



Oxfordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy
A long term vision for the county

**Briefing paper 5:
Learning and Skills**

DRAFT v3

This paper is number 5 in a series of 12 briefing papers prepared to inform the development of the Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy by the Oxfordshire Partnership.

The briefing papers are designed for any individual or organisation interested in finding out more about Oxfordshire. Specifically they have been developed for representatives of organisations in the Oxfordshire Partnership who will be attending workshops and discussions on the priorities for the strategy during 2007.

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CONTENTS

1	Introduction	3
1.1	Scope of this paper	3
1.2	What is meant by skills?	4
2	The importance of skills	5
3	Oxfordshire's skills base.....	6
4	Future need for skills	9
4.1	Changing workforce.....	9
4.2	Skills shortages	10
4.3	Employers providing training.....	11
5	Changes to learning and skills provision.....	12
6	Community needs and aspirations.....	13
6.1	Analysis of parish and market town plans.....	13
6.2	Summary of priorities of Oxford Area Action plans.....	14
7	Addressing the needs of vulnerable people	14
8	Threats and opportunities for the future.....	16
9	Issues and options for the strategy.....	17
	APPENDIX 1 – additional data on Learning and Skills in Oxfordshire.....	18
	APPENDIX 2 - Definitions.....	22
	APPENDIX 3 – Background to work analysing community plans	24
	APPENDIX 4 – Finding out more	26
	Documents and research.....	26
	Organisations.....	27
	APPENDIX 5 – list of briefing papers	28

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Change note to version 2: Some of the data and evidence moved from main body to appendix; data added in on qualifications of unemployed people and alternative presentation of deprivation data.
Text added in from community-led plans
Text added on needs of vulnerable people provided by voluntary sector
Changes to threats/opportunities and issues/options

Further amendments 09/08/07: Deprivation table amended and basic skills added to section 3
Skills shortages added to section 4
Section 5 added – changes to learning & skills provision

I Introduction

I.1 Scope of this paper

The focus of this paper is the demand for and supply of education, training and skills for 19+ year olds throughout Oxfordshire.

- It is assumed that education, training and skills for people below age 19 is covered by briefing paper 4 *Children and Young People*.

The paper draws from the recent national *Leitch Review of skills* and includes the following main sections:

Chapter 2: the importance of skills

Chapter 3: information on Oxfordshire's skills base

Chapter 4: an analysis on the future need for skills

Chapter 5: important changes to learning & skills provision

Chapter 6: priorities from community plans in Oxfordshire related to learning & skills

Chapter 7: addressing the needs of vulnerable people – learning in the community

Chapters 8&9: threat and opportunities, issues and options for the strategy

Appendix 1: additional background data on skills in Oxfordshire

1.2 What is meant by skills?

A clear definition of skills and, in particular, the issue of whether formal qualifications are a sufficient reflection of skills of individuals, is often seen as central to the debate on skills.

The Leitch Review of Skills, published December 2006, supports the focus on qualifications by arguing that “the majority of individuals prefer studying towards a qualification and over one half of employers say they would like to support their employees to gain qualifications through staff training” (see box below).

What do we mean by skills?

Skills are capabilities and expertise in a particular occupation or activity. There are a large number of different types of skills and they can be split into a number of different categories. Basic skills, such as literacy and numeracy, and generic skills, such as team working and communication, are applicable in most jobs. Specific skills tend to be less transferable between occupations. Most occupations use a mix of different types of skills.

The most common measures of skills are qualifications. On the job training in the workplace is a vital source of skills development and career progression. The [Leitch] Review recognises the importance of looking at these wider definitions of skills. For individuals, they provide portability in the labour market, allowing them to demonstrate the skills they have acquired. For employers, they provide valuable signals when recruiting new workers and also motivate employees to complete their training. Qualifications form a major part of employer recruitment strategies, especially screening candidates prior to interview. As a result, the majority of individuals prefer studying towards a qualification^a and over one half of employers say they would like to support their employees to gain qualifications through staff training.^b

Qualifications can be grouped into five different levels: full level 2 equates to 5 good GCSEs or their vocational equivalents, full level 3 to two or more A Levels and level 4 and above to degree level qualifications. Levels of literacy and numeracy tend to be based on surveys or on the proportion of the workforce with English or Maths qualifications.

a National Audit Learning Survey, 2002.

b The market for qualifications in the UK, PWC, 2005.

extract from Leitch Review of Skills, Final report 05/12/06 (p 11)

2 The importance of skills

According to the *Leitch Review of Skills*:

- Lack of skills can be a **key barrier to employment** for people from some ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups.
- **Updating skills and retraining** will increase in importance as many of us have longer working lives.
- There are **clear links between skills and wider social outcomes**, such as health, crime and social cohesion.
- Without world class skills, UK businesses will find it increasingly difficult to **compete and innovate**.

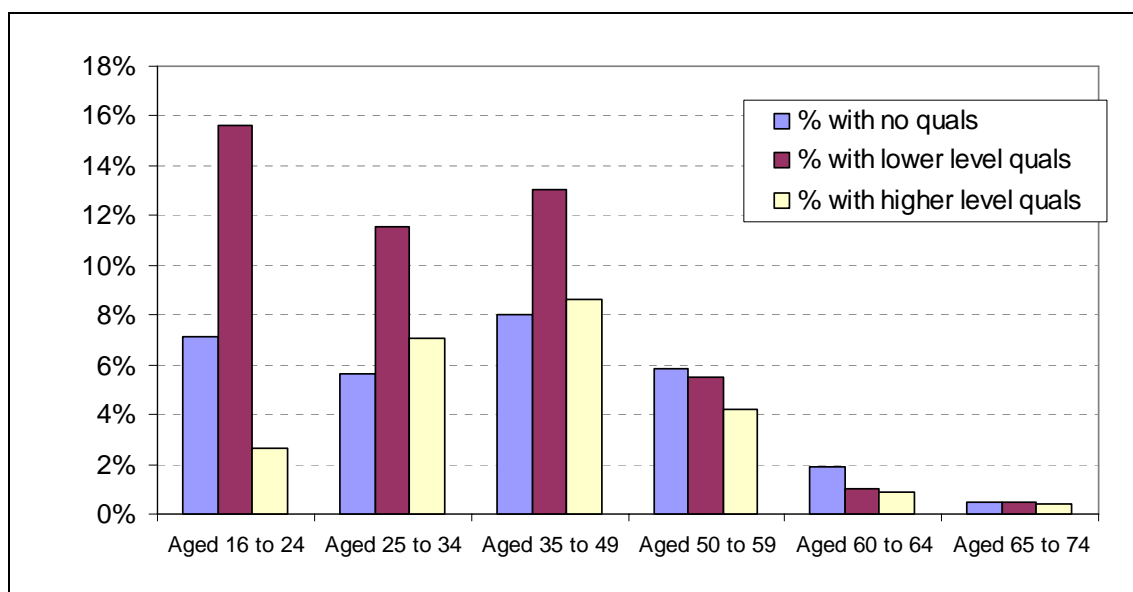
“where skills were once a key driver for prosperity and fairness, they are now *the* key driver”

Leitch December 2006

In Oxfordshire, people with lower levels of skills are more likely to be unemployed.

- At the time of the Census 2001 survey, three quarters (76%) of unemployed people in Oxfordshire had low¹ or no qualifications. The disparity was most apparent in the 16 to 24 age group – see chart below.

Figure 1 Percentage of all unemployed people in Oxfordshire by age and qualifications



Source: Census 2001, ONS Crown Copyright reserved, table S032, downloaded from nomisweb.co.uk

¹ Lower level = up to A level or equivalent

3 Oxfordshire's skills base

Oxfordshire's prominent education sector and hi-tech industry are likely contributors to the relatively high proportion of graduates in the county.

- At the time of the Census 2001 survey, around 28% people aged 16 to 74 in Oxfordshire had a degree or higher, the highest proportion of any county in England. Surrey was the next highest (27%) followed by Buckinghamshire county (26%).

Despite this high percentage of graduates and the low rate of unemployment, the county has 30 areas within the worst 10% in England on education, skills and training deprivation and three areas in Oxford ranked within the worst 1% in England on this measure.

This is a very different result to Oxfordshire's ranking on the overall index of multiple deprivation (IMD) – which includes income, employment health and other domains – where only 1 area in Oxfordshire falls within the worst 10% in England (see table below).

Table 1 Most deprived areas in Oxfordshire on Education, Skills and Training deprivation (2004)

Super output area ² name	District	Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation	Education, skills and training domain
Barton and Sandhills E01028514 (O)	Oxford	13.9%	0.2%
Northfield Brook E01028569 (O)	Oxford	7.3%	0.4%
Blackbird Leys E01028519 (O)	Oxford	19.9%	0.7%
Abingdon Caldecott E01028692 (VWH)	Vale of White Horse	27.9%	1.8%
Rose Hill and Iffley E01028576 (O)	Oxford	14.2%	2.2%
Banbury Ruscote E01028449 (C)	Cherwell	15.2%	2.5%
Blackbird Leys E01028520 (O)	Oxford	15.4%	2.5%
Blackbird Leys E01028517 (O)	Oxford	20.7%	2.6%
Northfield Brook E01028567 (O)	Oxford	20.2%	2.6%
Northfield Brook E01028568 (O)	Oxford	11.8%	2.8%
Banbury Ruscote E01028450 (C)	Cherwell	15.3%	3.7%
Barton and Sandhills E01028513 (O)	Oxford	14.4%	3.8%
Rose Hill and Iffley E01028577 (O)	Oxford	12.3%	3.8%
Banbury Ruscote E01028453 (C)	Cherwell	27.5%	3.9%
Banbury Hardwick E01028441 (C)	Cherwell	36.2%	4.8%
Littlemore E01028552 (O)	Oxford	23.2%	4.9%
Bicester West E01028471 (C)	Cherwell	36.9%	4.9%
Northfield Brook E01028570 (O)	Oxford	39.5%	5.3%
Berinsfield E01028604 (SO)	South Oxfordshire	39.0%	5.6%
Bicester Town E01028466 (C)	Cherwell	39.3%	6.0%

Source: CLG, Index of Deprivation 2004, from OCSI datatools supplied by the Oxfordshire Data Observatory. Percentages show how the area ranks in England

² A super output area (SOA) is smaller than a ward. There are 404 SOAs within Oxfordshire each with around 1,500 residents at the time of the census 2001 survey. The Index of Deprivation 2004 is not available at ward level.

According to the 2003 DfES Skills for Life survey³, approximately 6% of adults in the County were estimated as having literacy skills only at “Entry level”, with a further 40% thought to possess sub-level 2 literacy skills⁴. The situation is worse in respect of numeracy skills, where 41% of adults in Oxfordshire only have Entry level numeracy skills and a further 29% have sub-level 2 skills.

Table 2 Population breakdown by literacy/numeracy level - Oxfordshire

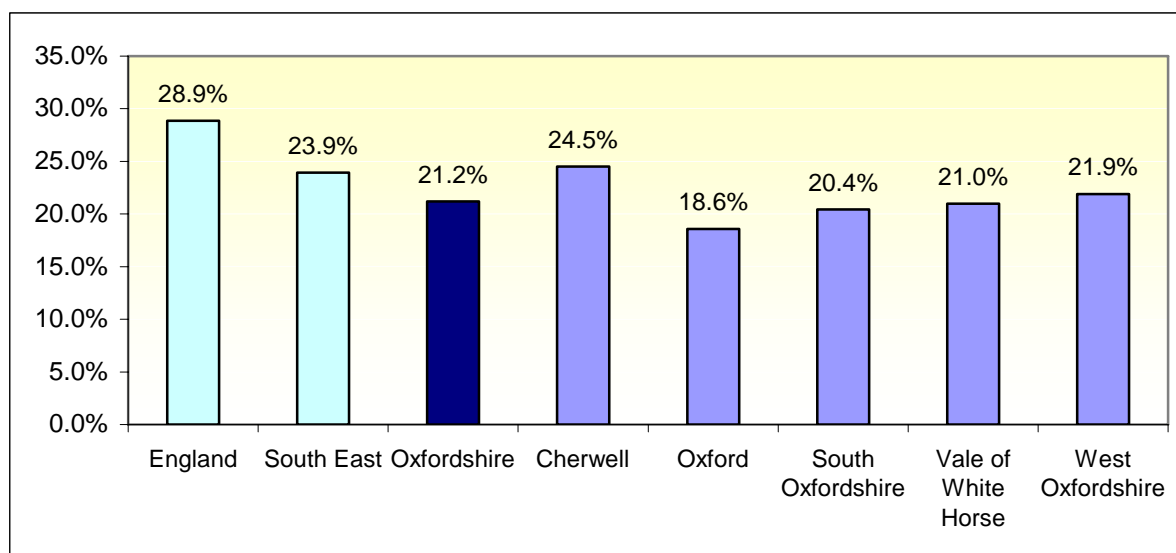
	Entry Level		Level 1 Skills		Level 2+ Skills	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Literacy	24,120	6.3	154,800	39.9	203,600	53.8
Numeracy	158,600	41.4	112,600	29	115,800	29.6

Source: Skills for Life Survey, DFES, 2003

Another approach to identifying basic skills needs is through the use of proxies such as those individuals lacking any qualifications. The 2001 Census found that approximately 21% of the population of Oxfordshire (94,000 people) aged 16-74 lacked any qualifications.

- Cherwell had 25% of adults with no qualifications, above the regional and county averages and accounted for a quarter of the total Oxfordshire population of 16-74 year olds with no qualifications.

Figure 2 proportion of adults aged 16 to 74 with no qualifications



Source: ONS, Census 2001, Crown copyright reserved

³ The DfES Skills for Life Survey was based on actual assessments of skills competency rather than using qualifications as a proxy

⁴ Entry level 3 literacy defined as ability to understand short, straightforward texts on familiar topics accurately and independently. Numeracy defined as understand numbers, symbols, diagrams and charts for different purposes in different ways using in graphical, numerical and written material. For a full definition please see 'The Skills For Life Survey – a national needs and impact survey for literacy, numeracy and ICT'. DfES, 2003

Census data also suggests that the rate of people with no qualifications is slightly higher among women than men and that there is a positive correlation between age and a lack of qualifications, suggesting older workers may have greater basic skills needs than their younger counterparts.

This possibly reflects the historic reality that fewer women were in the labour market and may not have access to learning opportunities to the same degree as men.

Census and Index of Multiple Deprivation data also indicates a strong correlation between lack of qualifications and deprivation.

4 Future need for skills

4.1 Changing workforce

Oxfordshire is expected to see a growing number of managers and professionals in its workforce – a continuation of a long-term trend.

- An analysis of future employment change in the Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (MKOB) area predicts almost 27,000 new managers and over 9,000 additional people employed in sales.

Table 3 Occupational groups expected to see the highest growth in employees 2004-2014, MKOB

	2004	2009	2014	Change 2004-14	% change 2004-14
Corporate Managers	106,100	118,300	133,000	26,900	25.4
Sales Occupations	47,100	51,600	56,300	9,200	19.5
Caring Personal Service Occupations	38,400	42,800	47,500	9,100	23.7
Skilled Construction & Building Trades	22,800	26,200	29,800	7,000	30.7
Transport & Mobile Machine Drivers & Operatives	24,500	27,400	30,700	6,100	24.9
Science & Technology Professionals	31,200	33,400	37,100	5,900	18.9
Total MKOB sub-region	749,300	776,000	810,000	60,700	8.1

Source: IER/LSC Working Futures 2, 2005

The same analysis predicts a decline in the number of people in “elementary trades” and administration.

- Over 27,000 fewer jobs are expected in the categories of trades and administration within the MKOB sub-region.

Table 4 Occupational groups expected to see the greatest decline in employees 2004-2014, MKOB

	2004	2009	2014	Change 2004-14	% change 2004-14
Elementary Trades, Plant & Storage Related Occupations	21,200	17,300	13,600	-7,600	-35.8
Secretarial & Related Occupations	27,900	24,400	20,700	-7,100	-25.4
Process, Plant & Machine Operatives	21,700	18,500	15,400	-6,300	-29.0
Administrative Occupations	68,600	66,000	64,700	-3,900	-5.7
Elementary Administration & Service Occupations	54,500	54,000	52,000	-2,500	-4.6
Total MKOB sub-region	193,900	180,200	166,400	-27,400	-14.1

Source: IER/LSC Working Futures 2, 2005

Overall the need for employees to replace people who have retired or changed jobs is more than four times the number required to fill the increase in the number of jobs in the sub-region.

Note that these trend based forecasts do not take into account new infrastructural projects which will impact on skills (particularly in areas such as construction and retail).

Examples of infrastructure projects which may impact demand for skills in Oxfordshire include:

- Additional new housing growth as described in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and the draft South East Plan.
- Oxford West End development (including expansion of retail centre by approximately 30%)
- Retail developments in (for example) Witney and Bicester.

In addition there are developments close to, but just outside, Oxfordshire that are likely to impact on its labour market. These include anticipated economic growth in Reading, Swindon, Milton Keynes and High Wycombe.

4.2 Skills shortages

According to the 2005 National Employer Skills Survey, Oxfordshire employers were more likely to have recruitment issues and skills gaps than in either the Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire area as a whole or across the South East region.

- 13% of employers in Oxfordshire had “hard to fill” vacancies compared with 8% across the South East.
- 28% of employers in Oxfordshire had skills gaps - well above the regional average of 18%.

Table 5 Vacancies and skills gaps by employer size

Sizeband (employees)	Have vacancies	Have hard to fill vacancies	Have skill shortage vacancies	Have skills gaps
2-4	12%	6%	3%	10%
5-24	29%	14%	11%	29%
25-99	45%	17%	13%	46%
100+	70%	19%	13%	55%
Oxfordshire total	29%	13%	9%	28%
MKOB total	20%	10%	7%	21%
South East total	18%	8%	6%	18%

Source: National Employer Skills Survey 2005, extracted from Oxfordshire Skills and Economic Assessment, LSC May 2006

Note that ‘Hard to fill’ vacancies are a sub-set of the overall vacancies and skill shortage vacancies are a sub-set of the hard to fill category.

The main causes for 'hard to fill' vacancies were identified by employers in Oxfordshire as:

- low number of applicants with required skills (38%);
- low number of applicants generally (17%);
- poor terms and conditions (16%);
- not enough interest in this type of work (15%).

When recruiting, Oxfordshire employers reported that the skills most difficult to obtain from recruits were:

- technical/practical/job specific skills (62%);
- customer handling skills (37%);
- oral communication skills (31%);
- written communication (30%); and
- team working skills (28%).

While this pattern is generally in line with the regional picture, there appears to be a greater deficiency amongst the technical/practical or job specific skills of potential recruits in Oxfordshire than in the South East region as a whole.

Overall the pattern of skills deficiencies within the existing Oxfordshire workforce mirrored closely those skills lacking amongst potential new recruits.

4.3 Employers providing training

According to information from both Annual Population Surveys⁵ and the National Employer Skills Survey (2005), Oxfordshire is close to or slightly above average on job-related training.

- The Annual Population survey suggests that slightly more people resident in Oxfordshire had received job-related training in both the previous four weeks (13%) and thirteen weeks (24.7%) than in either the South East region or England. A similar pattern of slightly more people in Oxfordshire receiving training than in either the region or in England can also be observed over each of the last three years.
- According to the findings of the National Employer Skills Survey (2005), approximately 63% of employers in Oxfordshire had provided some training to their employees over the previous 12 months. This was above the average for the South East (61%) and England (55%).

The Skills survey also found that around half of local businesses had a formal training plan and that two in five organisations had a dedicated training budget for staff development. Activity is lower for smaller organisations.

⁵ Note survey based on residents' area of work

5 Changes to learning and skills provision

The Leitch Review of Skills proposed an increasingly 'demand-led' approach to learning and skills identifying limitations to the previous 'supply-driven' approach.

The report recommended that by 2010 all public funding for adult vocational skills, apart from community learning programmes and learning for those with learning difficulties and or disabilities, should be routed through two programmes:

- Train to Gain (for employers) and
- Learner Accounts (for individuals).^{6 7}

Train to Gain is the Learning & Skills Council's service for employers.

It includes a brokerage service identifying training needs at all levels (which specifically targets Small to Medium sized Enterprises) and state funding for first full level 2 qualifications, including skills for life where needed.

Train to Gain activity which launched in Summer 2006 attracted over 600 Oxfordshire learners in its first 9 months

Learning Accounts are the intended mechanism for individuals to access training.

The Further Education system is expected to deliver more opportunities for individuals devolving purchasing power to them so they can determine where to use their entitlement.

This programme will operate jointly with a new adult careers service.

Learning Accounts are currently being piloted in parts of the South East, including Oxfordshire.

There are many organisations in Oxfordshire involved in skills development and a re-evaluation is underway of the work of the Oxfordshire Partnership in the area of learning & skills.

⁶ Delivering World class skills in a demand-led system, LSC 2007.

⁷ Implications of this reliant on outcomes of Comprehensive Spending review 2007

6 Community needs and aspirations

This section is an extract from two supplementary papers:

1. An analysis of 30 community-led plans of parishes and market towns in Oxfordshire prepared by the Countryside & Community Research Unit, University of Gloucestershire, commissioned as part of building the Sustainable Community Strategy evidence base (see appendix section 6.1).
2. A summary of priorities from Oxford Area Action plans provided by Oxford City Council.

6.1 Analysis of parish and market town plans

Community-led plans for parishes and towns rely on local volunteers identifying and agreeing shared needs and priorities as a basis for local action. Action points and concerns of direct relevance to the *Learning and skills* theme from 30 completed plans across Oxfordshire are shown below.

Learning and skills actions from parish and market town plans

Adult education did not seem to be a major concern in most places covered by community-based plans. There were only nine mentions of adult education or workforce skills. Six of them concerned the introduction or improvement of evening or day-time classes for adults. They extended over all four districts and both towns and villages.

Of the above, one village intends that its parish council should increase publicity for existing classes, another intends to assess the demand for evening classes, and a market town hopes to set up purpose-built premises for adult education.

There are two references to increasing workforce skills. One concerns the skills of hotel and restaurant staff and the other closing the 'skills gap' between local people and the requirements of local businesses. Also, one village has succeeded in its plan to provide training in information technology. It has been accomplished by a group consisting of the Parish Plan IT working group, volunteer trainers and the district and county councils.

In addition, there were several references to the need to improve library services, but as these do not necessarily involve adult education, they will be dealt with under the theme 'Access to Services and Travel'.

Example of actions proposed in local plans

"Whilst educational achievement at Faringdon Community College is good and improving it was flagged up by local business that the skilled people they require are not available in Faringdon. This project aims to [set up] a partnership that brings together education and private business to look at skills/education gaps." Key organisations: Local businesses, Community College, Cranfield College, Business Link. (Faringdon Action Plan, 2002)

Encourage development of a purpose-built adult learning centre. Led by: LWS, OCC, ACL; (Thame in Trust, 2004)

Community-led plans in Oxfordshire: their potential contribution to strategic planning, May 2007 by Gloucestershire University

6.2 Summary of priorities of Oxford Area Action plans

Each of the six Area Committees in Oxford has developed an Action Plan which sets out the key improvements needed in the area that local people, local groups, the Area Committee and other organisations through working together can bring about. The plans seek to embody local issues and activities and be a catalyst for greater local partnership working.

There are currently no priorities from the Area Committee Action plans relating directly to the *Learning and skills* theme.

7 Addressing the needs of vulnerable people

Action for Communities is the South East Learning and Skills Council strategy for placing learning in the community at the centre of economic and social well being across the region. The strategy aims to maximise opportunities for adults to learn in their communities and to make the best use of all available resources to support them giving funding to those needing it most.

The aim of the European Social Fund “Laying the foundations” project will contribute to the delivery of the *Action for Communities* Strategy by helping to maximise the opportunities for adults to learn in their communities. Essentially it is an investment in developing relationships and networks through which these opportunities can be delivered.

Laying the Foundations will enhance the capacity of local networks to:

- address adults’ complex aspirations and multiple needs in innovative ways;
- offer a wider range of routes into learning for learners and potential learners;
- ensure effective provision of outreach and initial engagement activity, information advice and guidance, brokerage between learners and providers, and small chunks of learning;
- encourage a culture of learning, enabling adults to plan a building block approach to learning in communities and create coherent progression pathways from informal to more formal learning, including between the Voluntary and Community Sector and statutory providers (including FE colleges and Local Authority Adult Education Services);
- develop fair and equitable partnerships between voluntary and community organisations and statutory providers, building on the SE LSC / RAISE Learning and Skills Compact;
- influence strategic funding partners to join up the opportunities provided by the programmes of a number of government departments, and other funding bodies (including other ESF projects within the Action4Skills programme) at local, sub-regional and regional level to align programmes and funding more effectively, particularly in the context of Local Area Agreements.

The Oxfordshire Learning Network has conducted a review which found that there is much good partnership-working going on in relation to the delivery of community learning activities across the county Oxfordshire.

Individual officers and workers have developed lots of practical inter-agency working arrangements in response to the situation that confronts them and to better meet the needs of specific groups of learners. However, with the termination of the Oxfordshire Learning Partnership some 12 months ago, the county has lacked a formal vehicle for facilitating and coordinating inter-agency working across the lifelong learning agenda as a whole and in relation to the delivery of community based provision in particular.

Because of the complex interplay of these divergent roles and to assist with people to fulfil their varying responsibilities respondents clearly identified the need for an 'overarching strategic approach' built around a partnership based approach to the delivery of community based provision. *Laying the foundations* is seen as an important 'pre cursor' to the successful development of an Oxfordshire wide Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) partnership body.

During the process of preparing this review the following themes emerged as key areas for development:

- Programmes for managers with community organisations that may need help to develop coaching skills to enable them to better support the volunteers that they work with;
- Extending the existing brokerage model developed within the Learning Communities Project as a vehicle to better match demand and supply for learning in other areas;
- Exploring the possible development of tenant representatives as learning champions to assist other residents to better identify and articulate their learning needs;
- Looking at ways to help members to identify resources and funding to support the development of community based learning programmes;
- Understanding better how libraries might be used as vehicles for the delivery of learning opportunities for individuals such as 'history walks' and family learning programmes such as financial literacy;
- Exploring the development of family based programmes to support healthy lifestyles including programmes that increase exercise and improve diet;
- Exploring tenant participation models to see if lessons can be learned and applied to educational settings that will lead to improved participation in decision making;
- Learning how to work together better as agencies sharing a common concern for local people and to achieve improved joint working and better service delivery;
- Creating opportunities for members to come together to review and evaluate the latest evidence of need in relation to educational provision in community settings;
- Creating the opportunity for members of the network to come together to discuss and share ideas and to develop improved ways of working together and with funding agencies such as the LSC, SEEDA etc.

8 Threats and opportunities for the future

Threats

- Declining numbers of jobs for those with no or low qualifications and/or skills leading to increased numbers of unskilled, unemployed individuals;
- Failure to respond to existing and predicted skill shortages and gaps potentially resulting in loss of key employers and/or reductions in inward investment;
- Uneven access to appropriate skills opportunities, particularly in Oxfordshire's most rural areas, leaving marginalised groups unable to access training opportunities;
- Complacency by individuals and employers resulting in a decreasingly competitive local workforce;
- Lack of investment in the long process of helping people with low/no qualifications move into accredited learning.

Opportunities

- New employment opportunities in the county drive up the demand for and supply of higher level skills raising the overall skills profile of the workforce;
- Boost to skills as a result of key infrastructural developments, for example the Oxford West End project;
- Oxfordshire benefits from tourism and hospitality skills development initiatives as part of broader activity supporting the 2012 games;
- New Further Education sector capital investment impacts positively on learning participation and reputation;
- Potential for developer funding agreements to include allocation for skills development;
- An increased role for the voluntary and community sector in improving access to learning by disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

9 Issues and options for the strategy

Issues

- It is notable from the review of community plans in Oxfordshire that communities themselves do not see adult education and workforce skills as a priority.
- What can the Sustainable Community Strategy do to address the issues of aspirations and attitudes towards learning and skills in Oxfordshire especially in deprived communities?
- There are huge changes happening in the funding and governance of Learning & skills – how will the Oxfordshire Partnership engage with these changes to deliver what the county needs?

Options

- Employers, schools and colleges to develop a Learning & Skills charter.
- Major construction and other developments to work to employ and develop local staff.
- Communities to be challenged to mobilise their members to engage in learning & skills issues.

APPENDIX I – additional data on Learning and Skills in Oxfordshire

Change in employment by sector

Despite the forecast reductions in the total number of employees in individual sectors, there is predicted to be a net demand for workers in every one of the sectors over the period 2004-2014 (see table below).

This reflects the need to replace existing workers who retire, move sector or leave the labour market for any other reason. For example, while the size of the manufacturing workforce is predicted to contract by around 3,000 over the period there will be a need to recruit over 21,000 new people simply to replace workers who leave the sector.

Table 6 Total demand by sector 2004-2014

	Change 2004-2014	Replacement Demand	Total Demand
Agriculture	-604	3,819	3,215
Manufacturing	-3,126	24,761	21,635
Utilities	-113	359	246
Construction	565	12,394	12,959
Retail & Distribution	20,008	49,762	69,770
Hotels & Restaurants	5,582	16,848	22,430
Transport, Storage & Comms	27	13,293	13,320
Financial Intermediation	1,075	7,111	8,186
Business Services	25,543	59,369	84,912
Public Admin	-1,171	10,249	9,078
Education	3,875	27,658	31,533
Health & Social Services	7,077	26,101	33,178
Other Services	3,709	16,094	19,803
All Sectors	62,447	267,818	330,265

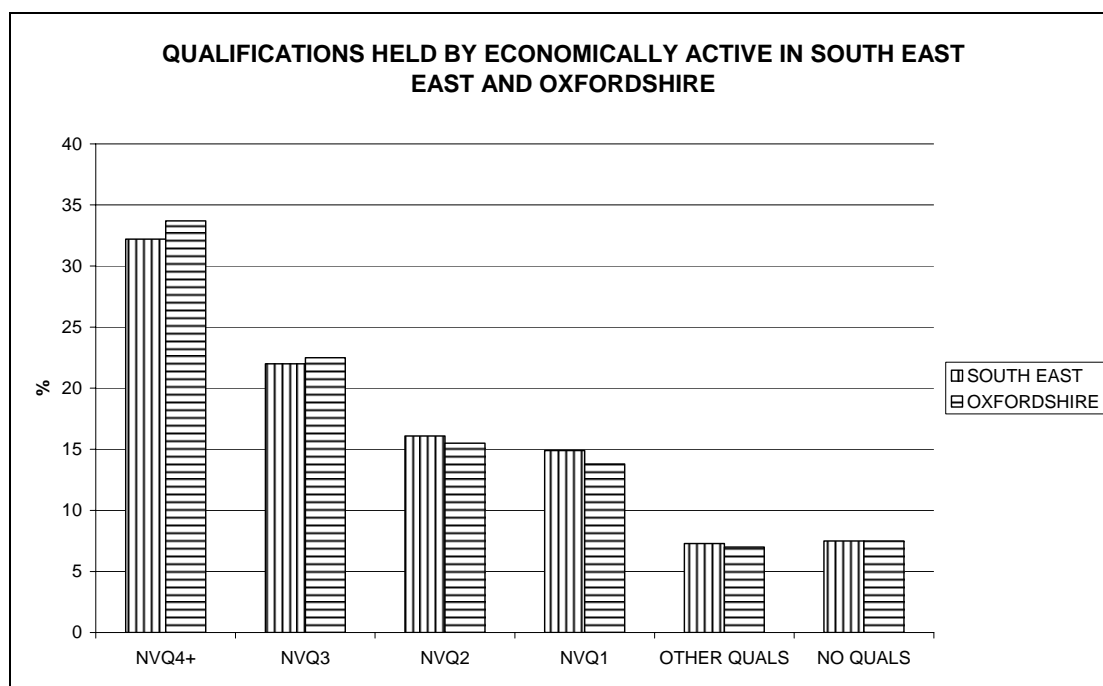
Source: Working Futures 2, SSDA

Qualifications

According to the Annual Population Survey, approximately 72% of the workforce in Oxfordshire hold at least a level 2 qualification compared to 70% in the South East overall.

For level 3 and above in Oxfordshire, 56% have attained this level compared with 54% in the region. Broadly similar proportions of men and women have attained both Level 2 and Level 3 in Oxfordshire.

Figure 3 Qualifications held by the economically active in Oxfordshire and the South East (2006)



Source: Annual Population Survey 2006

Younger age cohorts in Oxfordshire are better qualified than their older counterparts. 79% of workers aged 20-24 are qualified to Level 2 or above compared with 64% of those between 50 and retirement.

Over time as older workers retire and are replaced by better qualified, younger workers the qualification profile should naturally increase.

According to the Census 2001 survey, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse had very similar qualifications profiles (fewer people with no qualifications and more with level 4/5 qualifications than nationally or regionally). Oxford City and Cherwell however had very different profiles (see following table).

- Oxford city has a much higher proportion of people with the highest qualifications and a lower proportion with no qualifications (i.e is much better than the County

average), Cherwell is the opposite with fewer people with high level qualifications and considerably more with no qualifications than the county average⁸.

Table 7 Highest Qualification by Local Authority district (percentages)

	No Quals	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4/5	Other Quals
England	28.9	16.6	19.4	8.3	19.9	6.9
South East	23.9	17.1	21.2	9.2	21.8	6.8
Oxfordshire	21.2	15.3	19.2	10.8	27.7	5.8
Cherwell	24.5	19.3	21.6	7.7	20.0	7.0
Oxford	18.6	9.3	12.2	19.0	36.9	4.1
South Oxfordshire	20.4	15.8	20.9	8.9	28.3	5.8
Vale of White Horse	21.0	15.9	20.1	8.7	28.2	6.2
West Oxfordshire	21.9	17.7	22.9	8.2	23.3	6.1

Source: 2001 Census

See appendix 2 for a definition of qualifications levels

⁸ Note that data from the 2001 Census and Annual Population Survey should not be compared as they use different methodologies and relate to different population groups.

Participation in learning

According to the 2005 Local Labour Force Survey, approximately 77% of adults in Oxfordshire had participated in some form of learning over the previous 12 months compared with 76% across the South East (but below the best performing areas of the South East) and 70% in England. When limited to “taught” learning, the percentage from Oxfordshire fell to 53%, the same as in the South East but 5% points higher than the figure for England.

Although slightly better than regional and national figures, the data still shows that there is a significant proportion of adults who are not participating in learning in what is a relatively well qualified population: a factor potentially threatening the workforce's future competitiveness.

The South East LSC Skills Audit (2003⁹) found that the key motivators behind adult participation in learning were:

- personal interest (55%);
- to help do their job (44%);
- increased job satisfaction (36%) and
- for social interaction (28%).

Pressure from employers to undertake learning was found to be relatively rare, with only about 6% of respondents citing it as a motivating factor.

The most popular subject areas among adults in Oxfordshire were found to be:

- ICT;
- business/management/professional development; and
- health and social care.

This same survey revealed that individuals in Oxfordshire appeared to be relatively positive towards the prospect of learning in the future with only 12% stating that they believed future learning would be either “a waste of time” or “something they are not interested in”.

Almost two thirds of people identified no barriers to their future engagement in learning; among those who did, the key barrier was existing responsibilities and commitments. This was particularly an issue for those aged between 25-49, women, those working part-time and carers.

⁹ 2003 survey most recent

APPENDIX 2 - Definitions

NATIONAL QUALIFICATION LEVELS

NVQs	NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (NQF)	REVISED LEVELS (implemented from January 2006)	FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER QUALIFICATIONS (FHEQ)
	BTEC Certificates in life skills BTEC Certificates in skills for working life		
Level 1	BTEC Introductory Diplomas and Certificates BTEC Diplomas, certificates and awards GCSEs grades D-G		
Level 2	BTEC First Diplomas and Certificates BTEC Diplomas, certificates and awards GCSEs A*-C		
Level 3	BTEC National Diplomas, Certificates and awards BTEC Diploma in Foundation Studies BTEC Diplomas, certificates and awards A levels		
Level 4	BTEC HNDs and HNCs BTEC Professional, Diplomas, Certificates and Awards	Level 4 BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards	C – Certificate Certificates of Higher Education
		Level 5 BTEC HNDs, HNCs BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards	I - Intermediate Diplomas of Higher and further education, foundation degrees, higher national diplomas
		Level 6 BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards	H – Honours Bachelors degrees – graduate certificates and diplomas
Level 5	BTEC Advanced Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards	Level 7 BTEC Advanced Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards	M – Masters Masters degrees, postgraduate certificates and diplomas
		Level 8 BTEC Advanced Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards	D – Doctoral Doctorates

Source: Edexcel website

OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM WITH EXAMPLES

1 Managers and senior officials	Directors, Chief Executives of major organisations, chartered secretaries
2 Professional occupations	Chemists, veterinarians, secondary education teaching professionals
3 Associate professional and technical occupations	Laboratory technicians, train drivers, taxation experts
4 Administrative and secretarial occupations	Counter clerks, telephonists, market research interviewers
5 Skilled trades occupations	Farmers, welding trades, carpeters, printers
6 Personal service occupations	Dental nurses, travel agents, hairdressers
7 Sales and customer service occupations	Sales assistants, debt collectors, call centre agents
8 Process, plant and machine operatives	Paper and wood machine operators, assemblers, HGV drivers
9 Elementary occupations	Farm workers, packers, hospital porters

Source: ONS

APPENDIX 3 – Background to work analysing community plans

In May 2007, the Countryside & Community Research Unit at the University of Gloucestershire reviewed and summarised the 30 Oxfordshire parish and market towns plans completed in the past five years (see table below).

Table 8 Parish and town plans analysed

Benson Parish Plan	Goring Village Plan
Blewbury Parish Plan	An Action Plan for Harwell
Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Plan	Henley on Thames Action Plan for Year Three
An Action Plan for Carterton	The Launton Village Plan
Chinnor Parish Plan	Minster Lovell Village Action Plan
Chipping Norton Town Appraisal	Sandford on Thames Parish Plan
The Cholsey Plan	South Hinksey Parish Plan
Crowmarsh Parish Appraisal	Steventon Parish Plan
Dorchester Parish Plan	Tetsworth Village Plan
Dorn Valley Parishes Plan	Thame in Trust: a vision and action plan
Duns Tew Village Plan	Upton Parish Plan
Enstone Action Plan	A Town Plan for Wallingford
Faringdon Action Plan	Suggestions for a Better Watlington
Fencott and Murcott Parish Plan Vision	West Hagbourne Parish Plan
Filkins and Broughton Poggs Parish Plan	Wheatley Parish Plan

Since the total number of plans available for this review was relatively small, any comparisons of the differences between districts or between types of settlements can only be indicative. However they still provide a useful snapshot of issues and perceived priorities of communities in Oxfordshire.

Note that comparisons by district are difficult as a result of the imbalance of plans between the four rural districts, particularly in the case of market towns (see following table).

Table 9 plans considered by district and type of settlement

District	Number of market towns	Number of rural settlements	Total number of plans
Cherwell	0	3	3
South Oxfordshire	7	8	15
Vale of White Horse	1	5	6
West Oxfordshire	2	4	6
Total	10	20	30

Recommendations and more detail on the background to community-led plans are available in the main report "Community-led plans in Oxfordshire: their potential contribution to strategic planning, May 2007" published as part of the Sustainable Community Strategy evidence base (supplementary paper 1).

Overall recommendations for the SCS are included in "Community Life" theme paper 1.

APPENDIX 4 – Finding out more

Documents and research

Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills Final report: December 2006

The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Education and Skills commissioned the Leitch Review in 2004 to examine the UK's optimal skills mix in order to maximise economic growth, productivity and social justice. In addition, the Review was asked by the Chancellor in Budget 2006 to consider how best to integrate employment and skills services.

DfES Skills for Data Survey, 2003

A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RB490.pdf>

Regional Economic Strategy 2006-2016 – A framework for sustainable prosperity

South East of England Development Agency

<http://www.seeda.co.uk/res/>

Working Futures 2, IER/LSC, 2005 and South East LSC Skills Audit (2003)

Available from Learning & Skills Council

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/>

National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) 2005

Biennial survey based on national 72,000 sample undertaken by DfES, LSC and SEDA

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/2005/research/commissioned/national-employers-skills-survey-main-report-2004.pdf>

Organisations

Learning & Skills Council

www.lsc.gov.uk

Sector Skills Council

www.ssda.org.uk

SEEDA

www.seeda.co.uk

Jobcentre plus

www.jobcentreplus.co.uk

Oxfordshire County Council

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Oxfordshire Economic Partnership

www.oep.org.uk

Oxfordshire Data Observatory www.oxfordshireobservatory.info provides economic, social and environmental information for and about the communities of Oxfordshire. Information is arranged by theme and geography, supplying a range of key data sources, research reports and links to helpful websites.

APPENDIX 5 – list of briefing papers

	Theme	Broad content
	Oxfordshire Futures	Overview of economic, environmental and social trends and issues affecting the long term future of Oxfordshire
THEME PAPERS		
1	Community Life	Active communities, community-led planning, contribution of volunteers
2	Community Safety	Community safety, crime, fear of crime
3	Economy	Employment, income, businesses, change in key industry sectors
4	Children & Young People	Needs of children & young people
5	Learning and skills	Skills for the economy; skills for individuals
6	Environment	Climate change; resources (including waste, water, energy, air quality, countryside, land)
7	Health, care and wellbeing	Lifestyles, older people, long term conditions, vulnerable people
8	Housing	Affordability, housing for vulnerable groups, eco-homes
9	Population and migration	Ageing population, long term and short term migration trends
10	Access to services and travel	Road congestion, accessibility, safer roads, air quality, street environment
11	Recreation, leisure and culture	Participation in culture, sport, leisure activities, internet
12	Spatial Oxfordshire	South East plan, Local Development Frameworks, planning policy; rural, market towns, urban
SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS		
S1	Community-led plans and their potential contribution to strategic planning	by Gloucestershire University (May 2007) Analysis of the priorities from 30 community-led parish and market town plans completed in past 5 years in Oxfordshire
S2	Priorities from Oxford Area Action plans	by Oxford City Council (July 2007) Priorities from six Oxford City area action plans
S3	Oxfordshire Rural Framework (2007-2010)	by Oxfordshire Rural Forum (July 2007) Challenges and priorities for rural Oxfordshire