

All Age Skills Strategy Refresh 2016 to 2020

Making Central Bedfordshire a great place to live and work

Foreword

In an increasingly competitive world, skills have a critical role to play. Individuals require skills to enable them to secure and progress in employment; businesses need a skilled workforce to stimulate productivity, encourage competitiveness and innovation; and collectively skills are required to support the local economy to compete nationally and internationally.

The aim of Central Bedfordshire Council's All Age Skills Strategy is to enable the delivery of a flexible and responsive workforce that meets the needs of employers, ensuring that our residents have the opportunities to develop the skills they need for work.

This strategy has a critical role to play in enabling Central Bedfordshire to achieve its full economic potential and in delivering the Council's 5 Year Plan priorities to support education and skills, and business growth and prosperity.

Our first All Age Skills Strategy was produced in 2012 and much has been achieved since then. For example, a sustained reduction in the number and % of young people who are Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) and a re-focusing of the Council's adult skills service to deliver the priorities of the strategy with provision such as our work clubs ensuring a focus on employment support. Building on the good work to date, this Strategy refresh sets out our priorities and actions for the next 4 years.

We recognise that we cannot achieve this alone and we will work with a range of partners to ensure a coordinated approach, including schools, colleges and universities, Jobcentre Plus, business organisations and the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP). Most importantly, we will need to work with our residents to ensure they can achieve their potential.

This strategy sets out what we as an organisation will do to support this agenda and how we will work with our partners to put businesses at the heart of employment and skills provision in Central Bedfordshire, in order to make a real difference for our businesses and residents.

Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Education and Skills
Cllr Nigel Young, Executive Member for Regeneration

Introduction

Central Bedfordshire has an economy of £5.3B with over 11,600 businesses¹, providing 91,800 jobs². Skills are vital to our future and are at the heart of successfully growing Central Bedfordshire's economy to deliver sustainable growth, build stronger communities and promote social mobility. In this time of increasing pressures on budgets and changes to funding, it is critical that investment in skills provision generates the best possible return. The system is, however, not working as effectively as it should, and whilst Central Bedfordshire's employment rate of 79.4%³ compares well with the national average (73.9%), businesses still cite skills gaps as the predominant reason for recruitment difficulties (47%)⁴.

Our Aspiration is:

“To provide the best possible opportunities for our residents to develop their skills and reach their potential so that local businesses can prosper and grow”

The All Age Skills Strategy sets out how the Council will work with its partners in Central Bedfordshire to engage with employers to better understand employer needs, align skills provision and strengthen career pathways. It will seek to help our residents to navigate the skills system and progress into employment.

“The business need for people with the right talent and skills continues to grow. The positive picture on hiring shows the need to close the skills gap which is having a direct impact on UK firms’ ability to compete, particularly in high-growth sectors”

Neil Carberry, Director for employment and skills policy, Confederation of Business Industry, January 2016

Policy context

The Council's 5 Year Plan sets out our vision for Central Bedfordshire to be a great place to live and work, with six priorities:

- Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
- Great resident services
- Improving education and skills
- Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing
- Creating stronger communities
- A more efficient and responsive Council.

The All Age Skills Strategy supports all of these priorities, but particularly the priority for improving education and skills through creating opportunities for lifelong learning with routes into employment for all ages.

¹ UK Business Counts 2015, IDBR (ONS), via NOMIS, April 2016

² UK Business Counts 2015, IDBR (ONS), via NOMIS, April 2016

³ Annual Population Survey, NOMIS, April 2016

⁴ Business Survey 2015, BMG Research Agency on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council and SEMLEP

The local authority also holds a number of statutory duties in relation to securing employment and skills, including:

- securing sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people
- identifying young people who are not participating and take steps to ensure their participation in Education, Employment and Training
- holding a strategic overview of 14-19 provision in order to secure participation of young people

The All Age Skills Strategy also links to the:

- Employment and Skills Plan 2016-20.
- Partnership Vision for Education 2015-17: Workstream 5 'Young people have the skills to be work ready'
- Children and Young Peoples Plan 2015-17: Improved Educational Attainment and Progress
- Central Bedfordshire anti-poverty strategy, part of the Welfare Reform approach

A Sector Approach

Central Bedfordshire's skilled local workforce has attracted and retained world-class organisations and international businesses including Amazon, AS Watson, Cranfield University, Signature Flatbreads, Jordans Ryvita, Kier, Lockheed Martin, Millbrook Proving Ground, Nissan Technical centre, Vinci and Whitbread. Our skilled population also provides an ideal resource base for small and growing businesses.

The All Age Skills Strategy will focus on the skills needed by those sectors identified as particularly important to Central Bedfordshire's economy. We will channel our efforts on strengthening the Key Growth Sectors that have been identified as specific to Central Bedfordshire due to their growth potential:

- Agrifood
- Visitor Economy
- High Performance Technologies
- Transport and Logistics

In addition, we will target our significant employment sectors of construction and health and social care where there are identified skills and performance challenges. Both sectors lose out to competing sectors where work is more stable and pay is more competitive, and they face challenges in skills shortages, hard to fill vacancies, an aging workforce and growing sector requirements.

The Picture in Central Bedfordshire

Supporting the economy

Central Bedfordshire's employment levels fare well against national and SEMLEP levels. 81.6%⁵ of Central Bedfordshire's population are economically active and almost half (48.8%) are employed in managerial or professional occupations. However, with a growing economy (91,800 jobs⁶ and 11600⁷ enterprises), the demand for a strong local workforce is ever increasing, particularly in higher level occupations.

Sectors with the most growth potential in terms of employee numbers, output and investment have been identified as Agrifood (7,900 jobs in 2014, an increase of 41% from 2013 to 2014); Visitor Economy (10,700 jobs in 2014, an increase of 16% since 2013) High Performance Technologies (3,000 jobs in 2014, a slight reduction from the 3,400 in 2013 but key in terms of output); and Transport and Logistics (8,500 jobs in 2014, an increase of 400 jobs since 2013). The two most populous industry sectors are wholesale and retail trade (21%) and professional, scientific and technical activities (18%), with a further 14% of businesses operating in construction⁸. In order to grow, our business sectors will be reliant on the ability to access the right skills along with a pool of readily available staff to fill vacancies ranging from entry level through to higher level jobs.

Overall, Central Bedfordshire performs well in respect of qualifications with the proportion of the resident working age population qualified to NVQ Level 4, above the SEMLEP average (35.1% in 2014). However, this is slightly below the national average, with some of our statistical neighbours significantly outperforming Central Bedfordshire. 74% of the working age population are qualified to Level 2 NVQ, this is marginally above national levels. There also remains a segment of the population with no qualifications (6.1% in 2014)⁹. A total of 58% of Young People in Central Bedfordshire achieved 5 GCSEs at A* - C (including English and Maths)¹⁰. This is higher than the national average but lower than our statistical neighbours.

We have a comparatively low job density, with approximately two jobs for every three people of working age, however of those businesses seeking to recruit in the last 12 months, the predominant reason for recruitment difficulties has been the low number of applicants with the required skills (47%)¹¹.

Three in ten Central Bedfordshire businesses report skill gaps within their existing workforce (29% in 2015; although an improvement on 37% in 2014)¹². Poor quality staff is most frequently cited as a reason for skill gaps (17% of those with skill gaps), while lack of investment in staff training and development and insufficient time to train also feature relatively strongly (both cited by 12%). Employers in Central Bedfordshire are also more likely to report that young people (aged 17/18) are 'poorly' or 'very poorly' prepared for work (34% in Central Bedfordshire compared to 29% across England - 2013)¹³.

Supporting our residents

⁵ Annual Population Survey, NOMIS, April 2016

⁶ UK Business Counts, 2015 IDBR (ONS), via NOMIS

⁷ UK Business Counts 2015, IDBR (ONS), via NOMIS

⁸ Business Register and Employment Survey, via NOMIS, July 2016

⁹ Annual Population Survey, NOMIS, April 2016

¹⁰ DfE National assessments of KS4, 2015

¹¹ Business Survey 2015, BMG Research Agency on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council and SEMLEP

¹² Business Survey 2015, BMG Research Agency on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council and SEMLEP

¹³ Business Survey 2015, BMG Research Agency on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council and SEMLEP

Central Bedfordshire has continuing pockets of deprivation with five Lower Super Output Areas in the 10-20% most deprived nationally and eight in most deprived 10% for Education, Skills and Training Domain (2015 IMD)¹⁴. Overall the most deprived areas are found in Parkside (x2), Manshead, Tithe Farm and Sandy, mirroring education deprivation. These pockets of deprivation face a multitude of challenges with cyclical and generational unemployment, child poverty, health inequalities and higher crime rates.

It is therefore not only important to support businesses with a pool of available staff, but also to ensure our residents are supported to fulfil their full potential, engaging fully in society to create resilient and sustainable communities. This requires a particular focus on our most vulnerable residents such as those living in our most deprived areas, those who are long term unemployed, our young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) or who are Looked After Children (LAC) and our over 50's.

Our unemployment rate currently stands at 3.3% (4,700 individuals)¹⁵, having fallen by 1,100 people from December 2014, with 5.4% (9,270 individuals) claiming Main Out of Work Benefits in August 2015¹⁶. The area has seen a continuing fall in those claiming Job Seekers Allowance with 0.8% of the working population in March 2015, a fall from 0.7% in March 2015. However, Employment Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit claimant numbers remain stubbornly higher than other claimant groups, remaining at 3.6% from November 2014 to November 2015.

Central Bedfordshire is seeing an increase in the number of people aged 50-64 years in employment (67.6% in March 2013 to 71.2% in March 2016). A similar trend is being seen for the 65+ in employment, from 4,300 people (9.9%) in March 2013, to 5,200 in March 2016. Despite this, long-term unemployment is one of the most serious challenges facing the over 50s with large numbers of people aged 50+ claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), 2590 (44.9%) in November 2015¹⁷. This can be for a variety of reasons, for example ageism among employers, outdated qualifications, and for some people a lack of IT skills or declining self-confidence.

Of those Young People eligible for Free School Meals, 29.6% achieved 5 GCSE's at A* - C (including English and Maths)¹⁸. This is slightly lower than both the national and statistical neighbour averages.

Our young people aged 16-19 who are Not In Education, Employment and Training (NEET) in Central Bedfordshire continues to fall. For example, in 2012/13 there were 390 young people who were NEET which accounted for 4.6%. In 2014/15, this fell to 320 young people (3.7%) and reduced further in 2015/16 to 270 young people (3.1%)¹⁹.

IN 2015, of those Young People who were NEET:

- 45% were aged 18 to 19
- 35% were living in Dunstable and Houghton Regis. However, the ward that consistently has the highest number and % of Young People is Leighton Buzzard North. This population accounts for 10% of the overall NEET population.

¹⁴ Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

¹⁵ Annual Population Survey, NOMIS, April 2016

¹⁶ DWP benefit claims, via NOMIS, February 2016

¹⁷ DWP benefit claims, via NOMIS, July 2016

¹⁸ DfE National assessments of KS4, 2015

¹⁹ NCCIS returns, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016

- There has been a significant rise in Young People ‘unavailable’ to the labour market due to emotional health/illness – with this group now making up a third of the NEET cohort²⁰.

In January 2016, there were 184 looked after children and care leavers who were supported by Central Bedfordshire. At any one time, we support 120 of this group who live in Central Bedfordshire or neighbouring authorities, including a growing number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children²¹ to help them make the transition into independent lives.

Encouraging work based learning

With a move away from state funded training and individuals remaining in the workforce longer, there is a need for employers to invest in the skills of their current and future workforce in order to remain competitive. Three in ten Central Bedfordshire businesses report skill gaps within their existing workforce, however, despite an improving trend, 90% of people in Central Bedfordshire (both employed and unemployed) had not received any form of job related training in the last four weeks (average to March 2014-16)²².

The most popular education destination for young people in Central Bedfordshire is School Sixth Form, 54% of the total cohort choosing to stay in a school setting. This is much higher than the national average of 39%²³. Anecdotal evidence from local employers indicates their preference for more vocational pathways into employment.

Around one in twenty businesses in Central Bedfordshire (6%) currently employ someone on an Apprenticeship programme (cf. 7% in 2014). This proportion is slightly lower than the South East Midlands average (9%). Of those businesses that do not currently employ an apprentice, 41% would consider taking one on²⁴. The Apprenticeship Levy offers further incentives for employers to engage in this agenda.

“It is crucial to the long term sustainability of economic expansion that training for the right types of skills is provided, and for the stock of human capital is increased – a longstanding area of weakness for the UK economy”

Federation of Small Business, June 2014

²⁰ Local Authority NEET analysis, 2015

²¹ Youth Support Service LAC/CL report from CCIS, January 2016

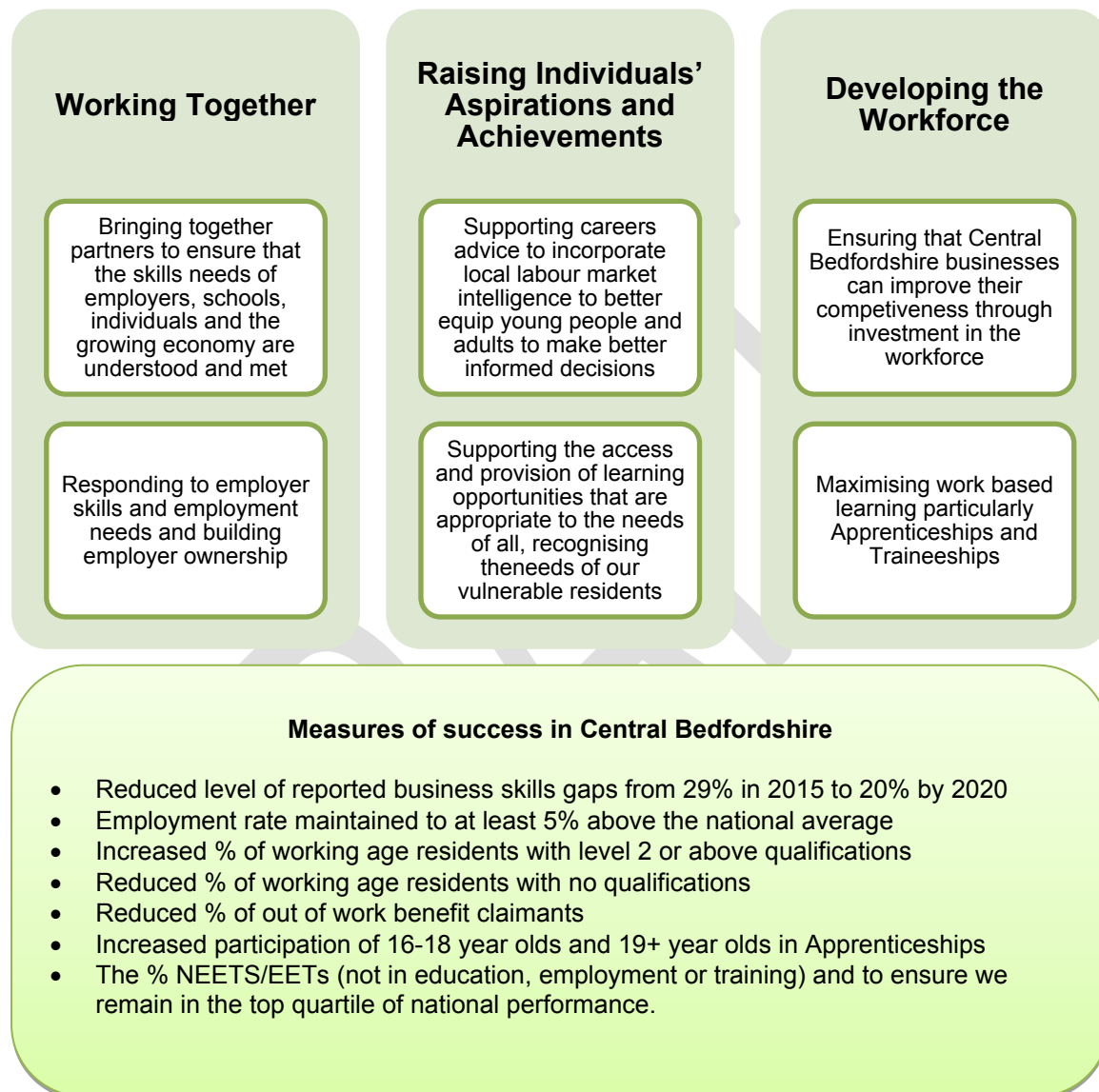
²² Annual Population Survey, NOMIS, July 2016

²³ DfE Destination measure reports, 2014

²⁴ Business Survey 2015, BMG Research Agency on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council and SEMLEP

Aims and objectives of the All Age Skills Strategy

The All Age Skills Strategy outlines how we will bring together the skills that businesses and the Central Bedfordshire economy need now and in the future. This needs to be balanced with provision delivered by local providers that meet the needs of individuals and local communities. The strategy will seek to achieve this by:



Objective 1: Bringing together partners to ensure that the skills needs of employers, schools, individuals and the economy are understood and met

To provide an efficient demand-led skills system and ensure that our residents are best placed to progress into and through employment, we need to improve the co-ordination and effectiveness of our dialogue with employers.

In the council's role as an enabler and facilitator, we will continue to bring together partners to ensure that the skills needs of employers, individuals and the growing economy are understood and met. We will work in partnership to establish whether we have sufficient opportunities for local residents and to influence the planning of provision and funding opportunities.

We will establish an employment and skills partnership involving the key partners in delivering the skills agenda. This will facilitate the sharing of information and make it easier for skills partners and schools to learn of current and future opportunities to support new collaborations on flexible responses for employers.

This will be supported by an annual update to the SEMLEP Skills Forum and Beds & Herts Provider Network which bring together provider networks and partnerships to share labour market intelligence, good practice and strategic direction.

As a key partner in SEMLEP, we will continue to work in partnership on the shared commitment to supporting business investment and driving economic success for the South East Midlands. We will support the development and coordination of externally funded projects in Central Bedfordshire, maximising opportunities for these to be informed by local intelligence.

Objective 2: Responding to employer skills and employment needs and building employer ownership

We must develop better ways of listening to employers and guiding them through the available support. As funding reduces and the flexibilities held by training providers increase, we must become more responsive to the needs of local employers, providing skills packages tailored to employer requirements.

We will develop and facilitate an employer-led Employment and Skills Board based on our key sectors to provide critical labour market intelligence to inform and guide local provision.

Our wider engagement with businesses will include a focus on their growth ambitions and skills needs. We will work with our key sectors to develop an in-depth understanding of their needs and to create packages of skills provision to support these. We will support businesses in navigating through the skills system to ensure their needs are met and encourage collaborations with providers through jobs brokerage activities, combined academic and vocational pathways into employment, apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience.

We will tap into and support those employers who are willing to act as skills champions or strategic partners in Central Bedfordshire, ensuring connections are made with the local skills infrastructure and encouraging greater interaction with schools. This will include work with SEMLEP to embed the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company in Central Bedfordshire.

Raising Individuals' Aspirations and Achievements

Objective 3: Supporting careers advice to incorporate local labour market intelligence to better equip young people and adults to make better informed decisions

We want our residents to have the work skills to secure and maintain employment, providing clear progression routes into the next level of training/learning and into work. Underpinning this is the need for high quality careers advice and progression pathways based on economic intelligence that will guide and inspire people about the opportunities available to them.

We will provide information, advice and guidance that allows all learners to make an informed choice – whether a young person wanting to choose a career or an employee wishing to switch to a more rewarding career. We will do this through our Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) services, National Careers Service (NCS), learning providers and tutors.

We will work with partners to define more clearly the nature of the interventions required to strengthen careers advice to young people, and to influence impartial careers advice in schools to ensure that this incorporates labour market intelligence. We will encourage interaction between employers and young people, their parents and teachers and we will support linkages between schools and businesses to develop opportunities for work experience, employability skills and employer-led careers sessions. We will explore the use of mentors, for example from businesses, to offer specific information, acting as role models and inspiring young people.

We will encourage all middle, upper and secondary schools to sign up to the Minimum Standards for Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and we will support national analysis of post-16 learning provision with schools and further education providers. This will inform whether we are making the best use of resources to meet the needs, aspirations and realistic goals of young people and the emerging requirements of the local labour market.

We recognise that individuals may seek information, advice and guidance from a number of sources and in a number of formats. Through partnership working with children's centres, schools, family learning and the community and voluntary sector we will ensure that learning is promoted and information, advice and guidance is available to individuals of all ages.

Objective 4: Supporting the access and provision of learning opportunities that are appropriate to the needs of all, recognising the needs of our vulnerable residents

We will work with employers in our key sectors to understand their current and future skills needs, translating this into local skills provision and sector based skills initiatives. Working with our partners, we will support quality careers advice that is responsive to employer needs and develop appropriate career progression pathways.

The continuing trend towards higher skilled jobs means that there will be significant changes in the demand for labour. In Central Bedfordshire, there is a particular demand for high-level and mid-tier technical skills, along with job specific or practical skills. We will use our employer-intelligence to inform and influence provision of higher level skills. We will encourage providers to respond to this and to work in partnership to deliver a central core of universally required skills which can be used as a basis for more targeted/bespoke skills training by providers and/or employers.

The benefits of economic growth may not reach everyone. Although Central Bedfordshire has a generally highly skilled workforce and relatively low unemployment rate, many people remain economically inactive or are caught in a low wage, low skills cycle. We will support those who do not have the basic skills and qualifications needed in the workplace, as well as raise the skill levels of those currently low skilled. This will include the delivery of basic and functional skills, employability skills, building confidence and addressing barriers. We will support and resource skills training and recruitment initiatives aligned to the current and future needs of employers in our key sectors, with 'step into' courses, providing progression routes into further learning and employment.

We will target initiatives towards our most vulnerable residents such as those living in our most deprived areas, those who are long term unemployed, our young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) or who are Looked After Children (LAC) and our over 50's.

Where appropriate, we will deliver a targeted and tailored approach to meet the specific needs of groups who are vulnerable to exclusion such as:

- those furthest from the labour market
- those living in areas of deprivation
- young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)
- looked after children and young people leaving care
- those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
- those in the Criminal Justice System
- those with learning difficulties or disabilities
- those with mental health issues
- black and minority ethnic groups (BME)
- asylum seekers – including unaccompanied children
- those aged 50+
- lone parents

We will work with our partners to address barriers to employment, including childcare, transport, poor health and confidence. We will work closely with providers to ensure that support is maximised locally, including through Jobcentre Plus programmes, the Work Programme and externally funded schemes.

We will seek to externally review our approach to delivery of the Post-16 agenda based on emerging national policy and local evidence of best practice.

Developing the Workforce

Objective 5: Ensuring that Central Bedfordshire businesses can improve their competitiveness through investment in the workforce

With a move away from state funded training and individuals remaining in the workforce longer, there is a need for employers to invest in the skills of their current and future workforce in order to remain competitive.

Combined with upskilling our residents, we will promote the advantages of investing in training to employers through our direct engagements and through the use of business skills champions. We will encourage employers to explore opportunities to invest in their staff, from progressing those in lower level roles through to higher level management. This will include raising employer awareness of the number of ways that skills and qualifications can

be obtained, through academic study, vocational opportunities, work based learning, apprenticeships and appropriate and relevant sector based progression pathways. We will bring together schools, colleges, universities and other training providers to carry out this delivery in partnership with employers.

We will provide guidance to employers who are prepared to invest in their staff with workforce development planning, links to possible financial incentives and connections to local providers. We will work with our partners to provide flexible responses that address the higher level skills needs identified by our businesses.

We will raise awareness amongst future and existing employees of the progression pathways into employment, and the skills requirements of employers. We will support employees with a low skills base (below level 2), by providing basic and functional skills training such as ICT, communications, literacy and numeracy.

Objective 6: Maximising work based learning particularly Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Building on the future Employer Apprenticeship Levy, we will promote the value of apprenticeships and work with partners to encourage high quality and employer responsive provision. We will support employers in their understanding of the apprenticeship levy and encourage larger employers to share training opportunities with smaller SME and micro-businesses. We will encourage an increase in traineeships and work placement opportunities, with connections to local schools and colleges. This will include a new offer from Central Bedfordshire Council as a large local employer.

We will seek to put in place policies through the emerging Local Plan to support local recruitment and training opportunities through new strategic developments, working with developers and investors in the area to maximise opportunities for our residents.

Achieving our aims and objectives

Table 1 below sets out our high level activities that will be delivered over the next two years to support the All Age Skills Strategy.

Detailed actions will be developed to ensure the delivery of these. Our prioritisation of these will be informed and honed by a FIBO exercise (fact, insight, behaviour change, output). This is a rolling plan that will be refreshed after two years to ensure it keeps pace with the needs of employers and residents, along with the changes in the skills provision landscape.

AIM: WORKING TOGETHER	CBC LEAD
Objective 1. Bringing together partners to ensure that the skills needs of employers, individuals and the growing economy are understood and met	
- Establish an Employment and Skills Partnership - Maintain our connection with SEMLEP and the intelligence and engagement that SEMLEP is leading - Provide an annual update to the SEMLEP Skills Forum, the Head teachers' Forum and the Beds & Herts Provider Network - Publish a bi-annual Local Economic Assessment and quarterly online Economic Monitoring Reports - Build on the evidence from the national area review and develop regular sufficiency statements for 16-19 provision - Maximise opportunities for funding informed by local intelligence	E&S B&I E&SI / YSS B&I YSS E&S
Objective 2. Responding to employer skills and employment needs and building employer ownership	
- Develop a private sector-led Employment and Skills Board and an associated employer-led action plan - Use local intelligence to inform our commissioning priorities - Include a skills review in business visits as part of our key account management - Encourage local Skills Champions and make linkages with SEMLEP Business Skills Ambassadors - Work with the SEMLEP Careers and Enterprise Company to maximise opportunities in Central Bedfordshire - Work with partners to translate employer skills needs into local skills provision and sector based academic and vocational pathways - Develop sector based skills initiatives such as sector specific 'step into' courses - Encourage employers and providers to identify and develop new standards to meet current and emerging needs - Encourage employer collaborations by joining up skills provision and training costs where there are commonalities - Develop a new local offer to schools to improve the effectiveness of 14-19 provision – including a shared plan to ensure young	E&S B&I / YSS B&I B&I YSS B&I / YSS E&S B&I E&S

people secure the best possible qualifications at Key Stage 4 and 5	YSS
AIM: RAISING INDIVIDUALS' ASPIRATIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS	CBC LEAD
Objective 3. Supporting careers advice to incorporate local labour market intelligence to better equip young people and adults to make better informed decisions	
- Encourage schools to sign up to the CEIAG Minimum Standards, and a commitment to give the same support to employment searches as they do to higher education opportunities - Define more clearly the nature of the interventions required to strengthen careers advice to young people - Work in partnership with the SEMLEP Careers Enterprise Company (CEC) to maximise the benefits of the programme for local schools, including - o Employer informed careers advice plans and employer-led careers sessions - o Dissemination of clear labour intelligence for teachers, parents and young people - o Employer toolkits for school engagement and work experience, making reference to safeguarding - o Opportunities for businesses to 'adopt a school' - Raise awareness of the provision available through the wide dissemination of publicity and targeted communications - Embed employer informed Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) in all adult skills provision in a variety of settings	YSS YSS YSS E&S / YSS E&S
Objective 4. Supporting the access and provision of learning opportunities that are appropriate to the needs of all, recognising the needs of our vulnerable residents	
- Ensure schools have access to regular and timely data of Young People who are at risk of becoming NEET - Deliver and review approaches to delivery of the September Guarantee and Activity Survey requirements - Commission bespoke training opportunities for young people to meet identified gaps in provision, including support for traineeships - Work with partners to respond to higher level skills needs (Objective 2) - Develop a new commissioning framework for bespoke learning opportunities for young people with complex needs, including Looked After Children, Care Leavers and young people in the Criminal Justice System - Promote careers pathways and progression routes through the Information Advice and Guidance service for young people aged 16-19 who are NEET, or becoming NEET, or who are aged 13-25 having complex needs - Develop local capacity to offer supported internships for young people with SEND - Facilitate work based opportunities for vulnerable adults, Looked After Children and Care Leavers - Deliver tailored programmes to unemployed and low skilled residents and those impacted by welfare reform - Develop a personalised and holistic approach for those facing barriers to employment, supporting pathways into employment	YSS YSS YSS E&S YSS / VS YSS YSS / VS / CSC E&S / SCHH E&S / SCHH

- Target support in our most deprived areas and in locations which engage job seekers/low skilled residents - Deliver adult skills provision and IAG in community locations such as Children's Centres, libraries, family learning and the community and voluntary sector	E&S E&S
AIM: DEVELOPING THE CURRENT AND FUTURE WORKFORCE	CBC LEAD
Objective 5. Ensuring that Central Bedfordshire businesses can improve their competitiveness through investment in the workforce	
- Facilitate partnerships that allow employers and local providers to work together to develop appropriate skills packages and progression pathways into employment - Deliver basic and functional skills training such as ICT, communications, literacy and numeracy to existing and future employees - Deliver a communications campaign on the local skills provision that is available for employers - Publish a portfolio of employer case studies to showcase best practice - Promote benefits of skills investment through SEMLEP and local Business Skills Champions - Provide guidance to employers on the financial incentives for investment in training	B&I / E&S E&S B&I B&I B&I E&S / B&I
Objective 6: Maximising work based opportunities particularly Apprenticeships and Traineeships	
- Support employers in maximising opportunities through the future Employer Apprenticeship Levy - Use existing communication resources to highlight the apprenticeship levy and the opportunities this brings - Ensure Information, Advice and Guidance includes signposting to work-based learning - Support national apprenticeship events in partnership with schools, highlighting higher & degree level apprenticeships as an option - Refresh the Council's apprenticeship programme to respond to the new levy and targets - Pilot a Traineeship programme with local employers - Facilitate a range of work experience opportunities including from the local authority - Maximise recruitment and training opportunities through planning obligations	B&I / E&S B&I / E&S E&S / YSS YSS HR E&S / YSS HR / YSS B&I

Key:

B&I	Business & Investment Service
CSC	Children's Social Care
E&S	Employment and Skills Service
HR	Human Resources
SCHH	Social Care, Health and Housing
VS	Virtual School
YSS	Youth Support Service

Monitoring Impact

The following indicators will be monitored annually to measure the impact that the All Age Skills Strategy, the integrated approach and its accompanying actions are having on skills and the local economy.

This will be supported by a detailed performance monitoring framework that will track performance against actions to support the activities identified in the Action Plan.

Performance will be reported through the Council's Five Year Plan monitoring arrangements and reviewed by the Employment and Skills Scrutiny Board who meet on a quarterly basis.

Measures of success in Central Bedfordshire	Current status	Source
Reduced level of reported business skills gaps from 29% in 2015 to 20% by 2020	29%	Business Survey 2015, BMG Research Agency on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council and SEMLEP
Employment rate maintained to at least 5% above the national average	5.5% higher	Annual Population Survey, NOMIS April 2016
Increased % of working age residents with level 2 or above qualifications	74% level 2 or above	Annual Population Survey, NOMIS April 2016
Reduced % of working age residents with no qualifications	6.1% with no qualifications	Annual Population Survey, NOMIS April 2016
Reduced % of Main Out of Work Benefit claimants	5.4%	DWP benefit claims, via NOMIS February 2016
Increased participation of 16-18 year olds and 19+ year olds in Apprenticeships	2014/15 under 19 years 620 starts 2014/15 19years + 1450 starts	Apprenticeships: Equality and Diversity, Further Education and Skills
Performance of EETs/NEETs (not in education, employment or training) to be in the top quartile of national figures	NEETs 3.1 EETs 90.4%, ranked 56 in the country or the second quartile. 2015/16	NCCIS returns

Glossary:

BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CEC	Careers Enterprise Company
CEIAG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
IAG	Information Advice and Guidance
NCS	National Careers Service
NEET	Not in Education, Employment and Training
SEMLEP	South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SME	Small and Medium Size Enterprise

Governance and partnership arrangements

The Central Bedfordshire Council Employment and Skills Scrutiny Board will be accountable for the All Age Skills Strategy with progress being monitored through the Council's Five Year Plan corporate reporting mechanism. The Scrutiny Board will receive updates on the Central Bedfordshire Employment and Skills Partnership activities, which will be shaped by engagement with the Employment and Skills Private Sector Board.

In order to share intelligence, progress and develop appropriate links, the Scrutiny Board will work closely with and provide updates to the Partnership Vision Education Board, Upper and Secondary Headteacher's Group, Welfare Reform Board, SEMLEP Skills Forum, SEMLEP Careers and Enterprise Board, Beds and Herts Provider Network and the Careers Education Network.

