

Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council

Co-Financing Summary Plan April 2002



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1. Introduction

This Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council Co-financing plan summary provides potential providers with information on proposed activities for tenders over the life of the co-financing period January 2002 – December 2004.

This is a summary of the Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council Co-financing Plan and measure level applications that have been submitted to the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) for approval. This has been developed from the Birmingham and Solihull Co-financing Consultation document. We have taken on board the comments received and agreed the co-financing plan with GOWM.

In phase 2 of co-financing by Birmingham and Solihull LSC, tendering opportunities are very limited. These are explained in our tendering prospectus – April 2002.

2. Plan Overview

2.1 Geographical coverage

The geographical coverage of this plan includes the Birmingham ward boundary area and the Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council boundary area.

2.2 Period of Plan

The plan covers proposed Co-Financing activity over the period **1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004**.

For the second phase of bidding, applications should be for a maximum of **18 months** – to from July 2002 – December 2003. Applications will be restricted to 2 measures only.

For the third phase of bidding, applications should be for a maximum of **24 months** – to from January 2003 – December 2004. Applications will be for all measures. A revised Co-financing and Tendering Plan will be provided for this tendering round.

2.3 Activities and funding

Birmingham and Solihull LSC have bid for ESF against all measures, the activities under which measures will be delivered are detailed in section 5. The amount of ESF applied for under each measure is summarised in the table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 – ESF applied for split by measure / year

Policy Field / Measure	ESF 2002	ESF 2003	ESF 2004	ESF TOTAL
1.1	£221,719	£144,600	£144,600	£510,919
1.2	£906,159	£992,920	£1,108,600	£3,007,679
2.1	£819,399	£626,600	£626,600	£2,072,599
2.2	£336,239	£1,505,000	£1,662,900	£3,504,139
2.3	£356,679	£241,000	£231,360	£829,039
3.1	£2,168,999	£2,169,000	£2,265,400	£6,603,399
3.2	£192,799	£915,800	£915,800	£2,024,399
4.1	£192,800	£385,599	£448,259	£1,026,658
4.2	£289,200	£289,200	£289,200	£867,600
4.3	£96,400	£241,000	£241,000	£578,400
5.1	£231,360	£241,000	£241,000	£713,360
5.2	£96,399	£173,520	£192,800	£462,719
	£6,208,152	£7,625,239	£8,367,519	£22,200,910

Note – Match funding will come from Birmingham and Solihull LSC funding and contracts. The figures exclude management and administration costs.

2.4 Purpose of plan

The purpose of this plan is to set out the arrangements in Birmingham & Solihull LSC for ESF co-financing taking into account the remit of Birmingham & Solihull LSC, the priorities of the Regional Development Plan, existing activities and the needs of individuals in Birmingham and Solihull.

ESF funding secured by Birmingham and Solihull LSC for the purposes of co-financing will be additional and complementary to other activities supported by Birmingham and Solihull LSC. The key planned achievements from co-financing support are as follows:

- *To raise substantially the skill base of unqualified and underachieving groups, especially ethnic minority communities and older workers, to increase their employability. This should include;*
 - *Reducing by 25% the proportion of the working age population without a qualification at Level 2,*
 - *Closing the equalities gap in employment of individual ethnic groups.*
- *To develop the role and capacity of the voluntary / community sector in;*
 - *The delivery of public services (e.g. Health and social care, education and training) at a local / neighbourhood level,*
 - *Employment creation,*
 - *Creating bridges into “mainstream” professional employment, especially for disadvantaged groups and communities.*
- *To support a substantial expansion in workplace learning opportunities through employee development schemes and on-line learning to improve transferable, generic skills, especially IT and basic skills, and thereby enhance the employability of employees vulnerable to structural change.*
- *To improve information, advice and guidance, especially in terms of outreach work, widen*

participation in training and create new routes into employment.

- *To work on a multi-agency basis to integrate learning and skills into local regeneration strategies, particularly in the development of multi-agency service delivery and support within deprived communities.*
- *To develop mechanisms for the pooling of temporary, casual and part-time jobs to ensure sustainable employment and career development for existing employees and new entrants to the labour market.*

In addition, we will seek to ensure that the process of co-financing is transparent and open and reduces bureaucracy for providers. We will ensure that funds are managed effectively and efficiently, and that they are targeted on the strategic objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy and Regional Development Plan, and complementary to the Objective 2 Single Programme Document.

2.5 Equal Opportunities

The Learning and Skills Council, has a statutory duty to promote Equality of Opportunity. It has produced an Equal Opportunities policy which has four key overall objectives:

- *To develop the Council as an equality and diversity employer organisation*
- *To develop the Council as a champion of equality*
- *To embed equality and diversity into all policies, programmes and actions*
- *To report to the Secretary of State on progress towards equality.*

The LSC will mainstream and integrate Equal Opportunities into all aspects of its work. Birmingham and Solihull LSC has prepared an Equal Opportunities strategy framework and in consultation with partners and providers is developing a more detailed Equal Opportunities action plan. Our overall goal is to;

“Transform the skill base of unqualified and underachieving groups, especially ethnic minority communities and older people, to enable them to participate fully in the economy, including closing the ‘equalities gap’ in employment and learning attainment of individual groups.”

3. Consultation

This plan has been developed following consultation with a large range of providers, partners and GOWM.

In Birmingham and Solihull, Birmingham City Council are also an approved co-financing organisation. We have been moving closely together to ensure that our co-financing plans are complementary and do not duplicate activity.

This plan will be refined in agreement with GOWM in full for the third phase of co-financing bids by Birmingham and Solihull LSC in June 2002 to take into account Birmingham and Solihull LSC strategic plan priorities which have recently been agreed.

4. Links with Government programmes and initiatives

As part of our remit for funding of post-16 education and training, the LSCs links to many Government programmes and initiatives for example, work based learning.

A range of Government programmes which we will link to are listed at **Annex 1**.

In addition, this plan seeks to provide support and complementarity to Objective 2 projects and packages, Strategic Regeneration Zone strategies, New Deal / Employment Zones, Connexions, and of course the learning and skills priorities of Advantage West Midlands. An example of this is our discussions with Eastside to ensure complementarity to areas of need and this plan. It is also complementary to the current EQUAL partnership bid recently submitted focussing on improving access to progression through and retention of individuals experiencing barriers to the labour market especially long-term unemployed, older people, refugees and people from ethnic minority groups.

This plan aims to complement government programmes and initiatives by funding greater volumes of mainstream activity, enhancing existing programmes and focusing on complementary targeted activity.

5. Description by Measure and activities

Birmingham and Solihull LSC is seeking to address all of the Regional Development Plan priorities and measures and many actions with each measure. We have ensured that our proposals do not overlap with those of Birmingham City Council and discussions are ongoing with Employment Service.

Below are the proposals for all priorities and measures which relate to Birmingham and Solihull LSC's strategic priorities as set out above.

Please note that Phase Two of Birmingham and Solihull LSC invitation to tender is very specific and targeted on 2 measures as outlined in the tendering prospectus April 2002. This document provides the full range of activities for the period of co-financing January 2002 – December 2004.

Phase Three of Birmingham and Solihull LSC invitation to tender will be for January 2003 – December 2004 and will include all measures.

Mapping of existing projects against priorities and measures has taken place. This has produced information including project summaries, client groups, finances and outputs. This information has enabled Birmingham and Solihull LSC and other potential CFOs in Birmingham and Solihull to map what activities are already being supported by ESF in Birmingham and Solihull, or gaps in provision, and have been taken into account in this plan. They will also be taken into account at the appraisal stage by ensuring there is no duplication of provision. We plan to work alongside other bidders who have projects in the same measures.

Consequently, in certain Policy Field Measures, where other programmes have allocated

certain groups as priorities for support, priority has been given to addressing the needs of particular groups rather than all priority groups. For example, in Policy Field 2.2 priority has been given to young people. Other excluded groups will be supported through other Measures or programmes. The same principal applies to 2.3, due to the limited amount of money available in this measure, priority has been given to people with disabilities.

POLICY FIELD 1 - ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

Target Groups for Policy Field 1:

- *16-18 year olds in the labour market without qualifications, skills or work experience*
- *people without relevant work experience*
- *people who without guidance, counselling and training will remain unemployed*
- *people who are long-term unemployed*
- *returners to the labour market*
- *people who need integrating into the labour market, particularly lone parents*
- *those wishing to upgrade limited or inappropriate skills*
- *those with no or low qualifications*
- *people who previously worked in declining industries*
- *people preparing for employment transition to different work situations*
- *people experiencing a process of skills intensification in their current employment*
- *part-time, temporary and contract employees*

Measure 1: *To provide advice, guidance and counselling to enable people to develop active and continuous job search strategies and prevent them from moving into long term unemployment.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Early interventions, including advice, guidance, counselling, rural outreach and community education using innovative systems, approaches and new forms of IT*

1.1 Proposed actions identified to date by LSC as a Co-financing organisation:

1. To maximise learners' transition from training to employment through developing job search activities and advice, guidance and counselling. This action would seek to target ethnic groups and break down stereotypical views of working in particular occupations.
2. # To enhance the advice and guidance presently provided by the Information, Advice and Guidance Consortium. This would encompass providers across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. The activities would include an emphasis on providing IAG in newly created venues such as SRB5 Family Learning Centres and all excluded communities.
3. To develop advice and guidance via mentoring relationships. This action would also seek to target individuals from families with poor participation rates in Further Education and Higher Education.

This activity is only available by single tender by the Information, Advice and Guidance Consortium

Measure 2: *To improve the employability of the long term unemployed, returners and young people of working age through targeted intervention to enhance vocational and other key skills and removing external barriers to labour market entry.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Improving employability throughout the development of basic skills and recognition of prior learning.*
- *Involving businesses in schools to encourage employability and motivation.*
- *Providing support through integrated approaches, including the provision of vocational social and key skills.*
- *Research and analysis to support active labour market policies.*

1.2 Proposed actions:

1. To provide customised training based on employers needs particularly in growth sectors (Medical Technology, Engineering Design, Food & Drink, Leisure & Tourism, Creative Industries, Retail, Construction and Health & Care) leading to employment opportunities. This training would include occupational skills development and would also include life, key and job preparation skills to maximise trainee employability. We would particularly welcome proposals supporting clients from within the Regeneration Zones.
2. Linking unemployed people and communities to employment opportunities through training. The development of the direct routes to employment opportunities in order to exploit the opportunities for pooling part-time, seasonal and temporary jobs to create continuous, permanent jobs with career development potential.
3. To develop Student Apprenticeship programmes for 16 – 18 year olds, where young people in full time school or college education have the opportunity to link with a local employer and provide one day a week to gain work based skills and evidence towards their key skills and vocational qualification portfolios.
4. Targeted guidance, tasters and vocational training for the long-term unemployed entering specific sectors including Health and Care.
5. Enhance business involvement and activities linked to the Learning Gateway to strengthen the student's chances of success and progression.

POLICY FIELD 2 - PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Target Groups for Policy Field 2:

- *those with no or low levels of skills and/or qualifications*
- *those in unemployed households*
- *those people subject to multi-disadvantage and deprivation including homeless people, ex-offenders, people with drug and alcohol problems*
- *those people with a pervasive disadvantage or disability*

- *those traditionally excluded from basic and other levels of education*
- *those wishing to upgrade limited or inappropriate skills*
- *people from ethnic minority groups*
- *lone parents and women returners*
- *young people who are at risk of 'disaffection' in the education system (13-17 year olds are specifically restricted to applications in measure 2)*
- *capacity building with people employed within*
- *community/voluntary organisations*
- *relevant education and training organizations*

Measure 1: *To widen access to basic skills provision: through the development of innovative and effective ways of promoting and providing basic skills, directed at those groups excluded from or under-represented in the workplace.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *More effective delivery of training within the home, community and workplace*
- *Supporting intensive interventions to meet the needs of the client group through vocational guidance, training and employment support measures.*

2.1 Proposed actions:

1. To deliver basic skills activity targeted at specific disadvantaged groups in Birmingham and Solihull. This will include work with key intermediaries, particularly in the black and minority ethnic communities and work in North Solihull to address basic skills needs.
2. Use equal opportunities monitoring data for education and training to inform curriculum development activity, in order to sustain improvements in participation and in the effectiveness of equal opportunities policies in colleges and workbased training providers.
3. Community based delivery of a range of taster / pilot activities aimed at developing language and communication skills, confidence building and mentoring as a means of encouraging participation among excluded groups/ communities and supporting integration into mainstream learning
4. To strengthen opportunities and support for learners on the Learning Gateway through intensive support measures including guidance and mentoring.

Measure 2: *To provide help to improve the employability and try and remove barriers to labour market entry. In particular, to develop local responses to assist individuals with disadvantages as identified in the labour market who face the risk of exclusion.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Working with employers to overcome barriers to employment for excluded groups, break down sex stereotyping and the stereotyping of disadvantaged groups.*
- *Supporting pre-entry training related to identified labour market needs.*
- *Improving employability throughout the development of key skills*

- *Activities focused on individuals with no or low level NVQs.*
- *Training trainers/educators*
- *Training for people working in community/voluntary organisations*
- *Vocational training relevant to employment opportunities particularly in the growth sectors.*

2.2 Proposed actions:

1. * To enhance the Learning Gateway Programme in order to increase retention and progression. Activity will include assessment centres (linked to Learning Centres) and pre-16 activity in the entry phase. The final phase will provide specialist provision with one to one support.
2. To strengthen opportunities and support for learners on the Learning Gateway through intensive support measures including guidance and mentoring.
3. Targeted support for black and minority ethnic people, refugees and asylum seekers to achieve assessment of prior learning (APL) in order to secure employment in key public sectors experiencing employment shortages, for example; health and care and teaching. Activities would also focus on language and communication skills together with professional competence, work placements and mentoring.
4. # To enhance education business consortium activity with a particularly focus on serving students from disadvantaged groups. The objectives within the bid would enable the consortium to add value to existing provision as well as piloting new methods of delivery and testing new ways of engaging with students, employers and schools.
5. To enhance the Excellence Challenge Initiative in order to widen participation in Further Education. This action would target groups who do not move from compulsory education into learning in FE or HE.
6. * Measures will be supported that develop the key skills of those disadvantaged individuals most difficult to reach in the labour market. Such measures will ultimately be focussed on improving the employability of traditionally under represented groups in Birmingham and Solihull.

This activity is only available by single tender by the Education Business Consortium.

*** Due to limited funding these activities are only available from 2003.**

Measure 3: *To combat discrimination in the labour market through individually tailored provision, in particular to combat race and disability discrimination and improve the employability of these groups.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Research and analysis to fill regional and sub-regional gaps on equal opportunities.*
- *Supporting initiatives to improve recruitment and promotion systems to enable equality of opportunity.*

2.3 Proposed actions:

1. To identify the barriers to training and employment and support innovative actions specific to disadvantaged groups in growth areas.
2. Working with employers to overcome barriers to recruitment, retention and progression for people with disabilities. To include research into employer perceptions and promotion of the business case leading to the review of existing policies, practices and procedures, benchmarking and the implementation of best practice.
3. Support the implementation of the Birmingham and Solihull Welfare to Work for Disabled People Joint Investment Plans through the development of an integrated package of support across a range of voluntary and public sector organisations in order to maximise access to training, education and employment.
4. Provide training and support to people with Aspergers / Autism and people with mental health difficulties as well as people with disabilities from ethnic minority backgrounds to enable them to become work ready and to assist them in identifying, obtaining and sustaining open employment commensurate with their aspirations and abilities.

POLICY FIELD 3 - LIFELONG LEARNING

Target Groups for Policy Field 3:

- *unskilled and semi-skilled people with low or no levels of training*
- *employees of SMEs*
- *those without previous experience of learning beyond compulsory education*
- *older workers (where vulnerability is exacerbated by age)*
- *those wishing to upgrade limited, inappropriate or outdated skills*
- *those who require training to multi-skill or interdisciplinary training to develop their careers*
- *managers and technicians in growth sectors*
- *managers, owner managers, enablers and facilitators of change within SMEs*
- *employees in the supply chain of large companies*
- *part-time workers*
- *those wishing to acquire business skills essential for self-employment*
- *unemployed graduates/post-graduates*
- *those with no qualifications.*

Measure 1: *Promoting wider access and participation in lifelong learning (especially for those groups least likely to take part in lifelong learning activities and lacking basic and key skills)*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Supporting collaborative action through Learning and Skills Councils, Local Learning Partnerships, Further and Higher Education Establishments and through SMEs*
- *Improving the quality and flexibility of local training including participation in lifelong learning partnerships*
- *Building strong foundations for future employability from family/school through into school/work*
- *Extending access through more innovative means, focusing on delivery to the community, family, and those in rural areas.*
- *Improve the positive inclination to train and for individuals to take greater responsibility for their own training, including the use of Lifelong Learning Partnerships and University for Industry*
- *Broaden the level of key skills within the workforce particularly within SMEs or clusters of companies.*
- *Developing basic, key, transferable and ICT skills for those in and out of work, and reducing the risk of those with inadequate skills falling behind.*
- *Work experience and work-based training*
- *Improving the employability of individuals, particularly low achievers and older workers*
- *Management training in higher level competencies including creativity*
- *Work experience and work-based training which targets disadvantaged groups and seeks to break down gender stereotyping and the stereotyping of disadvantaged groups*
- *Activities which seem to improve the positive inclination towards training which targets women and disadvantaged groups*

3.1 Proposed actions:

1. To provide disadvantaged groups with enhanced access to key economic sectors (Health & Care, Professional & Financial, Construction and Creative Industries) by offering new routes into career specific training.
2. The development of learning centres and learning points with employers. Included in this action would be support for the development of learning advisors and union learning representatives. Broaden the level of basic skills within the workplace, particularly within SMEs.
3. To enhance the delivery of learning through community based Learning Centres linked to UK on-line and/or Learn Direct. To develop new forms of outreach and initial access provision, including family learning, within disadvantaged areas and communities working in partnership with other providers of public services, especially through the SRB5 initiative.
4. Human Resource development.

Measure 2: *Improving employability through directing and supporting life long learning provision so that it is responsive to the changing needs of business, especially to global challenges in the fields of IT, management and the environment.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Foster links between businesses and support networks including the provision of funds to foster individual learning in the workplace*
- *Vocational training linked to recognised qualifications relevant to employers' needs in the key and higher skills areas.*
- *Upskill the existing workforce to enable them to meet the higher or multi-skill requirements of industry and commerce and cope with changes in employment.*
- *Management training in higher level competencies which targets women and disadvantaged groups*
- *Training to upskill the existing workforce which targets women and disadvantaged groups, to enable them to meet the higher or multi-skill requirement of industry and commerce and to cope with changes in employment*
- *Training to equip individuals to enter employment which is non-traditional to members of their sex or disadvantaged group.*

3.2 Proposed actions:

1. # Targeting groups in the workforce already using higher level skills, but without formal qualifications as candidates for foundation degrees and other appropriate accreditation.
2. # To support activities that seek to address diversity in the workplace particularly in the growth areas of professional and managerial occupations, retail, hospitality and tourism sectors.
3. To provide management development programmes for black and minority ethnic people in the public, private and voluntary sector.
4. To upskill /raise the knowledge and skill base of employees, especially under-represented groups. This project will achieve this by enabling employees to access a holistic apprentice model with clear and explicit progression routes from entry level to chartered status. Furthermore, this project will encourage non-traditional learners to access this project by removing barriers to learning such as cost, geographical (ICT) and timing constraints.
5. # The development of actions which promote the benefit of employee development to companies. This could include, amongst other activities, supporting workshops that promote employee development funds and a culture of lifelong learning. Particular focus will be on key sectors relevant to Birmingham and Solihull.

This activity is only available by single tender to Business Link Birmingham and Solihull for Workforce Development activity.

POLICY FIELD 4 - ADAPTABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Target Groups for Policy Field 4:

- *those wishing to upgrade limited, inappropriate or outdated skills particularly in the key growth sectors in the Region*
- *employees of SMEs and large company employees that support SME development*
- *the self-employed or those wishing to enter self-employment*
- *those who require training to multiskill or interdisciplinary training to develop in their careers*
- *managers, engineers and drivers of innovation*
- *those threatened with unemployment or redundancy*
- *workers threatened by industrial change or changes in production systems*
- *workers vulnerable to industrial restructuring and/or sectoral diversification or the affects of the introduction of new technology, particularly unskilled /semi-skilled workers in the manufacturing and production sectors, craft and skilled manual workers and clerical and secretarial workers*

Measure 1: *To update and upgrade employees' vocational skills, including basic and key skills.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Research, analysis and dissemination of best practice in adaptability and entrepreneurship*
- *Promoting employee development by updating and upgrading vocational skills, while considering new methods of delivering basic skills. This could include the provision of advice and guidance, training trainers and managers and promoting the effective use of ICT in SMEs*
- *Help employers develop strategies that support individuals to overcome barriers that inhibit economic activity, e.g. childcare*
- *Business mentoring schemes, inter-company collaboration, trainer training and innovative methods of training delivery which targets women and disadvantaged groups*
- *Business development training which targets women and disadvantaged groups*
- *Promoting employee development by updating and upgrading vocational skills, while considering new methods of delivering basic skills, which targets women and disadvantaged groups.*
- *New methods of vocational training and multi-skilling relevant to employers' needs from basic through to higher-level skills.*

4.1 Proposed actions:

1. # Improving local companies in-house training and development from basic skills to vocational qualifications, in order to meet the changes that face significant change, for example, health care workers. This would include innovative ways to fast track learning to the required levels through:
 - Identifying methods to address fast track learning*
 - Supporting additional vocational needs*
 - Developing centres of excellence to support the delivery of NVQs.*
2. Research to support wider understanding of policy and practice.
3. Working with employers in specific sectors, eg Construction, to train staff to become work based recorders and assessors. The prime objective will be to develop a closer integration of 'on and off the job' training and assessment thus improving the achievement of NVQ's in the workplace.
4. New methods of vocational training and multi-skilling relevant to employers' needs from basic through to higher-level skills.
5. Developing specific programmes (e.g. Women into Business), extending basic skills in the workplace, and mobile ICT training schemes. This priority also gives scope to develop entrepreneurship programmes.
6. To provide the opportunity for cross-sector secondments, exchange and mentoring. This would give employees from the public, private and voluntary/community sectors the opportunity to experience working in other sectors/organisations.
7. To target black and minority ethnic businesses in order to ensure employee updating of vocational skills and the acquiring of key and basic skills.
8. The targeting of black and minority ethnic businesses for mentoring and inter-company collaboration.

This activity is only available by single tender to Business Link Birmingham and Solihull for Workforce Development activity.

Measure 2: *To identify and meet emerging skills shortages, including higher levels.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Promoting effective training investment by employers and improving awareness of identified skill shortages with teachers in schools.*
- *Business mentoring schemes, inter-company collaboration, trainer training and innovative methods of training delivery.*
- *Upgrading skills and training in key sectors to meet identified skills shortages.*
- *Upgrading skills and training in key sectors to meet identified skills shortages which targets women and disadvantaged groups*
- *Encouragement of awareness-raising and training measures on equality for managers and advisors of enterprise support services.*

4.2 Proposed actions:

1. # To develop and strengthen sectoral networks of employers (e.g. Accelerate; Financial and Advisory Skills Taskforce) to improve the identification of the current and future skills needs of individual employers and the sector as a whole. This should in turn lead to collaborative action in improving HR / workforce planning and in establishing upskilling priorities.
2. # To support employers in anticipating the major demographic changes taking place over the next decade and their impact on the labour market. In particular, this would involve a wide range of positive action programmes to target disadvantaged groups which will represent a growing proportion of the future workforce.

This activity is only available by single tender to Business Link Birmingham and Solihull for Workforce Development activity.

Measure 3: *Encourage entrepreneurship and competitiveness of individuals, businesses, particularly SMEs and social enterprises.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Equipping workers threatened with redundancy by supporting innovation and creativity, with training and funding to turn good ideas into viable businesses.*
- *Training in entrepreneurship and promoting business start-ups and encouraging business to grow which targets women and disadvantaged groups.*
- *Supporting companies to help innovate to expand and create new employment opportunities.*

4.3 Proposed actions:

1. # To provide support for those individuals intending to take up entrepreneurial opportunities. To develop those SMEs and new enterprises to improve and sustain competitiveness through training and development packages.
2. # To conduct research into the depth and range of provision required to support social enterprises.
3. # To provide a stepping stone opportunity for individuals intending to enter or re-entering social /community enterprises via a combination of relevant work experience and vocational/business training. Supporting those individuals working within social enterprises/organisations through training and development mediums. To support social enterprises and organisations working within the social economy through a series of organisational/management development tools to ensure sustainability.

This activity is only available by single tender to Business Link Birmingham and Solihull for Workforce Development activity.

POLICY FIELD 5 - IMPROVING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Target Groups for Policy Field 5:

- *women with no experience of learning beyond compulsory education.*
- *women wishing to upgrade limited, inappropriate or outdated skills.*
- *women with no or low qualifications.*
- *unemployed women graduates or equivalents.*
- *unemployed women who wish to move into self-employment.*
- *women seeking continuing professional and management development.*
- *women working in areas where they are under-represented.*
- *women in part-time or job-share employment.*
- *women on temporary or fixed-term contracts.*

Where there is multiple disadvantage due to ethnicity, disability, age, caring responsibilities, marital status or location, the relevant individuals will be given priority.

Measure 1: *To improve access to learning and remove barriers to employment.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Increasing local access and basic skills training*
- *Continuing professional development and management training*

5.1 Proposed actions:

1. Positive action to support women in the entry and progression into employment specific to growth areas.
2. Promote and develop measures to support work life balance through key sectors and employer networks.
3. Targeted support for lone parents to increase their employability including the removal of barriers such as access to childcare.

Measure 2: *To research into issues related to gender discrimination in employment such pay, segregation recruitment and progression.*

RDP Actions being addressed:

- *Audit to identify gaps in provision which seeks to break down the barriers to employment and training for women, together with strategies for addressing the barriers identified.*

5.2 Proposed actions:

1. To support established networks to carry out research into barriers to employment faced by women in order to identify measures to address these barriers.

6. Beneficiaries by Measure

Beneficiaries by measure over a three-year period are expected to be as follows;

Policy field / measure	No of beneficiaries		
	2002	2003	2004
Policy field one			
Measure 1	800	900	900
2	720	1017	1098
Policy field two			
Measure 1	1306	1445	1495
2	1368	2935	3050
3	206	157	186
Policy field three			
Measure 1	625	4215	4225
2	1108	1163	1242
Policy field four			
Measure 1	1234	2229	2220
2	120	120	120
3	33	33	34
Policy field five			
Measure 1	100	132	132
2	0	48	60

The specific target groups for each Policy Field are detailed at Section 5. Where activities are targeted at specific groups, e.g. women, methods of marketing will be discussed and agreed as part of the suppliers contract.

7. Expected results by Measure

Results by measure have been estimated on an activity level by individual lead managers who have the relevant expertise and then aggregated to give an overall measure summary. There may therefore be some changes to the figures presented once bids have been received and the appropriate provision selected.

8. Added value by Measure

The Co-financing consultation process identified activities that ESF will support over and above those that domestic funding can provide, or which domestic funding cannot provide. The table below clearly demonstrates the added value criteria met by each measure. This information is based on the activities outlined in Section 5 of this plan.

Priority Measure	One		Two			Three		Four			Five	
	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2
Increase in the number of people receiving training.	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	
Additional results (higher level of qualifications/more jobs).							✓		✓		✓	
Measurable positive outcomes that link to the additional funding.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Creation of other eligible outcomes that would not occur without ESF support.	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Maintaining existing activities that would be cut back or enable activities to be brought forward.						✓						✓
Investment in new or creative activity that could not be developed using existing resources.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

9. Provider funding

Providers will be funded on a profile basis which will be individually agreed. Profiles will be according to need and front loading of profiles agreed as necessary. The final 20% ESF payment which is held back from the CFO applicant, Birmingham and Solihull LSC, will not be held back from providers. Providers will be funded on a formula / non formula basis, depending upon the activity. Figures in the interactive forms have been derived using appropriate methodology (contract cost based on national formula basis for additional activity where a formula applies or a proposed contract cost for activities which are non-formula based).

Since provider proposals are being invited after this plan has been submitted and approved, the outcomes and outputs have been estimated by activity based on knowledge and then aggregated by measure.

10. Match funding

All activities can be matched with Learning and Skills Council funding. On an exceptional basis, Providers match funding may be part of a project. This will be considered after the appraisal process on a case by case basis.

11. Technical assistance pooling

West Midlands LSCs have agreed to seek voluntary sector contributions at the rate of 0.75% of total grant secured (as agreed with the West Midlands Programme Monitoring Committee) from applicants who successfully secure ESF from Birmingham & Solihull LSC, except successful bids from voluntary and community sector organisations.

12. Management of the plan

The monitoring and management of the performance of sub-contractors delivering this co-financing plan will be integrated with Birmingham & Solihull LSC practices. Performance of providers will be monitored on a monthly basis by Programme Monitoring Coordinators and Project Managers. Project Managers each have a case load of providers and will be in regular contact with LSC providers. Twice a year providers will undergo a Provider Performance Review. This review will look into all aspects of provision including equal opportunities, performance, strategic planning and financial probity. The review process culminates in the Birmingham and Solihull LSC making an assessment of the performance and quality of the provider and agreeing actions that need to be taken in order to promote continuous improvement.

A cross sector Quality Improvement Forum will also be established to look at the issues arising from inspections and provider performance review to advise on use of funding and evaluate the impact of interventions on raising standards.

This process complements the four-year inspections carried out by the appropriate Inspectorate.

In addition, Birmingham & Solihull LSC has an internal cross functional co-financing group which will continue to meet on a regular basis to review process and monitor and evaluate overall performance. Regular reports and updates will be discussed by Birmingham & Solihull LSC Senior Management team and by Birmingham & Solihull LSC Council.

At regular intervals, the overall progress of activities in this plan will be evaluated on a formal basis and discussed by Senior Managers and Birmingham & Solihull LSC Council.

13. Cross cutting themes

Equal Opportunities

As stated in section 2.5, Birmingham & Solihull LSC has prepared an equal opportunities strategy framework. This forms the basis of a more detailed action plan which in turn will form an integral part of Birmingham & Solihull LSC strategic plan.

The co-financing plan targets key disadvantaged and excluded groups and will promote equality of opportunity through contracts to suppliers. Marketing material will also promote equality of opportunity.

In line with the overall goal set out in section 2.5 the LSC will adopt a segmented approach to its development strategy in relation to each key disadvantaged group and community and to each sector of the economy. As part of the annual strategic/ business planning cycle, Birmingham & Solihull LSC will benchmark the relative participation and attainment rates of each key group in relation to both learning and employment setting clear targets for improvement. ESF funds will be used to support a wide range of development and positive action programmes ensuring effective targeting and enhancement of support for key groups as well as influencing and changing behaviour and established practice.

A key element of the selection and appraisal process will be the assessment of how clearly applicants have demonstrated the way in which equality of opportunity will be applied as an intrinsic theme throughout the project. Each applicant must clearly state how they will address Equal Opportunity and identify which groups will be supported and their number along with outputs for impact measurement.

Given the LSC's statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, monitoring of project delivery will be an important measure of the local LSC's performance in meeting this objective. As part of the co-ordinators planned monitoring visits, equal opportunities will be a key area for assessment against agreed targets and outputs, which will in turn be monitored by the Senior Management Team.

Therefore this plan of action clearly supports the aims of the Regional Development Plan, and specifically the Regional Statement on Mainstreaming Equality for Disadvantaged Groups by delivering:

- action to address structural factors, which have been identified as blocking the access of disadvantaged groups to employment, self-employment, training and education, as well as certain facilities and services within Birmingham and Solihull.
- targeted (positive) action to enable disadvantaged groups to overcome factors which limit employability and / or the ability to progress into higher status, higher qualified and higher paid jobs.
- Research to fill regional information gaps about the situation of some segments of the disadvantaged population, and to make proposals for strategic action to address the factors which are preventing such groups from making a fuller contribution to the economic regeneration and development of Birmingham and Solihull.

Sustainable development

The Learning and Skills Council has been created to support the process of 'maintaining high and steady levels of economic growth and employment', particularly in addressing the Secretary of State's objectives to 'increase demand for learning for adults'; and to 'raise skill

levels for national competitiveness'. Locally, the key mechanism for developing the skills and capacities of individuals with a view to increased productivity in the workplace, improved employability and continued economic growth is to address the education and training needs of the post 16 population.

The actions proposed in this plan have been developed to match the needs of the beneficiaries in Birmingham and Solihull and opportunities in the local economy, whilst taking account of and supporting national and regional approaches to sustainable development. They specifically address the environmental requirements of the 'West Midlands Regional Development Plan' and the 'Regional Guidance of Incorporating Environmental Sustainability into the West Midlands Structural Funds Programmes 2000-2006' by encouraging a model of development that reduces the environmental impacts associated with growth and, where appropriate, Birmingham and Solihull LSC will use the Ecotec 'Development Path' model.

We plan to send a list of all proposed projects to Groundwork (as per our current Objective 2 applications process) for independent evaluation and advice. Birmingham & Solihull LSC will seek, wherever practicable, to improve the environmental awareness and performance of providers, both by informing them of our policy objectives, and seeking their assistance in achieving these by offering more benign products and services.

We aim to encourage applications from providers, which include an active and positive approach to environmental sustainability and good practice. We will encourage them to harness natural resources via the application of the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' principal, and ensure that the management of activity targets efficient use of resources, e.g., recycling, stock management, etc. By encouraging the implementation of the above we believe we are contributing to responsible and progressive economic growth and lasting employment, whilst at the same time addressing, from a sustainable perspective, the needs of all involved.

Information & Communications Technology (ICT)

Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council will ensure that all funded activities make full use of ICT in the provision and delivery of training and other services and will seek to maximise the use of current and emerging ICT technologies. All the measures supported under this plan will focus upon increasing ICT competence across the local target groups mentioned in the application, or encourage the use ICT in its delivery methodology.

The 'West Midlands Regional Information, Communication and Technology Strategy' comprises of six inter-dependent elements; the core elements of the Infrastructure, Access, Content with encircling themes of Globalisation, the Region and the User. This strategy document underpins the Learning and Skills Councils ICT policy and where appropriate, will be used to help evaluate the performance of ICT related projects. The technical study undertaken to help develop the Strategic Framework showed that the West Midlands Region exhibited a number of key weaknesses which needed to be addressed - this plan will seek to address the following issues through the measures where possible:

- The potential benefits of collaboration and best practice.
- Focussing on the needs of users rather than technology led investments.
- Increasing awareness of what is available, therefore not restricting access to and benefits of ICT.
- Developing high quality content and services that meet the needs of users

Applicants will be expected to indicate how they will use ICT to enhance the delivery of their programmes. Birmingham & Solihull LSC will ensure that funded activities employ appropriate

ICT on the provision and delivery of courses and other services. This is built into the selection and appraisal process and will be part of the on-going monitoring process.

The West Midlands LSC's will actively participate in the development of the National Web Site and will use the local pages on that site to promote our plans to the wider public. The LSC will seek to maximise the use of ICT locally by informing partners, providers, individuals and local interest groups via the local LSC website when it is available (in the meantime we will utilize partners web sites). This website will eventually also be used in promoting plans, associated bidding opportunities and the submission of proposals.

14. Implementation plan

Milestones

Summarised below are the estimated quarterly achievements planned for the first year of this bid.

2002

1st Period Jan – March	2nd Period April – June	3rd Period July – Sept	4th Period Oct – Dec
- 1 st phase Contracting with providers.		- 2 nd phase Contracting with providers.	
- Jan 2002 Profiles for payment agreed with providers.		- Sept 2002 Profiles for payment agreed with providers.	
Monthly monitoring of performance (starts, leavers, completers).	Monthly monitoring of performance (starts, leavers, completers).	Monthly monitoring of performance (starts, leavers, completers).	Monthly monitoring of performance (starts, leavers, completers).
Initial visits to providers to monitor and support progress.		Ongoing visits to providers to monitor and support progress.	
Review of staff needs to support co-financing (post start of contracting).			Review of staff needs to support co-financing (post start of contracting).
SMT/Council report on progress.		SMT/Council report on progress.	
	Provider meeting to review progress.		
	Invite 2 nd phase bids for co-financing (part of strategic plan).		
			Evaluation and review of performance
			Annual audit of provision

Processes

Birmingham & Solihull Senior Management Team will oversee the implementation of this plan.

Each activity in the plan will be linked to a specific co-ordinator who will be responsible for overseeing progress and Contract Performance in conjunction with the Finance and Quality teams.

Birmingham and Solihull European Unit, headed up by a Senior Manager, will have a lead co-ordination role for all co-financing activity. They will ensure that all systems and processes are in place and being utilised, provide technical advice as necessary, and ensure appropriate staff training and development is available.

Monthly cross office meetings will be held to check on overall progress and assess all aspects of progress and performance. Birmingham & Solihull LSC performance review group will meet regularly and oversee the performance of the overall LSC activity. This will be particularly important for the integration of Co-Financing in LSC work. Monthly reports will be discussed by SMT and corrective action taken. Quarterly reports will be prepared for Birmingham & Solihull LSC Council.

Quality standards

Birmingham & Solihull LSC has a quality team headed up by a Senior Manager. Their aim is to ensure high quality of provision across all LSC contracted activity. Alongside the LSCs audit function, they are responsible for assessing new providers and supporting quality improvement. The team works with Programme Monitoring Coordinators to ensure that providers meet agreed quality and performance measures through:

- **Pre and post inspection support**

The local LSC provides support to providers prior to inspection by questioning and validating their self assessment processes and outcomes against the Common Inspection framework. Post inspection, the LSC works with the providers on their action plan to address the areas of weakness identified by the Inspector.

- **Providers performance review**

This process makes an assessment of providers twice a year against ten key quality and performance measures. Again, the local LSC will work with and support the organisation to strengthen and improve performance in these areas.

- **Professional and vocational skills updating**

Providers are given funding and support to ensure their staff have appropriate, nationally recognised qualifications. Similarly staff are also encouraged to update their vocational skills and competences in partnership with employers.

- **New Providers**

New providers are required to meet and maintain specified quality standards, to become an LSC contractor. Voluntary and community based organisations who can help with the LSCs remit of widening participation will be offered a programme of support, based on a training need analysis, to help them reach the required standards.

Annex 1 – Government Programmes and Initiatives

Work Based Learning - Programme for young people through the work-based route.

Modern Apprenticeships - The preferred work-based learning route for all young people aged 16 to 24 who are capable of achieving NVQ Levels 2 and 3.

NVQ Training - NVQ training is high quality, flexible training provision to NVQ standards at Levels 1, 2 or 3. Young people aged 16 to 24 are eligible for NVQ Training where they are unable or unwilling to follow the MA route.

Life Skills - The Life Skills learning provision, this provides with Personal Advisers providing ongoing individual support.

Pre 16 Education Business Links - Provision of support to ensure that local education business link organisations work closely together to provide high quality education business link opportunities for all young people, including all those in primary and secondary education.

Workforce Development - Workforce development aims to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of those in work, those seeking work or those about to enter the labour market for the first time. It may be used in conjunction with other LSC budgets such as the Local Initiative Fund to address local priorities.

Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults (IAG) - Providing local information, advice and guidance for adults on learning and work. The Learning and Skills Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in all its policies, programmes and actions.

Adult and Community Learning - Innovative community-based learning opportunities provided by local voluntary and neighbourhood groups to attract and motivate adults wary of traditional forms of education. Learning can be integrated with other activities that concern local people, such as the environment, tenants' representation, childcare, arts, sport, crime prevention or health promotion.

FE Provision - Provision of Post 16 education and training through colleges and other providers.

National Target Level 2 Project - A national drive by local LSCs to achieve the DfES 2002 target of 85% of 19 year-olds to attain a Level 2 qualification.

Sixth Form (From April 2002) - Provision of education for 16-18 year olds within schools.

Rapid Response Fund - Responds to the needs of individuals in companies who are threatened with redundancy.

Basic Skills – Development of effective approaches for improving the basic skills of children, young people and adults, often in partnership with other organisations.