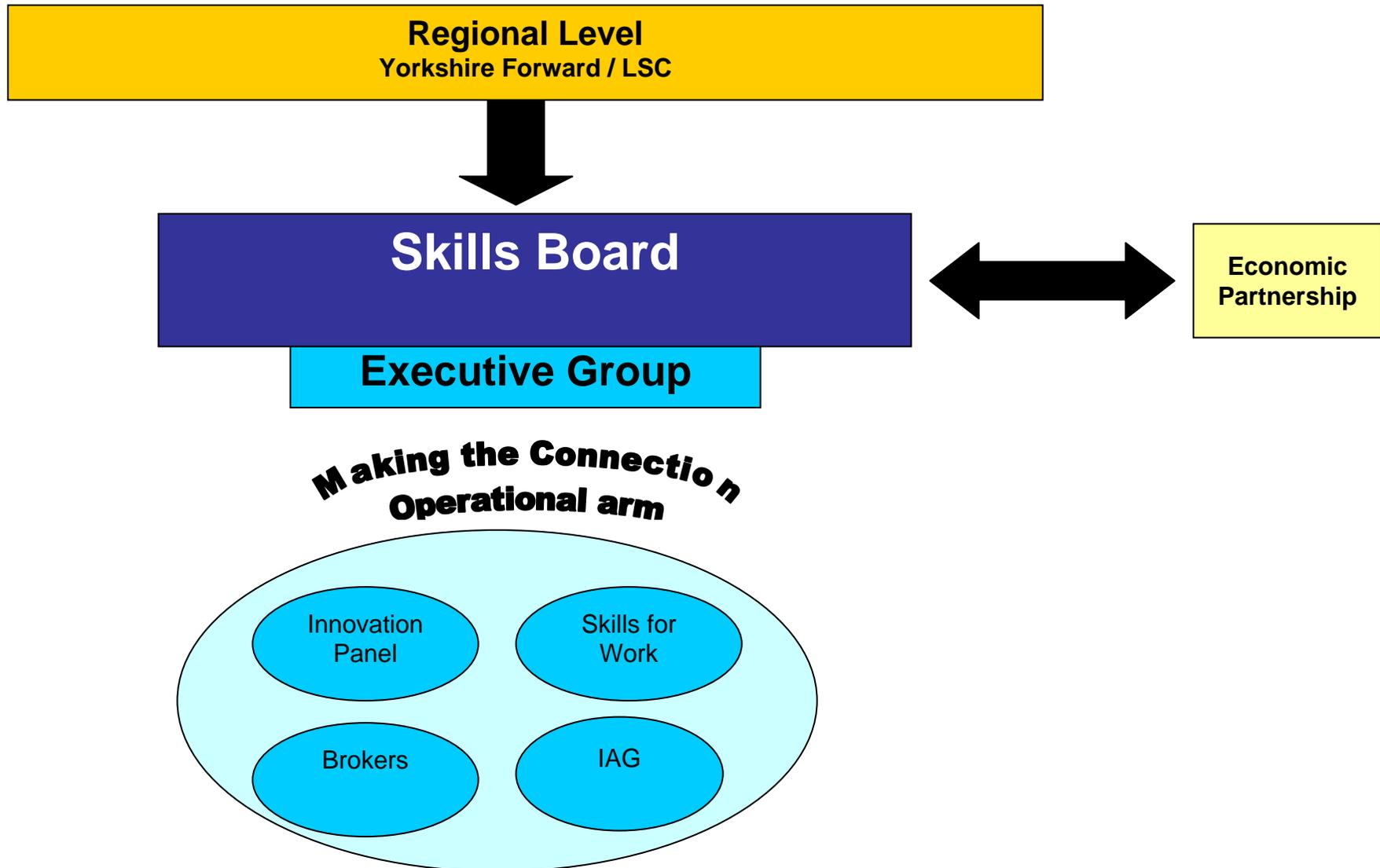
- Younger age groups, professional and associate professional staff, and workers in public administration/health/education and in banking/finance/insurance were most likely to have taken part in training in the last year, as were higher earners.
- Those least likely to have taken part were those aged 50+, people with disabilities, the economically inactive, the self employed, semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and respondents employed in the construction and transport/communication and distribution/hospitality/catering sectors.

In Bradford, 25,000 employees received job-related training in the previous 4 weeks, 14.3% of employees. This compares to a regional figure of 14.6%, and a national figures of 15.3%. Both Leeds and Wakefield have a higher participation in job-related training.

Participation in job-related training has been declining over recent years, following national trends in Bradford; levels have fallen from 18.2% in 2002/03.

Department of Regeneration - 17 October 2007

Employment and Skills Board – suggested model



Hearings and Witnesses

Monday 3 September 2007, City Hall, Bradford:

Wednesday 17 October 2007, City Hall, Bradford:

Nina Mewse, Education Client Team

Terry Davis, Skills for Work

Kate McNicholas, Department of Regeneration

Kylie Aitken, Department of Regeneration

Tuesday 30 October 2007, City Hall, Bradford:

Mike Cowlam, Assistant Director - Economic Development Service

Becky Hellard, Strategic Director Corporate Services

Tuesday 20 November 2007, City Hall, Bradford:

Julie Hinchliffe, Bradford College

Pat O'Brien, Bradford College

Ian Nichol, Park Lane College, Keighley

Sheila Jones, Shipley College

Margaret Robson, Shipley College

Professor Geoff Layer, University of Bradford

Wednesday 5 December 2007

Visit to Industrial Services Group

Friday 11 January 2008

Visit to the Greater Nottingham Learning Partnership

Tuesday 29 January 2008, City Hall, Bradford:

Anj Handa, West Yorkshire Employer Coalition

Alison Knight, Job Centre Plus

Craig Williams, Careers Bradford

Friday 8 February 2008

Meeting with **Angela Dobson** from the Learning and Skills Council