

Hastings & Rother Adult Learning and Skills Strategy 2013 - 16

Executive summary

This is the first Hastings and Rother area-wide Learning and Skills Strategy. It provides an overview of the local socio-economic landscape, and outlines the key local actions that will improve the education and skills offer to meet the needs of its residents and employers as well as addressing the wider social and economic issues of the area.

Hastings and Rother variously encompass high deprivation, low adult educational attainment and aspirations, rural isolation and an ageing population, and have suffered from these effects as seriously as everywhere else. At a time of greater demand, there are fewer resources available to provide support.

Doing more for less is therefore the mantra which underpins this strategy and drives it forward. It is clear that if the area is to access funding successfully in the future it will need to work collaboratively and regionally or lose out. It means working smarter, in different ways and through new partnerships or alliances, with educators, training providers and employers agreeing the right mix of provision to support economic growth, reduce and address local skills shortages and prepare local people for current and future job opportunities.

Overall, the strategy needs to recognise the issues the area faces and agree that a set of key actions which will ensure local people and employers are fully supported, enabling the Hastings and Rother economy and social fabric improve and thrive as the country builds out of recession.

The strategic priorities for the area were agreed based on consultation amongst local partners and stakeholders, and a comprehensive review of the policy landscape related to economic development, employment, learning and skills.

The Strategic Priorities for the Hastings and Rother area contained in this strategy are to:

- 1. Ensure that the local learning and skills offer meets the current and future skills needs of local employers.**
- 2. Ensure that community based and non-accredited learning is improved and enhanced, recognising its importance to social and economic inclusion across the Hastings and Rother area.**
- 3. Build relevant, clear and effective local pathways from non-accredited learning through and to higher education and/or employment.**
- 4. Maximise the funding which flows into the area to support local education, skills and employment priorities and actions within this strategy.**

These Priorities fit under the overarching principle of improved partnership working to achieve them, and a detailed annual action plan has been developed as a framework for this partnership working.

Mission and purpose

This strategy focuses upon the learning and skills needs of the Hastings and Rother area, linked to three constituencies whose needs are symbiotic:

- **Employers**, who need a supply of skilled workers. Without this they cannot grow, so there will be fewer jobs of lower quality, which is not good for residents
- **Residents**, who want the skills, knowledge and abilities to get work, develop careers and also simply fulfil themselves as individuals
- **Training providers**, who are responsible for the delivery of skills to meet the needs of local employers and people

The strategy adopts an overarching principle of building closer and more effective partnerships between education and training providers, employers, the Community and Voluntary Sector, communities across Hastings and Rother, Jobcentre Plus, and other public bodies.

By working in partnership organisations can ensure that the learning and skills needs of employers and local people are met, to drive forward economic growth and improve social and economic inclusion.

Introduction

This is the first Hastings and Rother area-wide Learning and Skills Strategy. It provides an overview of the local socio-economic landscape, and outlines the key local actions that will improve the education and skills offer to meet the needs of its residents and employers as well as addressing the wider social and economic issues of the area.

The strategy has been developed against a backdrop of economic uncertainty which began following the worldwide banking crisis in 2008. The UK economy has already experienced a double dip recession and there is little prospect of short-term recovery. Closures and cutbacks in a wide range of sectors from construction to retail have led to large-scale redundancies, while public sector spending cuts have further exacerbated the problem.

To compound the difficulties the large injections of money to support struggling communities, that Hastings and Rother have also benefited from in the past decade, have largely disappeared. These include Area Based Grants, Local Economic Growth Initiative (LEGI), South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE) Strategic Development Funding.

The government has embarked upon a deficit reduction strategy, and education funding levels have not been exempt from this with the national 19+ public funding available reducing from £3.8bn in 2012/13 to £3.3bn in 2012/15. Changes to the benefit system designed to make work pay are also beginning to bite. Residents who have been dependent on benefits are finding them removed or severely reduced.

Hastings and Rother variously encompass high deprivation, low adult educational attainment and aspirations, rural isolation and an ageing population, and have suffered from these effects

as seriously as everywhere else. At a time of greater demand, there are fewer resources available to provide support.

Doing more for less is therefore the mantra which underpins this strategy and drives it forward. It is clear that if the area is to access funding successfully in the future it will need to work collaboratively and regionally or lose out. It means working smarter, in different ways and through new partnerships or alliances, with educators, training providers and employers agreeing the right mix of provision to support economic growth, reduce and address local skills shortages and prepare local people for current and future job opportunities.

At a sub-regional level Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are being given increasing powers to determine smaller geographic areas' economic and skills priorities. LEPs are business-led partnerships, that include Local Authorities and colleges, and replaced the previous Regional Development Agency arrangements in 2010 as part of the Local Growth¹ white paper.

Hastings and Rother are part of the South East LEP (SELEP), the largest LEP in the country. This covers Essex, Kent and East Sussex and is home to 156,000 businesses, with 3.9 million people living and some 1,526,000 working within the area, contributing £63bn GVA (5%) to the national economy.

While slow growth at a national scale is probably the best outlook that can be envisaged for the three years this strategy covers, this does not imply standstill at a local level. Recent investments by Asda and Saga have reduced the negative impact of the recession locally, while the area's largest private-sector employer Hastings Direct also has plans to expand. Construction of the Hastings-Bexhill Link Road will unlock employment land in N.E. Bexhill to provide an estimated 1,900 new jobs, on top of those for constructing the road and new housing. Further developments in Bexhill town centre, and at Rye Harbour are also planned.

A range of funding streams is now available to support LEP objectives and priorities. These include the £1.9b Regional Growth Fund and £730 million Growing Places Fund to support job creation, innovative growth sectors and infrastructure projects. Hastings, recognised as a key growth location by the SELEP, has benefited from these investment funds to develop a new business park on Queensway and the second phase of Priory Quarter in Hastings town centre (both led by Seachange Sussex regeneration company) which should see the creation of over 800 jobs in the next five years.

Skills are seen by the SELEP Business Plan as a critical enabler for all these objectives, while low levels of employability and work readiness have been flagged as barriers to growth by businesses in the LEP area.

Future European and core education and skills funding will increasingly be influenced by the priorities highlighted by LEP areas. Following recommendations from the Heseltine Review: *No Stone Unturned in Pursuit of Growth*² the government announced in the 2012 Autumn Statement³ that all LEPs have been encouraged to develop more detailed skills strategies by July 2013, with access to a Single Pot of funding from 2015 to be used on key LEP priorities.

¹ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/economic-development/docs/cm7961-local-growth-white-paper.pdf>

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34648/12-1213-no-stone-untuned-in-pursuit-of-growth.pdf

³ Pages 40-41 of http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/autumn_statement_2012_complete.pdf

This increased influence on the local skills system is already occurring with the latest round of European Social Fund (ESF) provision, aimed at supporting low skilled employees, being let by LEP area with funding priorities directly agreed between the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and each LEP area.

These changes could have a fundamental change in the way in which funding for education and skills is directed and potentially distributed if Lord Heseltine's recommendation⁴ for the devolving of all post 19 education (and post 16 Apprenticeship) funding to LEPs is enacted. The Hastings and Rother Adult Learning and Skills Strategy is therefore important as it provides an even more local overview of the skills and training requirements in a key area of potential growth for the SELEP, and can be used to inform the SELEP Skills Strategy and future funding decision.

Like other parts of East Sussex, the current volume of jobs, particularly in Hastings, is insufficient to make a noticeable reduction to the levels of worklessness and there is a major need for quality private sector job creation. If the area aspires to reach the same employment level as other parts of the county or region a further 2,895 Hastings work age residents need to find jobs. This is more than the current planned developments generate.

The Learning and Skills strategy needs to sufficiently support those employment sectors recognised in local Economic Assessments as having growth potential, alongside those identified in future inward investment development plans. By highlighting how education and skills providers are working closely with developers and economic development teams and inward investment campaigns and websites in the area can encourage more companies to expand or relocate in the area, offering the right mix of skilled residents and young people to meet nascent demand.

Pathways from entry or non-accredited provision through and to Higher Education need to be more defined, with people supported to progress from level to level and organisation to organisation.

The wider benefits of learning also need to be both recognised and celebrated with a range of appropriate provision offered across the area. This will include supporting parents to develop the skills needed to help their children succeed at school whilst broadening their horizons to consider further education, apprenticeships or higher education. It would also ensure that learning for health and well-being or community cohesion as well as learning for learning's sake is recognised and supported, with those who can afford to pay subsidising those who can't via fees.

Overall, the strategy needs to recognise the issues the area faces and agree that a set of key actions which will ensure local people and employers are fully supported, enabling the Hastings and Rother economy and social fabric improve and thrive as the country builds out of recession.

The success of the strategy will be measured using the following quantitative and qualitative measures:

⁴ Page 171 of Heseltine Review

Target		Baseline	Targets
1. Increase in % of working age people with level 2 qualification	Hastings	66.8%	67.5%
	Rother	65%	66%
2. Increase in % of working age people with level 3 qualification	Hastings	44%	44.5%
	Rother	44.8%	50.3%
3. Increase in % of working age people with level 4 qualification	Hastings	25.4%	26%
	Rother	29.2%	30.5%
4. Increase in the number of people accessing non-accredited learning		baseline will need to be established in 12/13	
5. Reduction in the 18-24 unemployment rate	Hastings	745	640
	Rother	385	310
6. Reduction in the 25+ unemployment rate	Hastings	2390	1800
	Rother	985	740

Baselines are derived from:

1-3 - ONS annual population survey (Jan 2011-Dec 2011) from www.nomisweb.co.uk

4 – data collection required from Adult and Community Learning Forum

5-6 – JSA Claimant count Nov 2012 from www.nomisweb.co.uk

Strategic Priorities

The following strategic priorities for the area over the 2013-16 period were agreed based on consultation amongst local partners and stakeholders, and a comprehensive review of the policy landscape related to economic development, employment, learning and skills.

The Priorities fit under the overarching principle of improved partnership working to achieve them, and a detailed annual action plan has been developed as a framework for this partnership working.

1. Ensure that the local learning and skills offer meets the current and future skills needs of local employers.

Opportunities for employers to articulate the specific skills needs of their sector will be critical if curriculum and recruitment initiatives are truly going to respond to local demand. In order to revolutionise and localise the offer real conversations need to occur between employers and local skills providers as for too long national labour market intelligence has been used to define what qualifications providers offer.

The Hastings and Rother Economic taskforce *Six Point Plan*⁵ published in July 2012 identified a specific group of sectors (advanced manufacturing and engineering; creative, leisure and hospitality; and emerging technology industries) that are key to the growth of the local economy. Training providers need to ensure that their offers in those sectors meet local demands.

Increased flexibilities within the skills system will enable training providers to better meet these local needs, while the increased employer ownership of skills being promoted via the *Employer Ownership of Skills*⁶ pilots and *Regional Growth Fund*⁷ will ensure that there are further opportunities to bid for funding focused upon what is really required locally.

Significant curriculum changes do however take time and these will need to be jointly planned between skills providers, local authorities, employers and local regeneration organisations to ensure that employers relocating or growing into key development sites have a sufficient supply of skilled labour to meet their needs.

In order for local people to benefit from these new employment opportunities, pre-employment training programmes need to be better coordinated and linked to the employers looking to expand or replenish staff. Awareness amongst employers of these schemes is variable, so increased and joint marketing of the programmes to employers is critical if they are to address local skills shortages and enable take-up of jobs.

Employers must be supported to create more apprenticeships, and young people supported to begin and complete longer term skills programmes to gain higher level technical or craft skills.

Key strategic actions over the next three years will include:

- Running annual, joint sector specific education provider and employer events to review the skills requirements and influence curriculum development.
- Liaison to ensure education and skills provision more closely aligns with future inward investment proposals and the jobs that will be created.
- Involving more employers in the development of pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship provision.
- Increasing employer involvement in school and college based activities that provide young people with a greater understanding of the local labour market and the skills required to secure work.

2. Ensure that community based and non-accredited learning is improved and enhanced, recognising its importance to social and economic inclusion across the Hastings and Rother area.

The value of learning to employment and the wider economic development and growth agenda for Hastings and Rother is recognised throughout this strategy, and is critical if the area is to

⁵ http://www.hastings.gov.uk/environment_planning/planning/localplan/evidence_base/sixpointplan

⁶ <http://www.ukces.org.uk/employeroownership>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/boosting-private-sector-employment-in-england>

grow as the country comes out of recession. The power of learning to support other agendas and areas of policy and life is however also vital to the fabric of the area.

Hastings and Rother has a strong and established group of Community and Voluntary Sector providers who attract additional revenues into the area to provide a wide range of community based learning. They need to be supported to maintain this provision, and links to statutorily funded education providers need to improve and strengthen in order to encourage progression.

At its best community learning helps build community capacity and influence by enabling individuals, groups and communities to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision making and service delivery.

Learning has a restorative function when supporting local people to more effectively manage their health or addiction or recover from periods of mental ill health.

Learning is a powerful community cohesion enabler which brings different people together to learn from and about one another, equipping people with the skills needed to volunteer or support community activities or breaking prolonged periods of isolation. It also brings generations together providing the social glue that binds communities, challenges stereotypes and enables different people to come together in unity.

Most people can now expect 20 years in active retirement, and the number living beyond 100 will quadruple by 2030. Learning can play an important part in improving the quality of life of older adults by helping them to stay longer in work (if they want or have to); to use their skills and knowledge in mutual and self-organised learning activity; and it can reduce the costs of expensive medical and social care services including improving the quality of life of those in residential care.

The purpose of Community Learning as outlined in *New Challenges, New Chances* need to be considered and woven into the strategy and wider action plan:

- Maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances.
- Promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement.
- Maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.⁸

Key strategic actions over the next three years will include:

- Joint curriculum planning to ensure the offer meets local priorities and needs, avoids unnecessary duplication and maximises the impact of multiple funding streams.

⁸ Page 14 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31429/11-1380-further-education-skills-system-reform-plan.pdf

- Increasing training for volunteers to provide opportunities for local people to gain employability skills and offer others support.
- Developing additional provision targeting areas with high levels of deprivation and low educational attainment.
- Ensure local people moving off health or other long-term benefits are able to access appropriate provision that offers confidence building blended with skills development.

3. Build relevant, clear and effective local pathways from non-accredited learning through and to higher education and/or employment.

With low levels of adult educational attainment across the area providers need to focus upon developing and promoting pathways at every stage from non-accredited provision through and to Higher Education.

Encouraging adults to see education as an enabler will raise the whole area's aspiration levels and increase higher levels of attainment across all stages and within all ages of the local population, ultimately increasing attainment at Higher Education level which has historically been lower than regional or national averages. The development of higher level skills is also critical if local people are to secure employment in the manufacturing, engineering and creative growth sectors.

Closer partnership working on curriculum planning to develop those pathways, and link offers alongside improved access to Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) which supports local people to make informed decisions, will be critical.

Raising the overall education attainment levels in the area will also support children and young people as it provides parents with the opportunity to improve their skills levels and enable them to better support their children's numeracy, literacy and communication skills. This will contribute to improving children and young people's overall educational outcomes at 16.

Key strategic actions over the next three years will include:

- Increasing the range and amount of training available at Levels 1, 2 and 3, linked to the skills requirements of key local employment sectors and planned inward investment.
- Ensuring rural provision is secured and developed to meet local needs for both economic and social regeneration including the rural economy and Rye Harbour Development.
- Developing a joint programme for adult tutors and teachers to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and share effective practice.

4. Maximise the funding which flows into the area to support local education, skills and employment priorities and actions within this strategy.

Public funding for education and skills is reducing as a result of the government's deficit reduction plan. The administration and distribution methods for funding are also changing to

recognise Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) priorities. Larger, regional contracts with prime contractors and sub-contract supply chains are increasingly becoming the norm.

The Hastings and Rother area is only a small part of the South East LEP, which covers Essex, Kent and East Sussex, so partners will need to work more closely together to generate strong funding applications and lobby for investment in the area. By articulating the local priorities and actions via this strategy local cases can be put forward based on the evidence contained in the policy and local landscape section.

Opportunities to align the different funding streams held by different partners or to match fund opportunities arising from new European funding programmes from 2014 need to be further explored to ensure effective programmes are developed that address area priorities and improve the economic and social situation for local people.

The area must also develop partnerships with other similar areas within the region and SELEP area to share practice and attract funding to address similar issues. Emerging partnerships with other coastal towns and their surrounding areas need to be formally investigated.

Key strategic actions over the next three years will include:

- Building partnerships to investigate and apply for funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), other government or wider funding sources including the Lottery.
- Establishing a working group to identify match funding and European Union (EU) partners in preparation for the 2014-20 European Funding round
- Supporting local employers and networks to apply for employer related skills funding e.g. Employer Ownership of Skills and Regional Growth Funds in partnership with local education providers.
- Influencing the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to fund learning and skills issues facing Hastings and Rother and other Coastal Communities.

Developing the Strategy

At the September 2012 Hastings and St Leonards Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) The Director of Regeneration at Hastings Borough Council proposed that an area wide Adult Learning and Skills Strategy be produced to accompany the Economic Taskforce six point plan to set out the direction of travel for providers of education and skills to work together to improve skills levels, access to learning opportunities and increase employability skills.

A Strategic Steering Group with representatives at a senior level in a range of organisations was formed to draw up the Strategy and draft a supporting action plan for wider consultation.

Membership included:

- Sussex Coast College Vice Principal: Enterprise, Employment and Skills (Chair)
- University of Brighton at Hastings Director
- Bexhill College, Deputy Principal
- Job Centre Plus Relationship Manager
- East Sussex County Council, Economic Development Manager
- Rye Partnership Chief Executive Officer, a representative of community based providers from the Hastings and Rother Community Learning Forum
- Hastings Chamber of Commerce representative
- Private sector training provider representative from Lets Do Business Group
- Senior Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council Economic Development officers
- Strategic Lead & Chief Executive, Education Futures Trust

A range of consultation events were held in build up to developing the strategy to ensure that a range of views were included in the priority setting and further consultation events are planned in the first quarter of 2013 to ensure the priorities and accompanying strategic actions were appropriate and fit-for-purpose. Initial consultation sessions included:

- Hastings and Rother Adult and Community Learning Forum
- Hastings Community Forum
- Hastings and St Leonards LSP
- Hastings and Rother Taskforce
- Hastings and Rother Employability Forum

A joint Extending Horizons Community Educational Trust and National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) conference was also arranged in mid November, and attended by over 40 people, which specifically focused upon community based education and the critical role that this makes in the wider education and skills offer of the area.

All of these activities have fed into the development of this strategy and have enabled the steering group to form the following area Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis that has informed both the priorities and initial set of actions.

Steering Group members were asked to provide brief, bulleted strengths/opportunities and weaknesses/threats from their perspective incorporating their expertise and knowledge of the local area and the national, regional and local policy landscape. These have been collated below into four key factors related to the: Provider network or delivery; Economic; Social and Funding.

A great deal of effective practice already exists locally and this should be emphasised and built upon, ensuring that the lessons and evidence of what works from successful projects and programmes that remain or have ceased due to the funding ending is taken forward. These include innovative ways of utilising core education and skills funding as well as specific projects funded from a variety of regeneration, Lottery and other sources.

The best national effective practice also needs to be regularly reviewed and used to influence and adapt local provision and the strategy includes recommendations to work with organisations such as NIACE and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills to ensure this occurs.

BEST (Building Engagement, Support and Trust) project

A two year £2.3m Area Based Grant (ABG) funded project in Hastings that ran from 2009-2011. BEST supported 3651 local residents with a range of education and skills interventions that were jointly designed by 10 local providers and delivered in community locations to build the trust, confidence and skills of often marginalised residents (29% with a disability and 37% on Means Tested Benefits) encouraging them to see that learning was for them. Effective practice learnt from the project includes:

- Local partnerships led to closer joint working and ownership of the offer which enabled partners to see value of collaboration rather than competition; increased the quality and reduced unnecessary duplication of provision.
- BEST provided a coordinated range of interventions and stages to enable participants to build confidence and skills including work experience, employability, confidence building and full qualifications.
- Robust tracking processes ensured participants were encouraged to progress through the stages and between providers with 14% achieving qualifications; 5% participating on work experience and 4% gaining employment whilst engaged with the project.
- Effective and trusted local supply chain arrangements need to be in place to ensure all partners are aware of their service delivery requirements and the lead partner effectively manages the relationship to ensure profiles are realistic and partner payments are timely.
- Quality improvements across the partnership occurred via regular Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions and meetings for front-line workers and the reduction in poor quality or duplicated provision delivered across the borough.
- The need for education and training providers to be flexible and offer multiple entry points for adult learners as many participants were not able to progress onto accredited provision due to static start dates.
- All efforts to maintain effective provision and programmes that work on a local level need to occur regardless of the funding coming to an end via additional fundraising or the alignment of core or new funding streams to maintain programmes that work. This requires a deeper level of partnership and trust between organisations and a willingness to align scarce, core funding.

Hastings & Rother Area SWOT

Strengths and Opportunities	Strategic Weaknesses and Threats
<p>Provider network and delivery factors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategy is a unique opportunity to think and operate differently across the area devising a locally available and effective progression routes from Levels 0 – 6 which meets local need whilst taking cognisance of national and regional imperatives 2. A real desire and enthusiasm for working together locally between different groups of organisations (providers, employers, community groups) 3. Build on existing experience, skills and knowledge that exist within established local providers and forums including Hastings & Rother Employability Forum, Hastings & Rother Adult & Community Learning Forum, Hastings Community Network, Hastings & St Leonards Learning & Skills Research Partnership and Extending Horizons Educational Trust with links to wider East Sussex Adult Learning and Skills Partnership 4. Opportunity to build on historically successful projects and deliver something imaginative that harnesses community aspirations, skills and knowledge 5. The university seen increasingly by the community as an integral provider of high quality education space, learning and teaching and research 6. Access to HE Knowledge Exchange to deliver community support and research expertise for adult learning and skills to support best practice and embed learning and project memory 7. A grass roots, engaged CVS sector that is trusted in the local community 8. Opportunity to deliver something new & innovative 9. Increased career-focused courses at HE level from either University of Brighton or Sussex Coast College Hastings 10. www.hastingsed.org.uk web site exists bringing together 	<p>Provider network and delivery factors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A plethora of small, fragmented providers with individual agendas and an overlap of provision who have shown little enthusiasm historically for building effective cohesive partnerships 2. Historic tensions and a lack of trust between the different sectors, geographical divisions, local providers and the FE sector 3. A lack of leadership and cohesion in the learning and skills sector with an often insular local culture with many providers displaying a lack of knowledge of the regional and national adult learning and skills strategy 4. Competition rather than collaboration on funding bids with dependence on short term and small scale project funding and an absence of strategic sustainable thinking 5. Poor record of evaluation and monitoring of projects and implementing any lessons learnt in future programmes 6. Little quantitative or qualitative research into the local barriers to adult learning and skills education 7. Curriculum and learner-led teaching and training that is not responsive to local employer demand 8. No formal education-business links meaning that there is a lack of coordination of employer engagement, confusion about how/what employers can do and patchy employer intelligence about skills requirements 9. Lack of focussed or coordinated career guidance support or jobs fairs for adults or pupils at Primary or Secondary schools including a lack of up-to-date local Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) 10. Lack of celebration of success of learning and skills achievements

<p>information about research, local conferences and organisations that could be built on/expanded</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Training providers in the area have a wealth of local knowledge and experience gained over time that have usually been resilient to government changes in policy 12. Improving links with schools and academies with the potential to deliver locally based community learning in partnership with the college and wider provider network 13. Established and successful volunteering schemes that provide opportunities for employability and participation. Volunteer workforce provides additional resources and strength to programmes e.g. HE can provide a supply of student volunteers and mentors, vocational and academic placement students and employment ready graduates to build social capital and support partners 14. Area good at identifying and addressing barriers to accessing opportunities and sustained engagement with vulnerable adults and communities with community learning providers who have good track record in helping them 15. Embedded IAG – holistic - pastoral support as well as learning and careers advice and guidance: confidential, impartial and trusted 16. Progression - Hard-to-reach individuals are encouraged to participate in community activities, leading to informal learning and in many cases onto volunteering, accredited learning and employment giving residents more control over life chances 17. Learner input into design, planning and delivery and review of community based learning curriculum. 18. Community empowerment and engagement including flexible, student centric curriculum development and support – geographical, cultural and communities of interest 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. The LSP should be the ‘intelligent customer’ for the town but does not fulfil that role because of lack of co-ordination between employers’ and residents’ needs and learning provision 12. Residents do not know where to get information about courses and opportunities 13. Services are not designed from the learners’ perspective 14. ‘Learner voice’ among adult learners under-developed 15. Tensions in collaboration / competition between providers – particularly between existing community groups and Work Programme/JCP providers 16. Lack of work experience opportunities for adults and young people 17. Lack of buy-in from business if demands on their time by learning providers is uncoordinated or too heavy 18. Loss of corporate memory – lessons from regeneration projects not easily available with momentum lost when funding streams finish and services have to be built up again e.g. Rural Rother has not built on the equipment and IT resources provided in earlier years. 19. Education-led regeneration provided good buildings and some good projects but overall did not bring about a big change in ‘hearts and minds’ with learning still under-valued by local stakeholders and residents 20. Many disadvantaged adults have aspirations for themselves and their children but do not necessarily understand the link between educational qualifications and skills or what is realistic
<p>Economic factors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Recent and future capital infrastructure projects can generate 	<p>Economic factors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Negative media coverage of Hastings as disadvantaged,

<p>jobs e.g. College and University, Jerwood, Link road, NE Bexhill development; Priory Quarter, Pier, Queensway, Rye Harbour</p> <p>20. Clear and defined employment clusters to focus skills development on e.g. Advanced Engineering and manufacturing sector, Creative, Financial Services, Hospitality and Tourism with potential environment and energy sector</p> <p>21. Low commercial rents and quality sites and premises could attract greater inward investment and jobs</p> <p>22. Goodwill from Chambers of Commerce and FSB members and wider business community to work with local providers</p> <p>23. ESCC's remit to improve access to employability hubs and satellites will re-engage rural communities and revenue funding is key.</p> <p>24. East Sussex will benefit from the faster broadband proposals that provide learning (Digital inclusion or e-learning for rural communities) and small business growth opportunities</p> <p>25. Government focus upon supporting unemployed people into work with specific programmes (Sector Based Work Academies) developed locally in partnership with providers and employers</p>	<p>unemployment hotspot with low value jobs, low quality tourism offer</p> <p>22. Poor reputation of learning and skills delivery amongst employers</p> <p>23. Uncertain economic times and ongoing public spending squeeze</p> <p>24. Economy based on Small/micro business base and high proportion of public sector employment at risk due to downturn and reductions in public sector spending</p> <p>25. High cost of childcare and lack of funding for it within core learning and skills funding</p> <p>26. A lack of suitable jobs to meet the potential supply of a skilled workforce</p> <p>27. Welfare Reform – benefit caps, movement onto Universal Credit and monthly payment of all benefits may lead to additional poverty and/or debt.</p> <p>28. Movement to on-line benefit payment may disadvantage those without access to the internet/those with few IT Skills.</p> <p>29. Fees/FE Loans and cost of training for adult on benefits/low wages</p> <p>30. Insufficient jobs and a lack of visibility of jobs available in Hastings & Rother – residents do not know what is on offer</p>
<p>Social factors</p> <p>26. Cultural regeneration of the area with Jerwood Gallery and focus upon creative history and expertise</p> <p>27. Improving health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities via learning and skills provision</p> <p>28. A range of localised provision overcomes barriers such as lack of transport and unaffordable cost of transport; engagement by hard-to-reach individuals; social isolation and confidence building</p>	<p>Social factors</p> <p>31. Benefits changes especially effect on housing with a potential influx of claimants from London</p> <p>32. Low aspirations amongst adult population alongside poor educational attainment with a lack of work-readiness and basic employable skills</p> <p>33. Poor health indicators including high levels of mental illness</p> <p>34. Very high unemployment and other out-of-work benefits claimant rates twinned with a low wage economy</p> <p>35. A struggle for rural learners to access education and skills opportunities with high transport cost and lack of broad offer in rural settings</p>

Funding factors

29. Potential funding sources available to support innovative partnerships and collaborative working around the community learning sector
30. Opportunity to influence & acquire resources from South East LEP with cogent strategy and actions to address key learning and skills issues
31. Added value of other funds and resources secured by providers in the area that can offer different or unfunded activities from core education and skills provision
32. Learner- led fundraising and other not for private profit income generating activities
33. Opportunities to bid for large scale joint regional funding based on an agreed strategy, outcomes and programme objectives

Funding factors

36. Reduced / diminishing funding streams for innovation and wider learning and skills interventions
37. Lack of core funding for provider networks e.g. Hastings & Rother Adult & Community Learning or Employability Forums and investment for www.hastingsed.org.uk is limited
38. East Sussex is part of a wider LEP with funding opportunities that are not defined by geographical areas meaning more deprived areas with larger populations may benefit – Hastings and Rother could lose out
39. Training providers forced to provide services that rely on standardised outcomes and not always the best use of resources. Non-accredited learning is expensive.
40. Government 'localisation' policy undermined by centralisation e.g. regionalisation of skills and employment contracts.

Governance and implementation of the strategy

The Hastings & Rother Economic Taskforce will provide strategic oversight of this strategy with a new Learning and Skills Strategy Group formed and responsible for implementing the action plan reporting to the Taskforce.

The Economic Taskforce has senior representation from across the area including County, Borough and District Councillors, Senior Local Authority Officers, Employers, University of Brighton, Sussex Coast College Hastings, Bexhill College, Seachange and the Third Sector.

The Hastings and Rother Adult and Community Learning and Employability Forums will have representation on the Learning and Skill Strategy Group and these groups will become key action focused groups to enable all providers of education and skills in the areas to have an implementation role and have a defined mechanism for feeding up to and into the Economic Taskforce key issues and solutions.

The Learning and Skills Strategy Group will include senior representation from key stakeholders including Sussex Coast College, Bexhill College, County, Borough and District Councils, Chambers of Commerce and nominated representatives of the Hastings & Rother Adult & Community Learning and Employability Forums.

This structure would also enable reporting of progress to different and existing strategic groups in the area with wider or specifically focused remits including the two Local Strategic Partnerships.

