

# Darlington 14-19 Area-Wide Review Action Plan 2004 - 2009

May 2004



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## 1. Preface

This Action Plan was prepared by the Learning and Skills Council Tees Valley and Darlington Local Education Authority in collaboration with a wide range of strategic partners. It was written in response to two significant and overlapping initiatives. The 16-19 Area-Wide Review undertaken by Bentley Jennison Consulting on behalf of the Local Learning and Skills Council Tees Valley (LSC TV) and the Darlington Learning Partnership was reported in June 2003. At the same time as Bentley Jennison Consulting was reporting, an audit of 14-19 provision leading to the identification of the essential elements of a 14-19 Strategy was commissioned by the Director of Education in Darlington. This second work, undertaken by Richard Knott Consulting, complemented the findings of the Area-Wide Review undertaken by Bentley Jennison Consulting and resulted in a final report, *An Opportunity for Excellence*, in February 2004.

Throughout this period a Strategic Steering Group, representing all the key stakeholders in 14-19 education and training, has been responsible for the production of this Action Plan. The membership of this strategic group is listed in Appendix 2, together with an additional list of local educators who have contributed to the formulation of the plan.

The Strategic Steering Group welcomed both the Area-Wide Review Report and *An Opportunity for Excellence* because of the opportunity they afforded to review current partnerships and learning provision within the area and set out a new direction and agenda for the 14-19 phase in Darlington. The Strategic Steering Group recognised the need for a clear, cohesive and comprehensive 14-19 strategy for the area.

Darlington is currently in the middle of a number of substantial building projects that will see the learning environment and educational provision for young people of all ages radically remodelled.

Two secondary schools, Hurworth and Eastbourne, have recently joined together in a Federation. A further groundbreaking initiative is due to come on stream in 2005 with the £35 million Education Village development. The Education Village will bring together a primary school, a secondary school and a special school under one roof. *Building Schools for the Future* has been accepted as a fundamental part of the educational agenda in Darlington.

Darlington College of Technology also plans to move to a new campus in 2006 as part of a £33 million development that will provide state-of-the-art facilities. The new College campus will include a 14-19 Centre for Young People, a University Centre and Technology and Media Centres. This development will complement 21<sup>st</sup> century extensions to Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College and Carmel RC Technology College.

This list of innovative improvements for learning provision could easily be extended, but it underlines the pressing need to ensure that added value is brought to all developments by the creation of a coherent and collaborative 14-19 Strategy.

*An Opportunity for Excellence*, with its clear analysis of the findings of the Area-Wide Review and innovative solutions, was accepted by all the partners as providing a new way forward to which all could subscribe.

In essence *An Opportunity for Excellence* is the 14-19 Strategy for Darlington. For this reason, together with its valuable description of the Darlington context, it is quoted substantially in Section 2 of this plan. However, the partners recognised that some of the detail regarding actions, outcomes, management and funding of the plan would require further discussion and agreement before a final strategy could be agreed. The remaining sections of the plan describe the partnership approach to making the plan a reality.

The Vision for 14-19 Education and Training in Darlington is that:

**“All partners in the provision of 14-19 education and training work together effectively to enable the young people of Darlington, irrespective of background, to access high quality learning opportunities that will raise both aspirations and standards, meet individual needs, and encourage lifelong learning.”**

*(An Opportunity for Excellence page 20)*

This Vision has been framed in the light of the wider Tees Valley vision and is firmly based on a set of student entitlements which are themselves matched with three main priorities.

- **Collaboration, Planning and Partnership**
- **Participation, Engagement and the Curriculum**
- **Attainment and Standards**

The three priorities contain a set of clearly targeted actions designed to address the needs of young people in Darlington. These actions will deliver the 14-19 Strategy outlined in this plan as it unfolds over the next five years. They will deliver a collaborative commitment to tackling barriers to access, participation and retention and their aim is to improve levels of achievement across the age range.

In particular, the actions designed to deliver these priorities envisage more effective joint working and planning amongst all those involved in planning and delivering 14-19 education and training. This collaboration will include the setting up of an innovative Darlington 14-19 Trust, the fundamental purpose of which is to drive forward the strategy in the interests of both the community and the learners. Improved partnership working will seek to deliver higher attainment by the age of 16 and to encourage more young people from all sectors of the community to aspire to continue in education and training after the age of 16.

A full description of the plan's priorities and how they translate into actions follows in the remaining sections of this document, particularly Sections 2 and 9. The plan has been produced with further consultation and dissemination in mind, as the partners recognise the key importance of all those involved in producing better life chances for young people in this age group.

The partners acknowledge the need for their plans to fit together with wider developments across the Tees Valley area, including those associated with the implementation of the Learning and Skills Council Tees Valley's Strategic Plan and the related LSC TV delivery plan for Skills for Life. While this action plan addresses the key issues for attention in Darlington, many of the actions will build on LSC TV and partner initiatives already under way. These activities have been developed in response to Area-Wide Inspections undertaken in Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland, reflecting an emerging comprehensive 14-19 strategy within the Tees Valley region. The partners also intend this Action Plan to ensure co-ordination of local and national initiatives as they impact on young people and the local area.

The plan has the full support of local partners. Its implementation will have a significant impact, both immediately and in the longer term, on learning provision and opportunities for young people in Darlington. It will also meet the needs of employers more effectively in terms of the skilled workforce they seek.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ May 2004  
**Pam Eccles**  
Executive Director, Learning and Skills Council Tees Valley

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ May 2004  
**Geoff Pennington**  
Director of Education, Darlington LEA

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ May 2004  
**David Heaton**  
Chair, Darlington Learning Partnership

## 2. Extract from Richard Knott's Report: *An Opportunity for Excellence* (pp 5 – 31)

### 1. Darlington – the context

Its residents might not thank you for saying it, but on the surface, Darlington is an average English borough. This is borne out by the fact that it attracts little of the funding that more overtly deprived communities are able to access. Conventional indicators such as free school meals (FSM) and performance in GCSE are close to the national average. In practice, however, Darlington is a community of contrasts – rural and urban, deprived and affluent, aspirational and unmotivated. What appears 'average' about Darlington is often the result of aggregating two distinct and contrasting sets of data. That data reflects what appears to many to be the sharp difference between the leafy western half of the town and the less affluent half, literally on the other side of the railway tracks, to the east of the town.

Geographically, the town sits at one end of the Tees Valley, potentially rendering it more isolated than other neighbouring boroughs, but it benefits from ready access to the east coast main line railway, as well as close proximity to the A1 and to Teesside International Airport.

Other distinctive features of the Darlington context are:

- While 70% of the borough is rural, 87%<sup>1</sup> lives in the town itself.
- The relative importance of the service sector (it now absorbs more than 80%<sup>2</sup> of the borough's working population) and the rapid decline of the traditional industries that sustained the town in the past. The exception here is construction, an industry where Darlington's percentage figure of those involved is almost twice the national average. According to JSU data, Darlington's service industry is markedly different from others in the Tees Valley: for example, while Middlesbrough is more reliant on public administration, education and health jobs, Darlington has "... a greater share of banking and financial employment, as well as distribution, hotels and restaurants..."<sup>3</sup>
- A low wage economy with relatively high levels of employment compared to the rest of the Tees Valley - but not when compared nationally<sup>4</sup>:

Table 1: *Employment in Darlington*

	<b>% Employment</b>
Tees Valley	70
<b>Darlington</b>	<b>74.6</b>
National	76.1

- Significant pockets of high unemployment, with some wards in the town (Northgate North and South) running at more than three times the national average.
- While there are areas of affluence in the town (one ward is the second most advantaged in the Tees Valley), deprivation is a major issue: half of Darlington's wards are more deprived than the national average. The table below illustrates the specific nature of that deprivation and identifies the borough's most deprived wards. In determining the Deprivation Score (column 1) the following factors are taken into account: unemployment; adults with no qualifications; health/disability problems; lone parent households; households with no car; and households renting, rather than owning, property.

<sup>1</sup> Based on 2001 Census data

<sup>2</sup> Figure from *LSC Tees Valley Business Plan 2002-03*

<sup>3</sup> Source: *Tees Valley JSU: Annual Business Inquiry*

<sup>4</sup> Source: *Darlington Area Review 2003*, page 12

Table 2: Deprivation in Darlington

Ward	Deprivation score	Ranking in the borough	Ranking in Tees Valley
Cockerton West	23.6	1	23
Central	23.6	2	24
Eastbourne	22	3	39
Park East	21.9	4	41
Bank Top	21.6	5	43
Northgate	21.6	6	45
Lascelles	21.5	7	46
Haughton East	21.4	8	48
North Road	21.2	9	50
<b>TEES VALLEY (average)</b>	<b>20</b>		
Lingfield	19.4	10	59
<b>DARLINGTON (average)</b>	<b>18.9</b>		
Pierremont	18.5	11	68
Haughton West	17.6	12	75
<b>ENGLAND (average)</b>	<b>17.4</b>		

There are 12 wards whose deprivation score is below the national average.<sup>5</sup>

- Darlington is the country's third smallest unitary authority with a population of approaching 100,000. The ethnic minority population is well below the national average (2.1% compared to a national figure of over 11%).

## 2. Darlington's Provision for Education

### a) The Providers

Post-14 educational provision in Darlington rests with seven secondary schools, one of whom (Carmel Technology College) has its own sixth form; and an all-age special school (Beaumont Hill). Queen Elizabeth 6<sup>th</sup> Form College and the town's Further Education college, Darlington College of Technology, are, with Carmel, the major post-16 providers. The schools are:

Table 3: Secondary Schools in Darlington

	Type of school	Number on roll <sup>6</sup>
Branksome	11-16 mixed	699
Carmel	11-18 RC mixed	1057
Eastbourne	11-16 mixed	831
Haughton	11-16 mixed	756
Hummersknott	11-16 mixed	1221
Hurworth	11-16 mixed	626
Longfield	11-16 mixed	927

Other relevant factors are:

<sup>5</sup> The table and data is provided by the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (JSU) in its *Analysis of Deprivation in the Tees Valley Using 2001 Census Data*

<sup>6</sup> 2003 figures.

- The planned establishment of an 'Education Village' on the Houghton school site and involving a partnership with Beaumont Hill School and a primary school (Springfield). This is planned for 2005.
- Schools in the town have developed acknowledged specialisms in the arts, business, sports, mathematics, technology and languages.
- The College of Technology is moving sites from its present base in west Darlington to a new campus on the opposite side of the town. The anticipated opening date is 2006. Plans include the development of a 14-19 centre. There are increasing examples of collaborative ventures between schools and the College (see page 25).
- There has been considerable change in terms of the secondary headships in the town: there are currently two acting headteachers; in addition, four heads have been appointed within the past eighteen months. One school (Eastbourne) has been designated as requiring special measures, and is working in a federation with Hurworth School.
- There is a Secondary School Improvement Board amongst whose key purposes is the raising of educational standards across the town.
- Darlington has, as yet, not been in receipt of funding from the DfES in respect of Excellence in Cities, Excellence Clusters, Aimhigher or, with the exception of Eastbourne, Leadership Incentive Grant. All these initiatives have been instrumental elsewhere in the country in fostering and developing collaborative approaches.
- A particular challenge for the LEA is the growing significance of surplus places: pupil numbers are predicted to fall by some 11% over the next nine years. Moreover, the relatively poor state of some school buildings compounds the problem. During the period of this 14-19 strategy project, there have been ongoing discussions, arising from the LEA's plans in relation to the DfES's *Building Schools for the Future* initiative. That, and the decline in pupil numbers, both suggest potential school closures. Necessarily this has caused some concern at a time when 14-19 strategy development requires shared responsibility, planning and mutual trust. It will be important to ensure that 14-19 policy development, through the structures that are outlined later in this report, is consistent with, and not constrained by, decisions relating to school provision overall.

## b) Standards of Achievement

### ▪ *Attainment at Key Stage 4*

There are marked differences in the relative achievement of pupils at Key Stage 4 across the town as a whole. This is true of achievement against the 5A\*-C benchmark, but it is also true of pupils leaving with minimal or no qualifications. The tables below summarise a range of key data. Table 4 provides comparative data across the Tees Valley showing Darlington's relative success overall in GCSE. Nonetheless that falls short of the national average.

*Table 4: Comparisons at GCSE in 2003 (Tees Valley LEAs)*

LEA	% 5 or more A*-C	% No grades
Hartlepool	45.7	6.1
Middlesbrough	38.8	8.8
Redcar and Cleveland	47	4.9
Stockton on Tees	47	5.2
<b>Darlington</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<i>England</i>	<i>52.9</i>	<i>5.2</i>



Table 5 illustrates the range of achievement by pupils at KS4<sup>7</sup>, specifically, the numbers achieving the benchmark of five A\*-C over the past five years.

Table 5: Trends in GCSE Performance

School	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	Five Year Average
Branksome	39.4	38	43	35	41	<b>39.3</b>
Carmel	73.7	61	66	58	52	<b>62.1</b>
Eastbourne	28.7	20	21	16	24	<b>21.9</b>
Haughton	33.1	39	33	37	30	<b>34.4</b>
Hummersknott	60.9	65	60	64	57	<b>61.4</b>
Hurworth	69.8	64	66	58	47	<b>61</b>
Longfield	44.9	46	42	38	40	<b>42.2</b>
<b>LEA</b>	<b>51</b>					
England	52.9					

Overall, the rate of improvement at GCSE in Darlington compares well with others in the Tees Valley, and exceeds the national average over the past four years (Table 6).

Table 6: Improvements at GCSE 2000 -2003 (% 5 or more A\*-C)

LEA	2000	2001	2002	2003	% increase 2000-2003
Hartlepool	35.7	40.4	42	45.7	10
Middlesbrough	34.6	35	35.8	38.8	4.2
Redcar and Cleveland	45.6	43.4	48.6	47	1.4
Stockton on Tees	43.7	44.8	46.1	47	3.3
<b>Darlington</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>47.2</b>	<b>48.7</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>6</b>
England	49.2	50	51.5	52.9	3.7

Table 7 sets out (a) the variation between each school's GCSE performance in 2003 and that of its five year average; (b) the range of performance over that period of time; and (c) the comparison between current performance and that of five years ago.

Table 7: Variations at GCSE

School	Variation between 2003 and the average	Range of performance	Rise or decline since 1999
Branksome	+ 0.1	<b>8</b> (35 to 43)	- 1.6
Carmel	+ 11.6	<b>21.7</b> (52 to 73.7)	+ 21.7
Eastbourne	+ 6.8	<b>12.7</b> (16 to 28.7)	+ 4.7
Haughton	- 1.3	<b>9</b> (30 to 39)	+ 3.1
Hummersknott	- 0.5	<b>8</b> (57 to 65)	+ 3.9
Hurworth	+ 8.8	<b>22.8</b> (47 to 69.8)	+ 22.8
Longfield	2.7	<b>8</b> (38 to 46)	+ 4.9

Tables 8 and 9 provide data on relative value added performance based on 2003 GCSE achievement from KS3; and also from KS2 to KS3.

<sup>7</sup> This table is based on information provided by the LEA, schools, and the Area-wide Review

Table 8: KS3 to GCSE/GNVQ Value Added Measure

LEA	Measure
Hartlepool	99
Middlesbrough	98.3
Redcar and Cleveland	98.1
Stockton on Tees	98.7
<b>Darlington</b>	<b>98.5</b>

Table 9: Value Added From KS2/3 and KS3/4 (Schools)

School	Measure based on progress between KS3 and GCSE/GNVQ	Measure based on progress between KS2 and KS3
Branksome	98.2	97
Carmel	100.9	101
Eastbourne	98.5	97
Haughton	96.2	90
Hummersknott	97.3	100.3
Hurworth	101.2	100.3
Longfield	97.4	99.9
<b>LEA</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>99.4</b>

These figures indicate:

- The general upward trend of performance at KS4 over the five year period.
- The wide variation at GCSE between schools – taking 2003 as an example, there was a gap between the best and worst performers of 45%.
- While only one school has declined at GCSE since 1999, only two schools (Hurworth and Carmel) have improved by more than single figure percentage points.
- The same two schools buck the trend of relatively little variation at GCSE over the five years: for five of the schools, the average range is 10.4%; for the other two it is 22.3%.
- Significant variation in terms of value added.

Table 10: Variations between boys and girls achieving GCSE 5 A\*-C (data for 2003)

School	Both boys and girls (%)	a) Boys	b) Girls	Gap between boys' and girls' achievement
Branksome	39.4	34.2	45.3	- 11.1
Carmel	73.7	68.1	77.6	- 9.5
Eastbourne	28.7	21.7	36.5	- 14.8
Haughton	33.1	19.1	46.5	- 27.4
Hummersknott	60.9	55.6	67.3	- 11.7
Hurworth	69.8	60.6	79.4	- 18.8
Longfield	44.9	41.9	48.2	- 6.3
<b>LEA</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>58.8</b>	<b>- 16.3</b>

Boys' relative underachievement at GCSE is marked throughout, but there are significant variations between schools with some confining the boy/girl gap to single figures, and others being markedly less successful in this regard.

In addition, it is worth noting that five of Darlington's 'comparator' LEAs – LEAs that OFSTED regards as broadly similar in terms of socio-economic profile - outperform Darlington at GCSE/GNVQ. At post-16, however, GCE and VCE attainment in the borough is above the national average and above most of its immediate comparators.<sup>8</sup>

- *Attainment Post-16*

Current post-16 attainment data is as follows:

*Table 11: Post-16 results<sup>9</sup>*

	<b>Average Points Score Per Student (GCE/VCE)</b>	<b>Average Points Score Per Examination Entry</b>	<b>% Achieving Other Advanced Qualification</b>	<b>% Achieving Intermediate VQ</b>
Carmel Technology College	251.2	70.3	-	-
Darlington College of Technology	122.9	63.7	79	70
Queen Elizabeth 6 <sup>th</sup> Form College	330.9	83.8	-	93
<i>Local Average</i>	302.3	81.6	78.9	77.2
<i>National Average</i>	258.6	77.4	82.2	73.7

Table 12 illustrates Darlington's relative position in comparison to other Tees Valley LEAs.

*Table 12: Post-16 Comparisons*

	<b>Average Points Score Per Student (GCE/VCE)</b>	<b>Average Points Score Per Examination Entry</b>	<b>% Achieving Other Advanced Qualification</b>	<b>% Achieving Intermediate VQ</b>
Hartlepool	246.0	71	89.1	70
Middlesbrough	171.1	63.8	85.7	75.9
Redcar and Cleveland	257.9	72.1	94.6	73.8
Stockton on Tees	264.5	77.1	86	75.7
<b>Darlington</b>	<b>302.3</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>78.9</b>	<b>77.2</b>
<i>National Average</i>	258.6	77.4	82.2	73.7

### c) Participation

- *Post-16 Participation*

There are marked variations in post-16 participation rates across the borough – in other words, the likelihood of a young person staying on beyond 16 depends where they live - and rates overall are below the national average.

<sup>8</sup> Source: Area-Wide Review, 2003

<sup>9</sup> Data from DfES Performance Tables

Table 13: Destinations of Year 11 School Leavers<sup>10</sup>

The table below correlates data on school leaving against the relative positions of wards in Darlington so far as deprivation is concerned (see above).

Ward	% school leavers <u>not remaining in full time education</u> (FTE)	Deprivation ranking	Ranking in terms of those leaving FTE
Cockerton West	43	1	7
Central	63	2	1
Eastbourne <sup>11</sup>	45	3	6
Park East	56	4	2
Bank Top	34	5	11
Northgate	49	6	5
Lascelles	50	7	4
Haughton East	36	8	9
North Road	52	9	3
Lingfield	37	10	8
Pierremont	23	11	16
Haughton West	32	12	13
Cockerton East	31	13	14
Haughton North	36	14	9
Harrowgate Hill	33	15	12
Hurworth	14	16	18
Middleton St George	19	17	17
College	14	18	18
Park West	9	19	20
Sadberge & Whesoe	24	20	15
Mowden	6	21	21
Heighington & Coniscliffe	6	22	21
Hummersknott	5	23	23
<b>Darlington</b>	<b>34</b>		
<b>Tees Valley</b>	<b>35</b>		
<b>National<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>29</b>		

This table highlights the close relationship between deprivation and reluctance to pursue full time education – a national issue but starkly apparent in this perspective on the town’s learning culture.

#### d) Perceptions

This section summarises the key outcomes from the round of interviews with headteachers, college principals, and work-base learning providers.

<sup>10</sup> JSU data relating to 2001

<sup>11</sup> Average figure covering both Eastbourne North and South; data for Northgate is similarly averaged.

<sup>12</sup> Figure from DfES Statistics and relates to 2001.

Table 14: Interviewees' views (a) The Curriculum and Achievement

The next two tables summarise the principal views from the round of interviews.

Issue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Key Stage 4 curriculum</b> General acceptance of the view that there is an urgent need to extend the vocational offering at 14, thereby creating a greater diversity of provision.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Working together</b> There is a need to identify what curricular demands there are, and look overall at who is best placed to provide them. Work-base learning providers should be involved in this. There is a view that different sectors are isolated one from another.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Alternative curriculum</b> Currently individual schools work hard to cater for learners requiring a distinctive alternative provision; it would make sense to work together on this, making it more coherent across the town. A commonly held view is that curriculum innovation is often confined to disaffected pupils.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Flexibility</b> Many expressed the view that the present curriculum 'core' is too big and restricts flexibility.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Resources</b> The tension between expanding the curriculum offer and the level of budget available for additional provision was noted, with school size being cited as a factor on several occasions: small secondary schools finding curricular expansion difficult.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Routes</b> Several headteachers identified three routes: 'academic', mix of applied and more 'academic' courses etc., and work-related learning with the college.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Underperformance</b> This is an identified issue for attention for several new headteachers, both in relation to KS4 and in terms of value added from Key Stage 3.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>School/College Links</b> There is enthusiasm for working with the College on specific courses e.g. building (construction).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Disaffection</b> The need to "engage the disengaged" is considerable.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Vocational Centre</b> Views differed on the concept of a 'Vocational Centre' with some welcoming the notion of a vocational centre that offered applied engineering and manufacturing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Learning Mentors</b> Their use should be expanded.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Student Entitlement</b> There is a need to spell out post-14 student entitlement.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Employer Links</b> There is a need to look more closely at the needs of local industry.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Participation post-16</b> A big issue that must be addressed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Specialist Schools</b> Greater use should be made of schools' specialisms.</li> </ul>

Table 15: (b) Structures and Systems

Issue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Meetings</b> There is a widely – and strongly – felt dissatisfaction with the present system of meetings, with concerns about overlapping agendas and remits.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>A common timetable</b> Opinion is divided on this issue, but there is overall support for some part of the week being ‘common’ to all in order to facilitate shared provision.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Connexions</b> A number of interviewees are looking for a greater impact from the Connexions service, while recognising that the service is in its early days.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Communication</b> There is a need for better communication between schools, post-16 providers and the Town Hall.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Brokerage</b> There is a need to more easily broker links between schools e.g. on health and social care – in order to achieve viable numbers; and also between WBL providers and schools/colleges.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Structures</b> There is a willingness to move towards greater collaboration amongst schools and with the Colleges – this is a widely held view, but with some scepticism about the nature of any federation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>School Improvement Board</b> A number of interviewees are looking to the School Improvement Board to address these issues.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Post-16</b> Greater emphasis should be placed on education <b>not</b> ending at 16; on the other hand, this should not rule out the notion that learning need not be in school or college but in the workplace.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Information</b> Ensure that students receive the full range of information to allow effective post-16 choices to be made.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Co-ordination</b> There is a demonstrable need for a co-ordination role.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Planning</b> There is a strong need for joint planning.</li> </ul>

#### e) Consultation Workshops

Towards the end of November two consultation workshops on 14-19 needs and provision were held as part of the Director’s Conference. Membership of the two groups comprised headteachers in the main, from primary and secondary sectors. Individuals (some forty in number) were asked to prioritise potential issues in the 14-19 sector as they pertained to Darlington.

The table below summarises the priorities in order and notes some specific actions that group members felt were required.

Table 16: Perceived Priorities

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Suggestions made by participants</b>
<p>1. (Top Priority) The need to <b>raise aspirations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Foundation Stage - raising aspirations...</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Generic Life Skills - courses in schools</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Increase participation – corporate level, <u>all</u> services</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Identify and remove barriers to participation</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Find out what young people feel and want</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Vocational Education needs to be structured from the Foundation Stage up</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Less emphasis on core attainment (?)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Involve all young people using role models</i></li> <li>▪ <i>‘Believe, succeed, achieve’ – parents &amp; children</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Start early re aspirations</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Positive outcomes at the end of statutory education</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Engaging community</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Involve pupils in planning</i></li> </ul>
<p>2. <b>Disaffection</b> – the need to engage the disengaged</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Develop ‘can do’ mentality from an early age</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Make sure 14-19 lasts</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Develop a school experience relevant to their needs – the ‘right diet’</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Broader and more diverse curriculum</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Technical and vocational education for the disaffected</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Joined up service delivery</i></li> </ul>
<p>3. <b>Curriculum limitations in KS4</b> – the need to expand vocational opportunities; insufficient flexibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Flexibility</i></li> </ul>
<p>4. <b>Insufficient collaboration</b> in terms of joint planning and information exchange amongst schools and colleges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Collaboration on better provision to bring in disaffected young people (see also priorities 1 &amp; 6)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Set up appropriate collaborative structures across the town</i></li> </ul>
<p>5. <b>Standards in KS4</b>, including value added from KS3, and boys’ attainment at GCSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Collaboration across the town to raise boys’ achievement (see also priorities 1 &amp; 6)</i></li> </ul>
<p>6. Insufficient <b>guidance and support</b> e.g. insufficient learning mentors</p>	<p><i>No suggestions made.</i></p>

7. <b>Variation across the town in terms of participation post-16</b> ; 16 seen as an ending, not a milestone on a journey	<i>No suggestions made.</i>
8. Insufficient <b>dialogue between education and employers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Involving all partners</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Employers accepting their responsibility</i></li> </ul>
9. Uncertainty about <b>roles and structures</b> re 14-19 issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Support for social and emotional progress</i></li> </ul>
10. Failure to exploit <b>specialist provision</b>	<i>No suggestions made.</i>

#### **f) The Findings of the Area-Wide Review**

The report of the Darlington Area Review was presented on 27 June 2003. Commissioned by the Tees Valley LSC, it focused on standards achieved and quality of provision in the area; the range and coherence of provision available; the match of provision to local demand; and the value for money provided. Its main findings are extensive: 53 bullet points extending over four pages of the report. This section summarises the principal issues for action and the findings that prompt them:

##### **i. Strategy**

The report draws the connection between coherence and strategic planning, noting that "...there cannot be fully coherent provision...without a strategic plan..." The key outcome anticipated here is the definition of a *14-19 Strategy*.

##### **ii. Collaboration**

The report stresses the complex interrelationships amongst the various stakeholders at 14-19, including the LEA, LSC and the Darlington Learning Partnership (DLP), and seeks closer integration. It also emphasises the "scope for some combining of provision across the sector". There is also scope for greater college/training provider collaboration. Key Outcomes:

- *Review of interrelationships (and more effective working).*
- *More combined provision.*
- *More college/training provider collaboration.*

##### **iii. Value for Money**

The report comments adversely on the absence of "...a standard approach across the post-16 sector in Darlington to ensuring value for money..." Key Outcome: *An agreed approach to VFM.*

##### **iv. Information Management**

Data and therefore management information is not easily accessible or coherent. Key Outcome: *A unified database.*

##### **v. Participation**

The percentage of 16 year olds remaining in full time education is 6.5% below the national average. Participation at 17+ is also an issue. There is wide variation across the town in terms of participation. Key Outcome: *New approaches to improving participation.*



## vi. Standards of Achievement

The review team identified some underachievement in both KS3 and KS4 in some of the town's schools. It also noted various initiatives in terms of relating teaching approaches to different learning styles. Key Outcomes:

- *Higher standards*
- *Effective dissemination of various findings.*

## vii. Work-based Learning (WBL)

The sector is judged complex and requires effort to improve retention and achievement. Quality systems are too varied. MIS data is insufficiently accessible. Key Skills should be more integrated. The status of vocational education needs raising. Key Outcomes:

- *Improved WBL retention and achievement.*
- *Improved quality and management information systems.*
- *More positive attitudes to vocational programmes.*

## viii. Connexions

There is a recognition that the Connexions service is still developing. Nonetheless there are seen to be gaps in its provision. Key Outcome: *A fully functioning, staffed and effective Connexions service.*

## 3. The Vision for 14-19 Education and Training in Darlington – And What Needs To Be Done

### (a) What Are The Key Messages?

This next table summarises the key findings from the above analysis with a view to identifying the key priorities for action.

Table 17: Summary of Darlington's Needs

Issue	Data	Area-wide review: Issues for Action	Interviewees' or consultation workshop priority
Development of a strategic plan; the need for joint planning; greater coherence across the town		✓	✓
Participation post-16	✓	✓	✓
Greater breadth at KS4 – more vocational opportunities			✓
Standards including the variation between schools on KS4 achievement	✓	✓	✓
Boys lagging behind girls at GCSE	✓		
Engaging the disengaged			✓
The nature of post-14 entitlement			✓
Needs of local industry; more dialogue between education and employers			✓
Use of schools' specialisms			✓
Common timetable <sup>13</sup>			✓

<sup>13</sup> Support is confined to a partial common timetable (see page 14)

Greater collaboration		✓	✓
Raise aspirations			✓
Guidance and support; Connexions.		✓	✓
Value for Money		✓	
Data and management information		✓	
Work-based learning		✓	✓

*(b) What Is The Vision?*

Before analysing each issue in greater depth and confirming the key priorities and objectives, it is necessary to define the overall vision for 14-19 education and training in Darlington, and to declare what students have the right to expect in terms of learning opportunities in Key Stage 4 and beyond.

The Vision, then, is that:

**All partners in the provision of 14-19 education and training work together effectively to enable the young people of Darlington, irrespective of background, to access high quality learning opportunities that will raise both aspirations and standards, meet individual needs, and encourage lifelong learning.**

This vision statement has been framed in the light of the wider Tees Valley vision.<sup>14</sup>

*(c) What Do Students Have the Right to Expect?*

Each student is entitled to:

- High expectations and challenge from their teachers.
- Clear, timely and accurate guidance as to the range of opportunities open to them at any point on the 14-19 continuum, and the implications of particular choices.
- A breadth of curriculum choice that caters for their interests and needs.
- Effective, stimulating and supportive teaching.
- A logical and understandable set of curriculum and accreditation pathways.
- Expect that their views on the nature of the 14-19 programme are taken on board.
- Coherently planned provision with effective collaboration amongst the key providers.
- Learning opportunities that facilitate the acquisition of essential practical skills.
- Practical support when it is required.
- Access to modern technology.

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<sup>14</sup> "... The key to prosperity in the Tees Valley lies in the transformation of the learning in our schools and colleges... our enterprising young people have high aspirations. Our colleges are truly centres for lifelong learning and closely linked to our universities..."

(d) *The Resulting Priorities*

There are three main priorities:

**1. Collaboration, Planning & Partnership**

This priority envisages more effective joint working and planning amongst the 14-19 stakeholders, including innovative ways of enhancing partnerships.

**2. Participation, Engagement and the Curriculum**

Priority 2 is focused on encouraging more young people from all sectors of the community to engage in education and/or training after the age of 16; raising aspirations and broadening and strengthening the curriculum offer, notably in terms of vocational opportunities pre-16.

**3. Attainment & Standards**

The third priority addresses attainment, notably the variations in achievement at KS4.

The next section provides a commentary on each of the issues within these three broad priority areas.

**4. A Commentary on the Issues**

**Priority 1: Collaboration, Planning & Partnership**

This priority envisages more effective joint working and planning amongst the 14-19 stakeholders, including innovative ways of enhancing partnerships.

a. Development of a strategic plan; the need for joint planning; greater coherence across the town

One of the more telling comments during the round of interviews that informed this report and strategy paper was “We have never sat down and jointly planned anything.” This is evident in the absence until now of a strategic plan for 14-19 education although, as the Area Review noted, the Darlington Learning Partnership has made inroads into the task of defining an overall strategy for post-16 provision.

b. Needs of local industry; more dialogue between education and employers

There has been a major shift in the nature of local employment over recent years, with a decline in traditional occupations and a corresponding rise in the service sector. Greater use needs to be made of up to date labour market information in order to identify trends in employment opportunities. Employers should be drawn fully into the new planning and collaborative structure in the town.

c. Common timetable

Despite the relatively small size of Darlington, one school timetable held in common by all seven secondary schools and aligned in some respects with the Colleges is not realistic at this stage. Transportation difficulties would be one significant problem – the concept of bussing large numbers of children around the town is not widely welcomed – and there are currently marked differences amongst the schools in terms of their present timetables: for example, some have two week timetables, while others do not. Nevertheless, there would be value in identifying a block of time in the week when all schools followed the same timetable, so a limited amount of targeted collaborative provision could be initiated or extended. This has been successfully adopted elsewhere.

d. Greater collaboration

The Area Review noted that, while there are "... good links between several (institutions)... there is scope for more collaboration on course provision..." The potential for collaboration goes beyond carving up who will teach what. A key element in the Eastbourne Options Analysis report (May 2003), was the concept of a 'whole town vocational learning centre for 14-19 year olds' underpinned by a federated approach to 14-19 education, involving a partnership of all the town's secondary schools and the two colleges. Arguably, this sits comfortably with the government's comments that "...we want to see the necessary changes delivered through locally devised arrangements that exploit local strengths and meet distinctive local needs..." (*14-19: Opportunity and Excellence*). Moreover, as that DfES paper says, "... to think in terms of two phases is no longer helpful or meaningful...". There are potential fault lines between schools and post-16 providers whereby information about individual students does not get passed on. This is a feature identified by the Area Review which commented that "... this is potentially unhelpful to individual learners, and should be remedied..." What is required as an innovative and robust mechanism for forging sustained, productive and practical partnership and mutual support. Such a mechanism is proposed in the next section.

e. Value for Money

What is required here is an agreed, practical mechanism for gauging the value for money of 14-19 provision. This was identified as an issue by the Area Review team.

f. Data and management information

Management information and 'clean' accessible data has been a victim of the diverse nature of the 14-19 picture in the town. The Area Review noted a number of problems with data: "... no single organisation can provide comprehensive data on the post-16 sector..."; insufficiently developed management information about work-based learning; and less than satisfactory arrangements for passing on information about students moving institutions.

**Priority 2: Participation, Engagement and the Curriculum**

Priority 2 is focused on encouraging more young people from all sectors of the community to engage in education and/or training after the age of 16; raising aspirations and broadening and strengthening the curriculum offer, notably in terms of vocational opportunities pre-16.

g. Participation post-16

The reluctance of youngsters from disadvantaged areas of the town to be attracted into post-16 education and training has been raised earlier in this report. It is exacerbated as an issue by the relative ease of accessing low wage, unskilled jobs.

h. Greater breadth at KS4 – more vocational opportunities and the nature of post-14 entitlement

The Darlington Area Review noted the need to develop vocational opportunities pre-16: at the time of that report it seems that vocational opportunities pre-16 were very limited - only two schools in the town entered pupils – 56 in total – for vocational qualifications in 2001. The Review commented: "In an area like Tees Valley this may be a failure to recognise their importance to young people ... (or)... it may also indicate that the schools have not yet established the flexibility to staff such courses..." This is a national issue: the Government's *14-19 Opportunity and Excellence*

referred to it as ‘the weakness of our vocational offer’. Negative perceptions of vocational education still remain: ‘... learning a trade has still to become a truly valued option...’ The Government’s intended reforms envisage placing greater value on applied options in traditionally academic subjects. A major issue is curricular relevance: providing a full range of curriculum of a kind that engages and motivates and fits young people for life – and learning – once compulsory schooling is over. Other issues include: whether teaching methodology matches students’ varied learning styles, not least for the readily disengaged; whether pathways for students are clear, logical and facilitate ease of access; the availability or otherwise of work-related learning; the use of e-learning; and the practical implications of proposed government-led reforms.

The dilemma for headteachers is to balance cost efficiency on the one hand, and the relatively small size of the majority of Darlington’s schools, against the central government push for more accessible vocational opportunities pre-16. The issue is compounded by the fact that headteachers as a group concur with the view that the ‘conventional’ curriculum does not meet the needs – or suit the predilections – of a significant proportion of young people. The table below illustrates some of the range of provision currently on offer or being developed.

Table 18: KS4 Curriculum Provision

School	H&C	H&SC	L&T	F&H	Bus	C	Cr
Branksome		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Carmel					✓		
Eastbourne		✓				✓	✓
Haughton	✓	✓	✓				
Hummersknott	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Hurworth		✓			✓		
Longfield							

Key: H&C: Hospitality and Catering; H &SC: Health and Social Care; L&T: Leisure and Tourism; F&H: Food and Hygiene; Bus: Business; C: Childcare; Cr: Craft (Construction);

In addition, there are a number of examples of ‘alternative curricula’ – tailor made packages designed to address the particular needs of challenging cohorts of pupils.

Some of these programmes are run in collaboration with Darlington College of Technology (DCoT) including discrete vocational taster courses (non-certificated). These are school funded and designed to meet the school’s defined needs. They include:

- Catering, painting and decorating and light engineering at Beaumont Hill.
- Hairdressing and beauty therapy, health and care, media, motor vehicle and construction at Eastbourne.

In addition, the following should be noted:

- The link between the College and Carmel Technology College on GCSE Engineering.
- The Increased Flexibility Programme: funded through the LSC, this involves, for example, access to programmes such as GCSE Leisure and Tourism and Health and Social Care.

i. Engaging the disengaged

This issue is directly related to h above. Essentially, it concerns the reluctance or inability of some pupils to ‘switch on’ to the curriculum and pedagogical approaches on offer. It raises questions about curricular breadth, and teaching and learning styles.

j. Logical Curriculum Pathways

Young people are entitled to equality of choice in terms of curriculum opportunity and logical, clearly understandable routes from their preferred choices at 14 through to employment and/education and

training. Thus, they need to know what the career implications of a curriculum choice are, and in good time, so they can easily see how their studies will lead to FE and employment. They also need logical pathways that do not lock them into an inappropriate sequence of experiences. It is important too that vocational routes should keep open access to HE, as well as employment.

**Priority 3: Attainment & Standards**

The third priority addresses attainment, notably the variations in achievement at KS4.

k. Standards including the variation between schools on KS4 achievement and boys lagging behind girls at GCSE

This issue has been raised already in looking at the attainment data (see section 3). A key objective should be to remove as many obstacles to GCSE success that arise from gender, social background and class, and the educational institution attended. There are indications too that the post-16 sector adds more value than pre-16 (a judgement voiced in the Area Review), though it should be said that the lack of compulsion in post-16 provides a different climate for learning and is therefore a fundamental difference between the two.

l. Raise aspirations

This is a fundamental issue: how can **all** pupils and students look to the future with ambition and a determination to make the best of themselves, rather than be satisfied with something less than that.

m. Guidance and support; Connexions.

To make informed choices, students need accurate objective information. They also need support, encouragement and challenge.

n. Work-based learning

The key needs here are:

- The need, as one provider said, "To make us work together."
- Better communication.
- Effective brokerage between need and provision.
- To improve what is seen as a "fragmented, competitive culture" and to address Darlington's relative isolation.

Finally, it is worth noting those principles framed by the SSG in its initial – temporarily shelved - response to the AWR (see the opening section). Those that are not subsumed within the above are:

- Enable young people's attainment in Darlington to out-perform that nationally.
- Make learning provision a key contributor to the social and economic regeneration of Darlington.
- Develop a greater presence and profile for Higher Education in Darlington and create better links with Higher Education in the region.
- Give young people quality opportunities to gain understanding of the world of work and develop entrepreneurial skills.

## 6. A Structure for Excellence

The round of interviews revealed considerable uncertainty about who does what in terms of the town's 14-19 planning and provision: several headteachers commented that the same things appeared to be discussed on the agendas of different bodies, on different occasions on the same day. Moreover, the emphasis was felt to be on discussion and debate, rather than joint planning and corporate action. There is a perception too that, in the past, cards have been kept close to chests. Nonetheless, there is currently a willingness to embark upon an innovative communal approach. Such an approach underpins the concept of the new Darlington 14-19 Community Trust. This should be seen as the key innovation in this report proposing as it does a significant pact between schools and colleges with the fundamental purpose of working together for the benefit of the community as a whole, and learners aged 14 to 19 in particular.

There is a danger, however, that an additional body might only serve to muddy the 14-19 waters even more. It is essential therefore that the Community Trust's role is compatible with – and not in conflict with – other organisations. Currently, the position can be summarised thus:

<b>The Darlington Learning Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountable to - and funded by - the LSC</li> <li>• Part of Darlington Partnership: as 'The Learning and Skills Themed Group' and, as such, responsible for the delivery of parts of the Community Strategy</li> <li>• Aims: promote provider collaboration in support of lifelong learning; maximise the contribution of learning to local regeneration; facilitate the Learning and Skills outcomes contained within the Community Strategy.</li> <li>• Objectives: improve access, participation and achievement, and attendance; ensure high quality early years provision; involve employers in workforce development.</li> </ul>
<b>The 14-19 Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider educational needs 14-19</li> <li>• Share information about curriculum development</li> <li>• Work together to ensure the full range of educational provision is available</li> <li>• Plan curriculum changes in "a spirit of partnership and collaboration"</li> <li>• Avoid unnecessary duplication</li> <li>• Oversee guidance and ensure young people are fully informed about options available to them</li> <li>• Monitor educational achievement 14-19</li> <li>• Make joint bids for funds</li> </ul>
<b>The Strategic Steering Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for the development, oversight, and ongoing monitoring, review and evaluation of the Darlington Area Review Action Plan</li> </ul>
<b>The School Improvement Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established as '... a collaborative model for raising standards...' and operates as a forum where heads and LEA officers meet to discuss a wide range of issues, ranging from project funding to 'providing feedback on the performance of the LEA's services in providing support to schools'.</li> </ul>

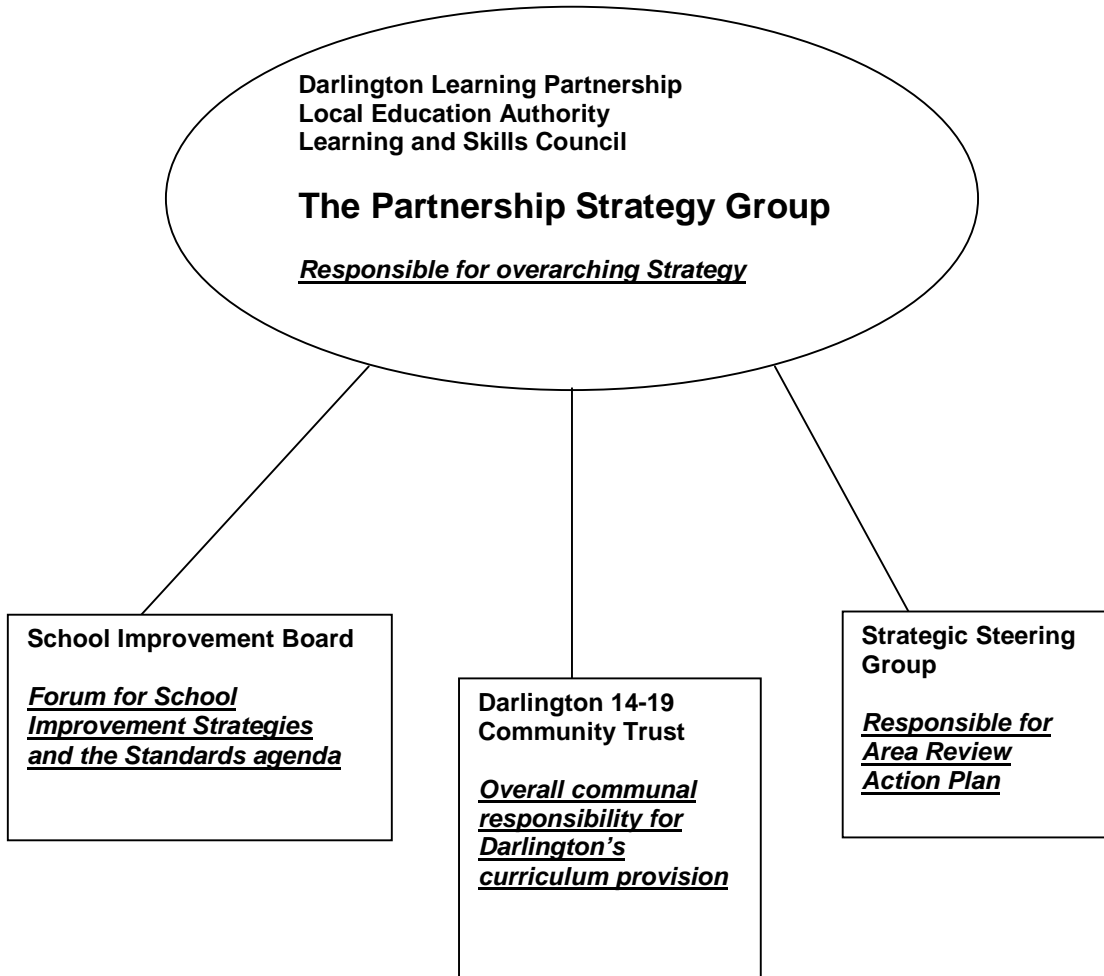
The next section will define the underlying principles behind the Trust, how it would function, and how it would relate to – and differ from – the other bodies.

1. The Trust would comprise the headteachers of the seven secondary schools, the two College Principals, the head of Beaumont Hill, the Chief Executive of the Eastbourne/Hurworth Federation, the Director of Education, one representative from the DfES and one from LSC Tees Valley. It would be chaired alternately by the DfES and LSC officials.
2. Membership would be voluntary i.e. no school or college would be compelled to participate. Members would enter into a 'Trust Covenant' confirming their engagement in the process and agreeing to the communal principle and the broad thrust of the Trust Action Plan.
3. Its prime function would be to manage and ensure the delivery of 14-19 provision for the students in the borough of Darlington. Instead of each school/college regarding its students, and the curriculum offer they receive, as its own responsibility, the concept here would be that the Trust would assume overall communal responsibility for Darlington's curriculum offer in respect of all its 14-19 school/college based provision. It would agree the needs and the means by which those needs would be met.
4. Its key role is to:
  - ✓ Plan the 14-19 curriculum in such a way that the individual student's needs are placed first.
  - ✓ Target funds on identified barriers to learning.
  - ✓ Facilitate the deployment of key teachers across the Trust.
  - ✓ Develop specialist centres of excellence, including vocational centres.
  - ✓ Work towards a common timetable across the town.
  - ✓ Ensure that the 14-19 Centre at Darlington College is responsive to students' needs and is a genuine communal activity involving learners, teachers and school/college senior management.
5. The Trust would have its own budget. Its deployment would be modelled on the process by which Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) and Excellence Cluster initiatives are funded. Resource would be channelled via the LSC and DfES and would only be released once priorities, activities and targets were agreed. These would be derived from the overall 14-19 strategy, an audit of individual institution's needs, and would be negotiated with the DfES and the LSC. Funding will be targeted at need through an agreed formula.
6. There will be an Executive Officer for the Community Trust (EO), together with some administrative back up. The EO will be responsible for implementation; this is likely to entail data collation and analysis; preparation of curriculum models; negotiation with individual headteachers; budget oversight; monitoring and evaluation. It will be necessary to ensure congruence with the role and job description of the Area Review Project Officer.
7. This will **not** be a formal federation, but is intended to be a wholly new concept whereby no autonomy is lost for the co-operating organisations. There will, moreover, be clear benefits: broader curriculum coverage; greater certainty that students' needs are being met; shared expertise; minimising of the isolation and limitations of small secondary school status; and significant opportunities for staff development. Co-operation will embrace curriculum, training days, and resources, including teachers. Successful specialisms will be shared, both existing areas – performing arts, technology etc – but also vocational specialisms too, so that, for example School X becomes the acknowledged leader in, say, leisure and tourism. Above all, the students will benefit from shared planning, wider choice and the impetus consequent upon innovation.



8. Since this is not a federation, there will be no Governing Body, although clearly governors will need to be kept informed. Accountability will be to the Darlington Learning Partnership, LSC and LEA. The 14-19 Forum would cease to exist.

The interrelationship of the various groupings would be as follows:



The detailed remits of each of the groups would be:

**The Partnership Strategy Group** – comprising Darlington Learning Partnership, the LEA and the LSC. This would be responsible for:

- Overall strategic vision.
- Evaluation.
- Funding: matching budget to overall strategy.
- Coherence with other initiatives.
- Quality.

**The Strategic Steering Group** should be responsible for:

- The response to the Area-Wide review.
- The annual operational plan.
- Ongoing monitoring and review of the plan's implementation.
- Preparation of annual self-assessment reviews.
- Ensuring the DCT (below) works in accordance with the overarching strategy.
- Monitoring progress against targets and disseminating related data where appropriate.
- Monitoring the relationship between targets and resource in the work of the DCT.

**The School Improvement Board** should be responsible for:

- Strategic thinking around effective approaches to Priority 3 i.e. standards and attainment at KS4.

**The Darlington 14-19 Community Trust** should be responsible for:

- Planning the borough-wide 14-19 curriculum ensuring that the individual student's needs are placed first.
- Deploying funds on identified barriers to learning using an agreed needs formula.
- Facilitating the deployment of key teachers across the Trust.
- Developing specialist centres of excellence, including vocational centres.
- Working towards a common timetable across the town.
- Ensuring that the 14-19 Centre at Darlington College is responsive to students' needs and is a genuine communal activity involving learners, teachers and school/college senior management.

### **3. Partnership Commentary on Richard Knott's Report**

#### **Introduction**

*An Opportunity for Excellence* has been discussed at length in a series of meetings held by both the 14-19 Forum and the Strategic Steering Group. This process has enabled all key stakeholders to register their views about this report and the degree of support for the central innovation, the establishment of a 14-19 Trust to 'manage and ensure the delivery of 14-19 provision for the students in the borough of Darlington' (page 24\*). The following paragraphs record the outcome of these discussions.

#### **Overall Agreement**

As a result of these meetings the partners have welcomed and agreed in principle to the findings, vision and recommendations of Richard Knott's report whilst requiring more detail. In particular discussion has focused on the need for revised timescales for some of the actions, greater detail on costings and funding streams, and clearer analysis of issues around institutional accountability and autonomy. The partners recognise the need for more clarity on the day-to-day working of the Trust, its management and links with other organisations. Where not mentioned specifically below, every effort has been made to ensure that appropriate amendments have been made to the text of this Action Plan to incorporate revisions agreed by the Partnership.

#### **The Name and Position of the Trust**

The appropriateness of the name 'Darlington 14-19 Community Trust' was questioned: it was felt that the title did not sufficiently indicate the business of the Trust. The partners have therefore agreed that the Trust be re-named as 'The Darlington 14-19 Trust'.

The partners also recognise that, although the LSC TV and Darlington LEA share a statutory duty for the delivery of a 14-19 Strategy for Darlington, the Darlington Learning Partnership (DLP) should play a pivotal role in that process. They have therefore resolved that the Trust should be an independent body which would take initiatives forward by agreement and that it would report to the DLP.

The DLP would delegate all 14-19 issues to the Trust, which would, in effect, become its executive arm. The representation of the LEA and the LSC TV on both bodies would ensure coherence and congruence with their own strategic plans. The 14-19 Forum will cease to exist, its roles and responsibilities being subsumed by the Darlington 14-19 Trust.

*\* page numbers relate to An Opportunity for Excellence, as quoted in Section 2 of this plan*

The proposition that the DfES and LSC TV officials would chair the Darlington 14-19 Trust alternately (page 24) was felt to conflict with the need for local control. Instead it has been agreed that the Chair should be selected locally for an agreed term of office. It was also agreed that Trust membership should be expanded from that described in *An Opportunity for Excellence* (page 28) to include representatives from Connexions and work-based learning providers.

The concept of a voluntary 'Trust Covenant' (page 24), into which all members would enter in order to confirm their engagement in the process and their agreement to the communal principle and broad thrust of the Trust's Action Plan, was welcomed. Action to produce such a document was approved. Although it will not be a legal document, just as the Trust will not be a formal federation, it will provide a statement of intent.

The partners have noted that Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College and Darlington College of Technology already plan to avoid duplication and gaps in learning provision and welcome the opportunity to extend this type of coherence to all courses across the 14-19 age range.

### **The 14-19 Vision, Student Entitlement and Priorities for Action**

The partners support the vision statement and statement of student entitlement as outlined in *An Opportunity for Excellence* (pages 20-21). They have also adopted the three priorities for action as the main thrust of the 14-19 strategy:

- Collaboration, Planning and Partnership
- Participation, Engagement and the Curriculum
- Attainment and Standards

They think that the actions contained within these priorities will, with some additions, meet the needs of young people and help to make learning provision's contribution to the social and economic regeneration of Darlington more effective.

### **Funding Streams**

Unfortunately, the funding assumptions contained in *An Opportunity for Excellence* (page 24) have not been realised. In particular the presumption that additional DfES funding might be available to support the plan has not borne fruit. Given current levels of funding, the concept of some form of formula funding for additional resources to support 14-19 work in schools is thought to be inappropriate. Instead the Action Plan has concentrated on a number of specific activities to promote collaborative working. In addition, further initiative proposals will be considered annually by the Darlington 14-19 Trust, using available funding streams provided by the LSC TV, the LEA and matched funding from providers. Such proposals from consortia of schools and/or colleges will

complement and add value to the core learning activities of individual institutions as well as nationally funded initiatives such as EIC, Aimhigher and the Increased Flexibility Initiative.

It has been agreed that funding will be devolved to the Project Manager and the Executive Officer who will manage these resources in line with this Action Plan and subject to the overall financial control of the Darlington 14-19 Trust and to LSC TV and LEA monitoring.

### **Targets**

*An Opportunity for Excellence* has a complete section of actions with quantifiable and qualitative targets on which this plan has been based. The next section of this plan, Section 4, provides additional targets to address participation, retention, achievement and progression. These targets also link into the actions of the plan. The tables in this section include annual milestones targets and benchmarking against regional and national targets. They also include a set of performance indicators against which the progress and impact of the strategy can be monitored annually by the Project Manager.

## 4. Targets

In November 2003 the project group set up to establish a 'Common Framework for Target Setting and Data Gathering in the Tees Valley' produced a common set of definitions and targets. These have now been agreed by all the Learning Partnerships in the Tees Valley. The agreed framework comprises five common measures and seven statutory core performance measures. The table below reflects the agreed framework.

In addition to the targets laid out in this section, other core performance indicators are included as part of the plan and will be reported on in the annual evaluation report from the Project Manager. These include: Achievement at GCSE Maths and English A\*-C, % Achieving GCSE 5+ A-G or equivalent, GCSE Average Points Score, Foundation Modern Apprenticeships / Advanced Modern Apprenticeships Completions and Achievements at NVQ.

This plan supports many targets that are already in strategic documents relating to 14-19 learning in Darlington.

	Indicator	Baseline figure 2003	D'ton Target (2004)	D'ton Target (2005)	D'ton Target (2006)	D'ton Target (2007)	D'ton Target (2008)	Commentary
1	Progression into full time education and training at age 16 <b>(Common framework target &amp; statutory core performance indicator)</b>	80.5%	81%	83%	84%	86%	88%	Source=Connexions Annual Survey of School Leaver Destinations: Year 11 pupils who have progressed into full time education and training on the 1 <sup>st</sup> November as a proportion of all Year 11 pupils.
2	Participation in education and training of 17 year olds <b>(Common framework target &amp; statutory core performance indicator)</b>	82%	83%	84%	85%	86%	88%	2 sources available – DfES: Statistical bulletin: Participation in education and training by 16 and 17 year olds in each local area (latest data available is end 2000) OR Connexions Annual Survey of 17 year olds.
3	% achieving Key Stage 4: GCSE at 5+ A* to C (including GNVQ) <b>(Common framework target &amp; statutory core performance indicator)</b>	Loc: 51%	55%	57%	58%	59%	60%	Source=DfES: Percentage of 15 year old pupils (age 15 at the start of academic year) who have 5 or more A*-C GCSE/GNVQ grades.
	Nat: 52.9%							

	Indicator	Baseline figure 2003	D'ton Target (2004)	D'ton Target (2005)	D'ton Target (2006)	D'ton Target (2007)	D'ton Target (2008)	Commentary
4	FE Success Rate (all levels) <b>(Common target)</b>	Loc: 77% (2001-2) Nat: 64% TV: 68%	78%	79%	80%	81%	82%	Source=LSC (ILR): Success rates (Provider based) are calculated for 16-18 year olds as the number of qualifications achieved divided by the number of learners who have end dates in the measurement period in question and who have not transferred out. The success rate can also be derived as multiplying achievement (all completers) by retention (all completers).
4.1	FE Success Rate level 1 <b>(Common target)</b>	Loc: 56% (2001-2) Nat: 59% TV: 69%	57%	58%	59%	60%	61%	As above but only for level 1 qualifications
4.2	FE Success Rate level 2 <b>(Common target)</b>	Loc: 55% (2001-2) Nat: 56% TV: 60%	56%	57%	58%	59%	60%	As above but only for level 2 qualifications
4.3	FE Success Rate level 3 <b>(Common target)</b>	Loc: 82% (2001-2) Nat: 68% TV: 73%	82.5%	83%	83.5%	84%	84.5%	As above but only for level 3 qualifications
5	FE Success Rate: <b>Retention</b> (all levels) <b>(Common target)</b>	Loc: 89% (2001-2) Nat: 84% TV: 86%	89.5%	90%	90.5%	91%	91.5%	Source: LSC (ILR) Retention Rates (Provider based)— Number of 16 – 18 year old learners that are continuing or have completed their study, divided by the number of students who started a qualification, excluding transfers out. For the programmes of study of two years or more, retention is calculated across the whole programme, i.e. from the start to the end of qualification
5.1	FE Success Rate: <b>Retention</b> at Level 1 <b>(Common target)</b>	Loc: 79% (2001-2) Nat: 85% TV: 87%	80%	81%	82%	83%	84%	As above but only for level 1 qualifications

\* Source: (GCSE): SFR 02/2004; GCSE/GNVQ results and Key Stage 3 to GCSE/GNVQ value added measures for young people in England. 2002/03 (revised).  
(KS3): SFR 37/2003 National Curriculum assessments for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 value added measures for young people in England, 2002/03 (revised)

	Indicator	Baseline figure 2003	D'ton Target (2004)	D'ton Target (2005)	D'ton Target (2006)	D'ton Target (2007)	D'ton Target (2008)	Commentary
5.2	FE Success Rate: <b>Retention</b> at Level 2 (Common target)	Loc: 78% (2001-2)	79%	80%	81%	82%	83%	As above but only for level 2 qualifications
		Nat: 80%						
		TV: 82%						
5.3	FE Success Rate: <b>Retention</b> at Level 3 (Common target)	Loc: 90% (2001-2)	90.5%	91%	92.5%	92%	92.5%	As above but only for level 3 qualifications
		Nat: 86%						
		TV: 87%						
6	FE Success Rate: <b>Achievement</b> (all levels) (Common target)	Loc: 89% (2001-2)	89.5%	90%	90.5%	91%	91.5%	Source= LSC (ILR):Achievement (Provider Based)– Calculated for 16-18 year olds as the number of qualifications achieved divided by the number of completed qualifications. The calculation relates to learning aims so learners with more than one learning aim are included once for each aim.
		Nat: 80%						
		TV: 83%						
6.1	FE Success Rate: <b>Achievement</b> at NVQ Level 1 in colleges (Common target)	Loc: 77% (2001-2)	77.5%	78%	78.5%	79%	79.5%	As above but only for level 1 qualifications
		Nat: 75%						
		TV: 82%						
6.2	FE Success Rate: <b>Achievement</b> at Level 2 (Common target)	Loc: 78% (2001-2)	78.5%	79%	79.5%	80%	80.5%	As above but only for level 2 qualifications
		Nat: 75%						
		TV: 79%						
6.3	FE Success Rate: <b>Achievement</b> at Level 3 (Common target)	Loc: 93% (2001-2)	93.5%	94%	94.5%	95%	95.5%	As above but only for level 3 qualifications
		Nat: 83%						
		TV: 87%						



	Indicator	Baseline figure 2003	D'ton Target (2004)	D'ton Target (2005)	D'ton Target (2006)	D'ton Target (2007)	D'ton Target (2008)	Commentary
7	Success Rate in WBL (all levels)	Loc: 40% (2002-3) Nat: TV: 34%	41%	42%	43%	44%	45%	<p>Source: LSC (ILR) Modern apprentices– The number of 16-18 year old learners who have left, completed or progressed and have either met all of the requirements of their apprenticeship framework or achieved an NVQ required by the framework, divided by the number of learners who have left training or successfully completed their learning or completed and progressed to another programme.</p> <p>NVQ programmes – The number of 16 – 18 year old learners who have left, completed or progressed and have achieved an NVQ, divided by the number of learners who have left training, successfully completed their learning, or completed and progressed to another programme.</p> <p>These rates are calculated on a residence base due to the difficulty of calculating on a provider base at LEA level. <b>Note: baseline data is 2002/2003.</b></p>
7.1	Success in WBL: Level 1	Loc: 23% (2002-3) Nat: TV: 20%	24%	25%	26%	27%	28%	As above but only for level 1 qualifications
7.2	Success in WBL: Level 2	Loc: 47% (2002-3) Nat: TV: 34%	48%	49%	50%	51%	52%	As above but only for level 2 qualifications
7.3	Success in WBL: Level 3+	Loc: 48% (2002-3) Nat: TV: 46%	49%	50%	51%	52%	53%	As above but only for level 3 qualifications

## Performance Indicators

The following performance indicators are tracked annually by the Project Manager as part of the monitoring and evaluation process.

	Indicator	Baseline figure 2003	Commentary
A	% Achievement in English at Key Stage 3 (Level 5 and above)	Loc: 68%	Source= DfES: the number of eligible pupils in each subject who have achieved Level 5 or above in English as a proportion of all pupils who were at the end of KS3 and therefore eligible to be assessed.
		Nat: 69%	
B	% Achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 3 (Level 5 and above)	Loc: 73%	Source= DfES: the number of eligible pupils in each subject who have achieved Level 5 or above in maths as a proportion of all pupils who were at the end of KS3 and therefore eligible to be assessed.
		Nat: 71%	
C	% Achievement in science at Key Stage 3 (Level 5 and above)	Loc: 66%	Source= DfES: The number of eligible pupils in each subject who have achieved Level 5 or above in science as a proportion of all pupils who were at the end of KS3 and therefore eligible to be assessed.
		Nat: 68%	
D	GCSE (or equivalent) performance % achieving A*-C grade in English	Loc: 51%	Source=DfES: The number of pupils who gained A*-C grades in English as a proportion of all pupils aged 15.
		Nat: 52.9%	
E	GCSE (or equivalent) performance % achieving A*-C grade in mathematics	Loc: 45%	Source=DfES: The number of pupils who gained A*-C grades in maths as a proportion of all pupils aged 15.
		Nat: 48%	
F	% achieving Key Stage 4: GCSE at 5+ A*-G GCSEs (including GNVQ)	Loc: 89.5%	Source=DfES: Percentage of 15 year old pupils (age 15 at the start of academic year) who have 5 or more A*-G GCSE/GNVQ grades.
		Nat: 88.8%	
G	GCSE Average Points Score	Loc: 32.9	Average capped point score used
		Nat: 34.8	
H	Training Provider achievement of AMA completions.	Loc: 40% (2002-3)	Source = LSC (ILR) :The number of learners of all ages who have left the AMA programme (including those who have completed and progressed to another programme) who have met all of the requirements of their apprenticeship framework, divided by the number of learners who have either left training, completed their programme, or completed and progressed to another programme. These rates are calculated on a residence base due to the difficulty of calculating on a provider base at LEA level. <b>Note: baseline data is 2002/2003.</b>
I	Training Provider achievement of FMA completions.	Loc: 34% (2002-3)	Source = LSC (ILR): The number of learners of all ages who have left the FMA programme (including those who have completed and progressed to another programme) who have met all of the requirements of their apprenticeship framework, divided by the number of learners who have either left training, completed their programme, or completed and progressed to another programme. These rates are calculated on a residence base due to the difficulty of calculating on a provider base at LEA level. <b>Note: baseline data is 2002/2003.</b>
		Nat: TBA	
		TV: 25%	

J	Training Provider achievement of 1+ NVQs	Loc: 41% (2002-3)	<p>Source= LSC (ILR): The number of learners who have either left training or completed their programme and progressed to another programme and achieved an NVQ divided by the number of learners who have left training, completed, or completed and progressed to another programme. The calculation covers those on FMA and AMA courses who achieve an NVQ as well as those on NVQ programmes. The data covers all levels (1,2,3 and 4), and applies to people on AMA and FMA as well as NVQ only programmes. These rates are calculated on a residence base due to the difficulty of calculating on a provider base at LEA level.</p> <p><b>Note: baseline data is 2002/2003.</b></p>
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## 5. The Management of the Plan

### The Role of the Darlington Learning Partnership (DLP)

Currently the Darlington Learning Partnership, as a themed group of the Darlington Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership for Darlington), is the umbrella organisation for learning in Darlington, working closely with both the LEA and LSC Tees Valley.

The DLP is seen in 'An Opportunity for Excellence' as the overarching body, which holds that role on behalf of the wider learning community and providers in Darlington. This follows a model adopted elsewhere in the Tees Valley, where the Chairperson of the Learning Partnership has been a co-signatory of any action plan together with the Executive Director LSC TV and the Director of Education. The latest nationally produced LSC advice (Advice and Guidance for Area Inspections, February 2004) recognises this role. It states that *'effective learning partnerships may be able to secure a consensus about priorities for action and commitment to any re-organisation of provision and providers that may be necessary.'*

### The Function and Role of the Darlington 14-19 Trust

Figures 1 and 2 below demonstrate that the Partnership oversight of the 14-19 Strategy should reside within the DLP, but that, in effect, the day-to-day running of the strategy would be determined within the Trust, expanded to include Connexions and WBL provider representation. This structure, with LEA and LSC TV input, would ensure swift decision making and speedy implementation of and impact from decisions taken. The Darlington 14-19 Trust would take delegated responsibility for driving the Strategy forward, using its Executive Officer (EO) and Project Manager (PM) as its key staff.

In the words of *An Opportunity for Excellence* (page 28), the prime function of the Trust would be:

*'to manage and ensure the delivery of 14-19 provision for the students of Darlington. Instead of each school/college regarding its own students, and the curriculum offer they receive, as its own responsibility, the concept here would be that the Trust would assume overall communal responsibility for Darlington's curriculum offer in respect of all its 14-19 school/college based provision. It would agree the needs and the means by which those needs would be met.'*

Its key role is to:

- ✓ *Plan the 14-19 curriculum in such a way that the individual student's needs are placed first.*
- ✓ *Target funds on identified barriers to learning.*
- ✓ *Facilitate the deployment of key teachers across the Trust.*

- ✓ *Develop specialist centres of excellence, including vocational centres.*
- ✓ *Work towards a common timetable across the town.*
- ✓ *Ensure that the 14-19 Centre at Darlington College is responsive to students' needs and is a genuine communal activity involving learners, teachers and school/college senior management.*

### **Linkages between the School Improvement Board and the Trust**

To avoid duplication and unnecessary overlap between the functions of the LEA, School Improvement Board (SIB) and the Darlington 14-19 Trust, it is envisaged that the Trust would elect two representatives to sit on the main SIB whilst acting as the 'de facto' SIB Secondary Cluster. At times, Headteachers and LEA members of the Trust will arrange to meet independently at the beginning or end of Trust meetings in order to discuss Key Stage 3 issues within the remit of the School Improvement Board. In this way the Trust can link into the wider remit of the SIB, whilst at the same time focusing action on the 14-19 agenda.

### **The Role of the Executive Officer and Project Manager**

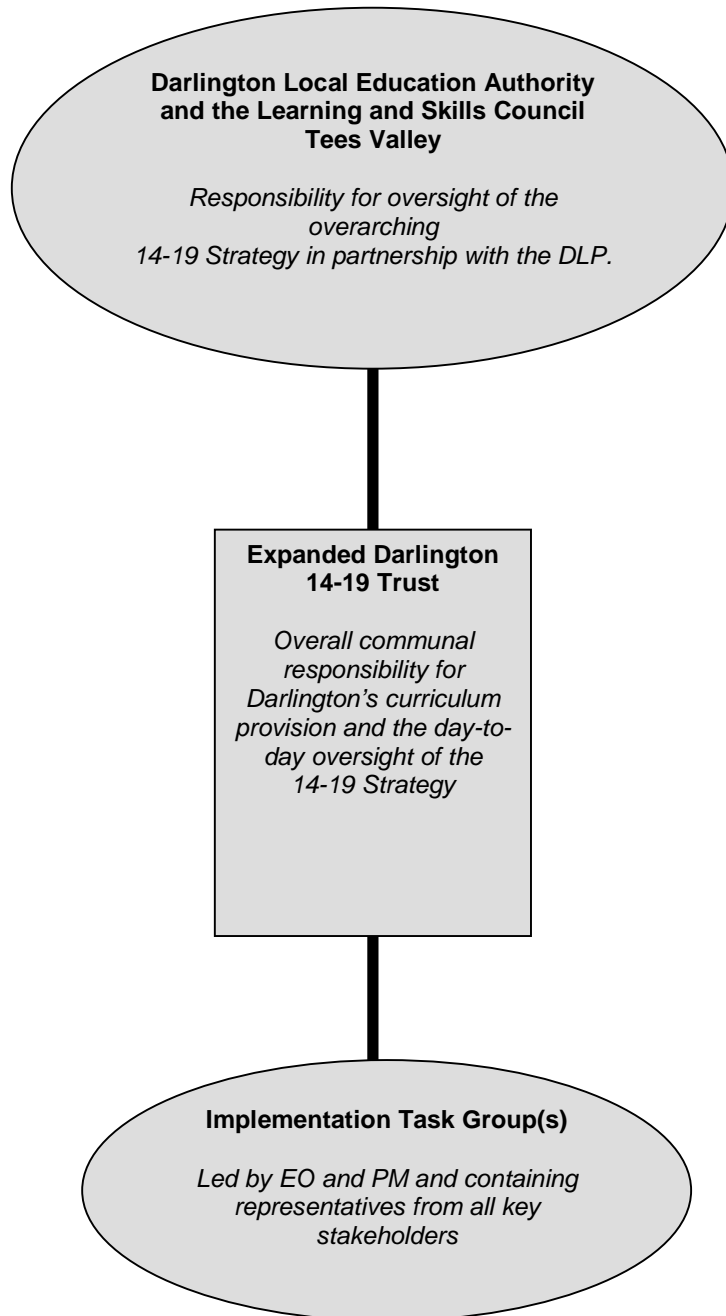
An Implementation Task Group led by the Trust's Executive Officer (EO) and Project Manager (PM) would include provider representatives who deal with practical implementation issues as determined by the Trust. The EO and PM would act as budget holders for any funds contributed by schools, the LEA and the LSC TV. Areas of responsibility for EO and PM will require precise definition: in outline the EO is likely to collaborate with providers to make the curriculum provision work, while the PM takes overall responsibility for driving forward and managing the Action Plan and ensuring effective monitoring of its progress.

It is the view of SSG that the EO would need to be a full-time appointment to ensure that initiatives were facilitated and that support was on hand to negotiate and broker joint working on behalf of the Trust. In the short term the LEA has agreed that their 14-19 School Development Officer should be seconded to fulfil the role of EO until the full scope of this post can be fully determined and a funding stream found to enable the post to be advertised and filled.

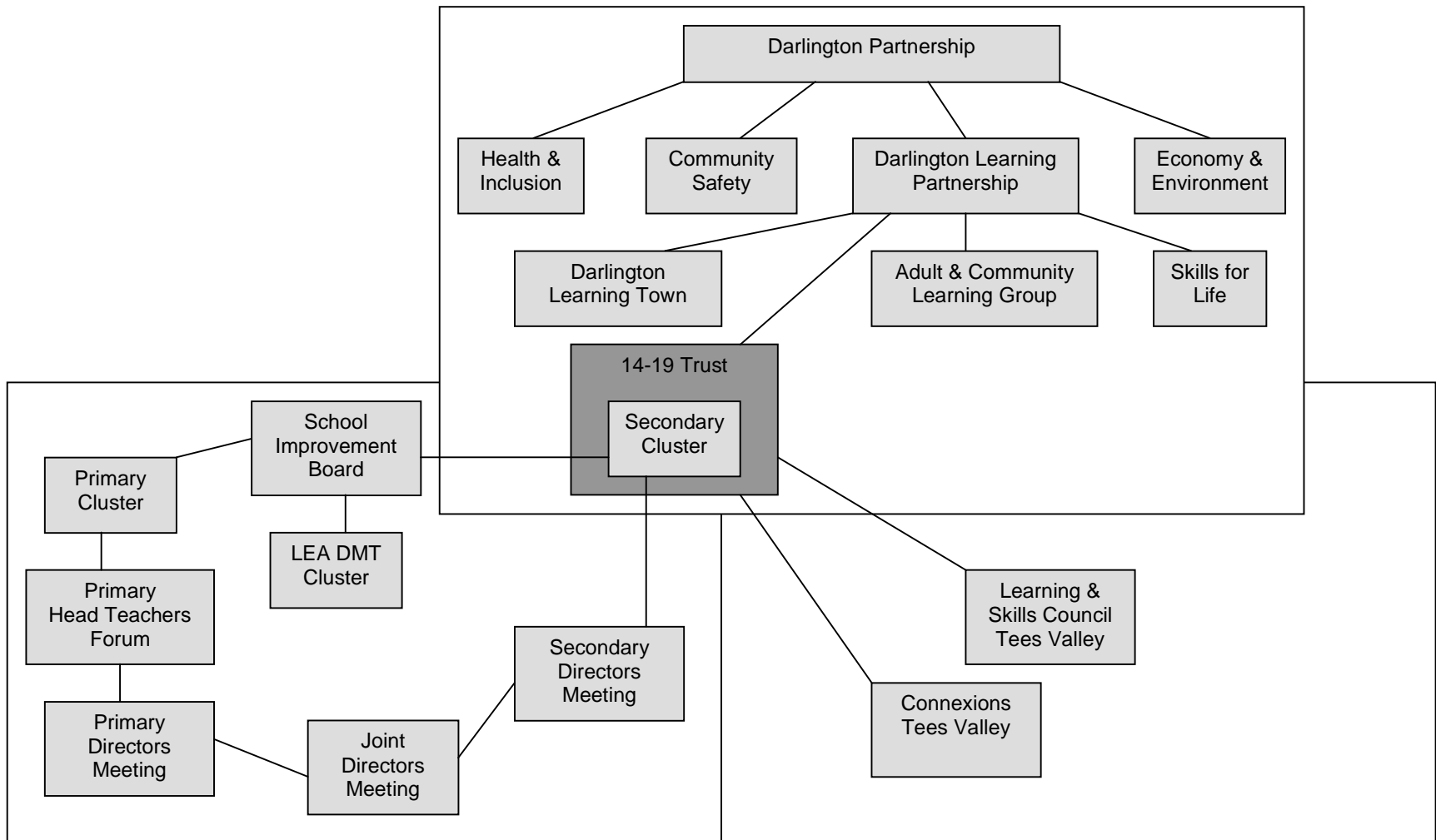
### **Line Management of the Executive Officer and Project Manager**

Currently, the Chair of the DLP line-manages the Project Manager for the implementation of the Strategy. In the event of the Darlington 14-19 Trust being formed, the Chair of the Trust would line-manage the EO. As day-to-day control of the whole strategy will be delegated to the Trust, it is suggested that the Chair of the Darlington 14-19 Trust be a full member of the DLP. It is important in the interests of 'joined up thinking' and effective lines of communication that the line-management of the EO is clear and compatible with that of the PM.

**Figure 1. Management of the Plan**



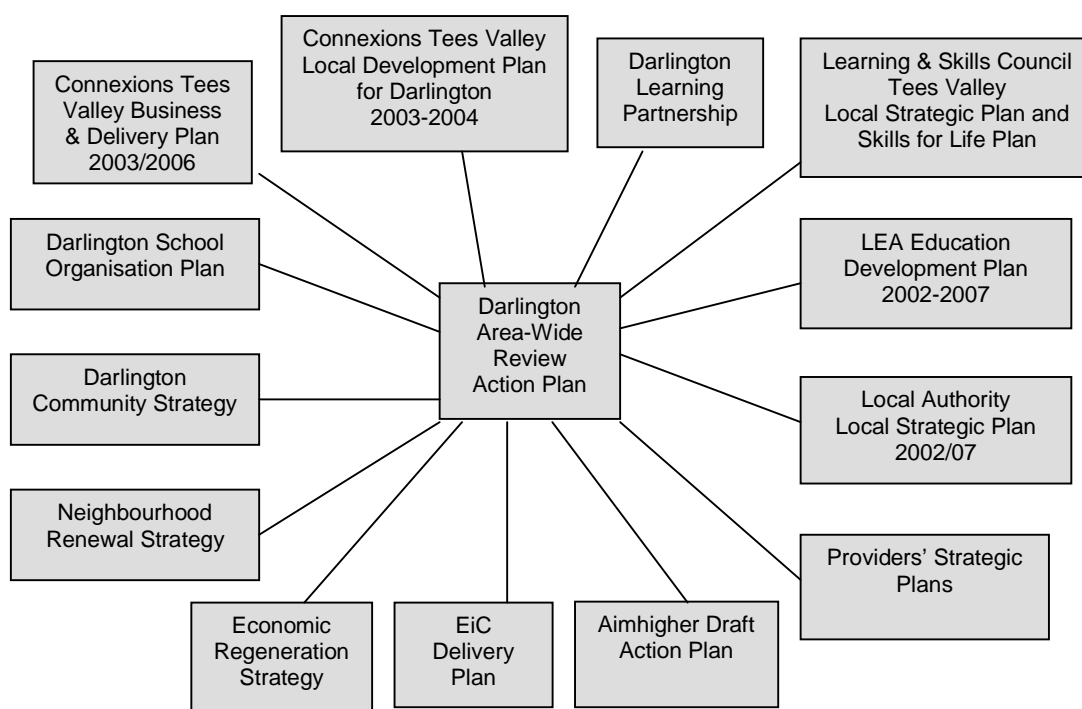
**Figure 2. The Relationship of the Darlington 14-19 Trust to Key Partners**



## 6. Links with Other Local Plans

The Area-Wide Action Plan draws from plans either already in place or in the process of development by the partners, as illustrated below in figure 3. This will ensure coherence in the strategic planning process for all 14-19 provision in Darlington.

**Figure 3.**



This Action Plan addresses all issues identified in the Area-Wide Review Report (June 2003). Equally importantly, it makes appropriate strategic links to wider aspects of 14-19 provision, not least the context of Local Education Authority planning, Learning and Skills Council Tees Valley 'Skills for Life Delivery Plan', Local Learning and Skills Council strategic planning and the developing Connexions TV Service. In particular, activities contained within the LEA's Education Development Plan 2002-2007, the Connexions Tees Valley Business, Delivery and Transition Plan and the LSC TV Local Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005 correlate closely with the Action Plan. For example:

- Darlington LEA's EDP 2002-2007 has several priorities designed specifically to address improved attainment by the end of Key Stage 4. In both KS3 (Priority 2) and KS4 (Priority 3) the LEA strategies for raising attainment and wider school improvement include improving teaching and learning, promoting the use of ICT and improved use of data. Continuing professional development and the dissemination of good practice are also stressed. At KS3



there are actions to address the under-achievement of boys which will be built upon by this Action Plan. At KS4 the EDP notes that: 'Importantly the LEA will ensure there is cohesion with partner post-16 and training providers and promote the introduction of vocational GCSEs' (Page 29). The 14-19 Trust will enable this to happen.

- The work planned by the LEA to 'Narrow Attainment Gaps and Tackle Under-Achievement' (Priority 4) also includes, within its work programme, improving the teaching and learning of under-achieving groups. This programme of activities is planned to have particular impact on the performance of boys, children in public care, traveller pupils and those pupils from areas of socio-economic disadvantage.
- The Connexions Business Plan is intrinsically concerned that young people gain access to the services and information that they need, so that they are able to participate and achieve fully.
- Four out of five of the LSC TV's key objectives are:
  - to extend participation in education, learning and training;
  - to increase engagement of employers in workforce development;
  - to raise the achievement of young people;
  - to raise the quality of education and training and improve user satisfaction.
- Partners have their own action plans that contribute to the main plan. These will be used to guide implementation and support monitoring arrangements.

Through the LSC Tees Valley and the Learning Partnership network every effort has been made to ensure that these activities complement wider initiatives and strategies across the Tees Valley area.

## **7. Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting the Plan**

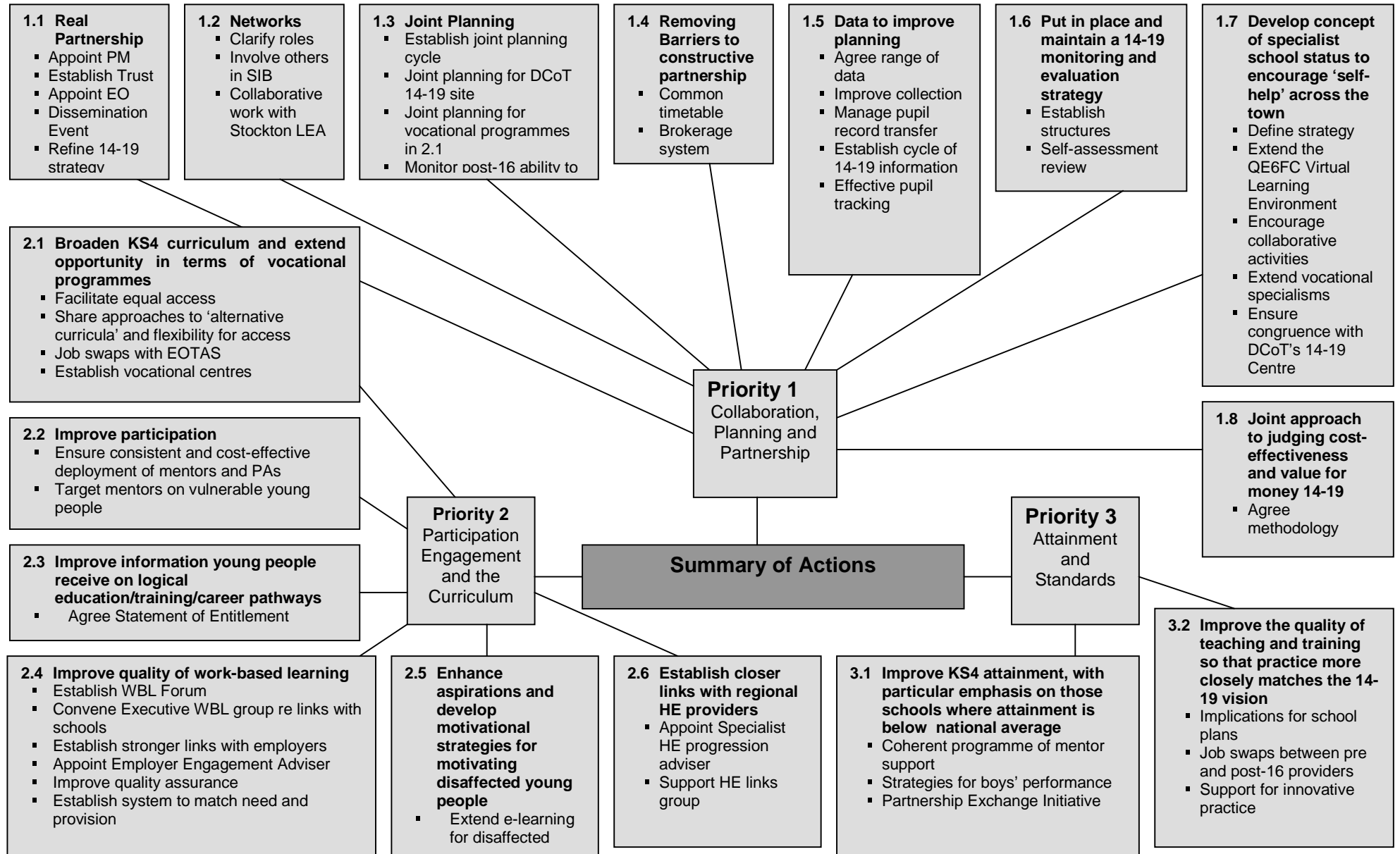
The role of the SSG will eventually be subsumed under the Darlington 14-19 Trust at its inauguration. The SSG's monitoring and evaluating function will be undertaken by a much smaller Scrutiny Group drawn from the DLP and containing, as a minimum, the Chair of the DLP together with LSC TV and LEA representatives. This group will meet 3 times a year in May, September and January to receive and evaluate progress reports from the EO and PM. Members of the DLP and Darlington 14-19 Trust would receive copies of these reports and queries could then be directed via the Scrutiny Panel to the EO and PM at their scheduled meetings. In the event of serious slippage or significant problems in implementing the 14-19 Strategy, the Scrutiny Group would bring this to the notice of the DLP for full discussion and recommendations for action. Meanwhile ongoing monitoring, dissemination of good practice and celebration of success would be the responsibility of the Trust's Executive Officer and Project Manager.

The Learning and Skills Council Tees Valley already maintains comprehensive records of auditing activities, together with relevant data/evidence associated with each audit, for scrutiny during further third party monitoring activities. Results of each audit are reported to the Chair of the Learning Partnership and, where necessary, consultation with key partners takes place regarding the re-specification of actions. In this additional way, progress against actions contained within the plan will be rigorously assessed.

## **8. Consultation on the Plan**

Both the Darlington Area Review ,undertaken by Bentley Jennison Consulting (June 2003), and the 14-19 Review, *An Opportunity for Excellence*, undertaken by Richard Knott Consulting (February 2004), involved extensive consultation with 14-19 providers in Darlington (see examples: Appendix 3). These two key reports have helped to inform this Action Plan but the partners realise that there is a critical need to disseminate this plan and the 14-19 Strategy to a much wider audience of representatives from the Darlington learning community.

This Action Plan accordingly contains a plan to launch the 14-19 Strategy at a major conference in October 2004. At this event employers, work-based learning providers, youth representatives and teachers from schools and colleges will meet with Darlington 14-19 Trust members to review the actions planned for 2004/5 and suggest future needs and developments. The intention is to ensure that ideas, concerns and evaluation from the 'grass roots' are fed into the planning cycle. If it proves useful, this type of activity may become a regular part of the annual cycle.



## 9. Action Plan Tables

Strategic Aim 1: Collaboration, Planning & Partnership							
Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
<b>1.1 Real Partnership</b>							
Establish a greater sense of partnership and collaboration.	a) Appoint Project Manager (PM) with admin to support implementation of overall 14-19 Strategy through the AWAP.	Appointments in place  PM commences first Area-Wide initiatives.  PM co-ordinates roll-out of agreed 14-19 Strategy	Nov 2003  Feb 2004  From June 2004	Effective co-ordination of implementation of the 14-19 Strategy.	Chair DLP	Monitoring and evaluation via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	Establishment of Trust in 2004/2005  £31,500 PM costs
	b) Establish the Darlington 14-19 Trust (DT) to manage and oversee the delivery of 14-19 provision – this is to be, in effect, a 14-19 communal partnership of all secondary schools and colleges in the town.	Funding streams agreed.  Trust Covenant drawn up, shared with governing bodies and agreed.	From June 2004  May 2004  Sept 2004	All potential partners sign up to the Trust Covenant.  Evaluation reveals improved approval ratings from students for curriculum provision, while all partners maintain engagement into second year.	Chair SSG	Monitoring and evaluation via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
	c) System for allocation of 14-19 funding discussed and agreed.		June 2004	Funding arrangements for allocating Trust funds and grants agreed initially and accepted thereafter.	Chair DT	Monitoring and evaluation via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost

Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
	d) Seek funding to appoint the Trust Executive Officer and provide the necessary administrative back up. (NB the role of SDO/EO to be filled by School Development Officer (SDO) until appointment can be made.)	Agreed job description, funding stream and management structure for the Trust by SSG. May 2004  Administrative provision and location confirmed by SSG.  Suitably qualified person appointed. Jan 2005	May 2004  May 2004.  Jan 2005 or before	Performance review at the end of 2004/5 academic year indicates satisfaction with SDO/EO's impact on 14-19 collaboration.	Chair Darlington 14-19 Trust (DT)	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	LEA contribution in 2004/5 £44,000 (Full year costs 2005/6 estimated at £67,000 for SDO/EO)
	e) Disseminate and consult on the 14-19 Strategy and refine accordingly.	Final strategy document accepted and approved by all parties.  Dissemination takes place on Strategy.	June 2004  Oct 2004	Agreed 14-19 Strategy with implementation underway.  Wider dissemination and feedback to inform next planning cycle.	Chair SSG	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	Conference costs  costed at 1.3 a)
	f) Confirm arrangements for updating the strategy and producing an operational plan on an annual basis.	Arrangements in place.	Sept 2004	School and College Development Plans reflect 14-19 strategy.	Chair SSG	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
<b>1.2 Networks</b>							
	a) Clarify and agree the respective roles of the various agencies in terms of 14-19 strategy and ensure that <u>all</u> involved understand the relationships and the extent of the network. June 2004	PM drafts Trust Covenant for discussion and endorsement by partners.	July 2004	Agreed Trust Covenant in place.	Chair SSG	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost

<b>Actions to secure the aim</b>	<b>Specific activity</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcome/Impact</b>	<b>Responsibility for implementation</b>	<b>Monitoring activity</b>	<b>Funding source 2004 - 2005</b>
	b) Involve the College Principals and the head of EOTAS in the School Improvement Board.	First meeting of expanded SIB.	May 2004	90% Attendance at relevant SIB meetings by College Principals and Head of EOTAS.	Chair, SIB	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
	c) Review the scope for collaboration with Stockton LEA on 14-19 in both specific initiatives and broader policy direction.	Programme of contacts with Stockton LEA agreed with SSG.	Nov 2004	Two specific examples of shared initiatives completed in first year (assuming initial agreement).	School Development Officer (SDO)	Monitoring via SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
<b>1.3 Joint Planning</b>							
Plan 14-19 provision jointly	a) Establish joint planning cycles (for curriculum and area-wide action planning) that is agreed and implemented by all relevant partners.	DT meet to confirm planning cycles	From July 2004	All key providers accept and conform to cycle.	PM-AWAP SDO/EO- Curriculum cycle	Monitoring via PM and SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	£12,500
	b) Facilitate effective joint planning – principals and heads – for the use of the Darlington College 14-19 site (from 2006).	Termly meeting of PM and SDO/EO with secondary heads and college principals.	From Dec 2004	All secondary schools involved at a practical level in both the planning process and implementation.	PM initially, then SDO/EO, with Principal DCoT	Monitoring via PM and SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	Costed at 1.3 a)
	c) Plan jointly for the learning vocational programmes described below (1.7)	Initial meetings between SDO/EO and school representatives.  Regular planning group led by SDO/EO with recommendations to DT.	Sept 2004	All secondary schools involved. End of year review 2004/5 indicates greater coherence of learning provision.	SDO/EO with PM	Monitoring via PM and SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	Costed at 1.3 a)

Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
	d) Review and monitor the ability of the post-16 providers to meet increasing demand on their individual and collective capacity.	DT includes review of demand provision as part of their cycle of meetings.	Sept 2004	Match between provision and demand improves. LEA and LSC kept updated with accurate data on the relationship between demand and capacity.	SDO/EO with PM	Monitoring via PM and SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
<b>1.4 Barriers</b>							
Remove barriers to more constructive partnership between school and college providers.	a) Agree a proportion of the week in which schools and colleges share a common timetable thereby facilitating shared provision of various kinds.	Agreement reached and planning commences	By Sept 2004 to take effect from Sept 2005	At least one block of time agreed and implemented	SDO/EO with PM	Monitoring via PM and SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
	b) Put in place a brokerage system whereby students' access to opportunities outside their own institution is extended.	Establish baseline data for current levels of student learning movement in academic year 2003/4.  Brokerage system fully operational.	Sept 2004  Jan 2005	Each secondary school involved in at least one additional and significant vocational activity with another institution.  For each of the next three years, 5% increase in pupils accessing appropriate provision out of the 'home' institution. (2003 baseline)  Student questionnaire reveals broad satisfaction with arrangements.	SDO/EO	Monitoring via SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost



Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
<b>1.5 Data and Transition Records</b>							
Improve planning through more timely, detailed and relevant data provision.	a) Agree the range of local and regional 14-19 data to be collected.	Data range published to partners	From Jan 2005	Each provider supplies required data on time and in the correct format.  Improve the process of data collection and analysis.	PM (with SDO/EO support)	Monitoring via PM and SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
	b) Data collected and shared with Implementation Group, DT and DLP.	First report by PM	Sept 2005	Rolling AWAP makes clear links between data and proposed action.	PM (with SDO/EO support)	Monitoring via PM and SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
	c) Improve the process whereby pupil records are passed on to post-16 providers	Transfer of pupil records monitored by SDO/EO Sept 2004.	By May 2005	Statistically valid random sample by SDO/EO indicates 95% success rate.  A common record transfer format and expectation with regard to pupils moving between institutions	SDO/EO (with PM support)	Monitoring via PM and SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	Costed at 1.3 a)
	d) Establish an annual cycle of 14-19 management information e.g. labour market trends, employer needs etc.  Reach an agreement on the information available and what further information partners can supply.  Establish a mechanism for sharing information to the partnership.	Identify lead partners  Develop the agreement  Establish a mechanism for gathering and disseminating data.	By Sept 2005	List of required management information agreed and data obtained in good time for use by DT.	PM (with LSC TV, Connexions TV and LEA support)	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost

Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
	e) Review the extent to which current arrangements for tracking pupils across the town are effective both for (a) vulnerable pupils and (b) the full ability range; in the light of that review, develop the town-wide pupil tracking mechanism to all partners' satisfaction.	Review commenced  Improved tracking system in place  Evaluation by Darlington Trust of new arrangements.	Sept 2004  Sept 2005  March 2006	Review completed within timescale.  Tracking enables more effective guidance and support.  System improved where necessary to users' satisfaction.	Connexions Locality Manager	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
<b>1.6 Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>							
Put in place and maintain a 14-19 monitoring and evaluation strategy.	a) Put in place structures that ensure the acquisition of key information on progress of the 14-19 strategy and its objective analysis and evaluation including the participation of <u>all</u> those involved, notably student 'consumers' of the provision.	First PM Progress Report  Establishment of Scrutiny Group and terms of reference  Involve YP representatives in Dissemination Conference  Collate information from student surveys	Sept 2004  Sept 2004  Oct 2004  Dec 2005	Information emerging from monitoring and evaluation processes is deemed valuable by DLP partners and informs the future development of the strategy.	PM	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
	b) Put in place the means by which self-assessment review can be effectively conducted in readiness for external inspection.	First draft of Self Review Evaluation Report put in place	Jan 2005	Appropriate information on current progress using AWAP criteria available on request.	External Consultant	First review of Year 1 via PM report to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost

Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
<b>1.7 Specialisms</b>							
Develop the concept of specialist school status to encourage 'self-help' across the town.	a) Define a strategy for more effective use of schools' subject specialisms, including improved access for all schools to that specialist expertise and the sharing of key teaching staff.	Draft strategy based on shared specialisms agreed	Sept 2004	Each school actively engaged in the process, both as 'consumer' and provider.	SDO/EO	Monitoring via SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	Costed at 1.3 a)
		DT consults and publishes strategy	Oct 2004	Approved strategy in place to guide timetable arrangements.			
	b) Extend the QE Virtual Learning Environment to partner schools to enable students to develop a range of study skills that will support GCSE and ICT study and ease the transition to post-16 education.  Staff in schools and college to work collaboratively to meet needs of 14-16 students and develop materials for the VLE.	Establish partner schools	From May 2004	Increased participation and retention rates (see targets)	Principal QE Sixth Form College	DT	£30,000  [transport costs and salary / supply costs]
		Develop material	Jan 2005	Student perception of the value of the VLE via student questionnaire.			
		Pilot	Feb 2005				
		Review and roll out	March 2005				
	c) Put in place a number of collaborative activities and courses open to 14-19 year olds across Darlington and supported by QE6FC VLE project, including:  - European Computer Driving Licence for G&T Y9 pupils	Course commences	Sept 2004	20 qualify for ECDL	ICT Co-ordinator at Hurworth	LEA SDO/EO will monitor at six-month intervals and report annually to DLP scrutiny group.	£10,000  [transport costs and salary / supply costs]

<b>Actions to secure the aim</b>	<b>Specific activity</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcome/Impact</b>	<b>Responsibility for implementation</b>	<b>Monitoring activity</b>	<b>Funding source 2004 - 2005</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saturday AM courses in maths and ICT for Y8&amp;9 G&amp;T pupils</li> <li>- Maths with Statistics GCSE course for G&amp;T Y10 &amp; 11 pupils</li> </ul>	<p>Clubs running</p> <p>Courses commence</p>	<p>Sept 2004</p> <p>Sept 2004</p>	<p>Improve G&amp;T pupils' ICT skills (as measured by post attendance pupil questionnaire).</p> <p>Improve pupils' Maths/Stats skills and 20 pupils achieve the Maths with Stats GCSE qualification.</p>	<p>Maths &amp; ICT Co-ordinators at Hurworth</p> <p>Maths Co-ordinator at Hurworth</p>	<p>LEA SDO/EO will monitor at six-month intervals and report annually to DLP Scrutiny Group.</p>	<p>See above</p>
	d) Extend the specialist school concept to embrace vocational specialisms in KS4 by mapping existing specialist expertise. Re-appraise the DfES capital bid proposals for a 14-19 Centre at Eastbourne and the establishment of vocational centres within targeted schools.	<p>Mapping complete</p> <p>First centre comes on line</p> <p>All centres open</p> <p>External evaluation undertaken</p>	<p>March 2005</p> <p>Sept 2005</p> <p>Sept 2006</p> <p>July 2007</p>	<p>Up to three vocational specialist centres set up in year 2.</p> <p>Contribution to 10% growth in vocational qualifications at 16 on 2003 baseline by July 2006.</p>	SDO/EO	<p>Monitoring via SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.</p>	<p>No additional cost</p>
	e) SDO/EO and PM to work with Principal of DCoT to ensure the congruence of these vocational specialist centres with DCoT's 14-19 centre.	<p>Regular meetings of PM/SDO/EO with secondary heads and college principals via DT</p>	<p>From March 2004</p>	<p>External review confirms close and logical relationship between the various centres.</p>	Principal DCoT	<p>Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.</p>	<p>No additional cost</p>
<b>1.8 VFM</b>							
Establish a joint approach to judging the cost-effectiveness and VFM of 14-19 based on the new success measures being developed jointly by DfES, LSC, Ofsted and ALI.	a) Work with LSC TV to implement the new VFM measures and embed them with providers.	<p>Implementation of the new success measures by providers.</p> <p>Full operational running of the new success measures.</p>	<p>From Sept 2005</p> <p>By Sept 2006</p>	<p>New success measures bedded in, will enable regular evaluation of VFM provision on a consistent basis across the sector and will facilitate national benchmarking.</p>	LSC TV	<p>Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.</p>	<p>No additional cost</p>

Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
<b>Strategic Aim 2: Participation, Engagement and the Curriculum</b>							
<b>2.1 Curricular Breadth</b>							
Broaden the KS4 curriculum and extend opportunity in terms of vocational programmes.	a) Improve equality of access to appropriate KS4 vocational provision for all Darlington students who want it via the introduction of a Junior Apprenticeship scheme and/or extension of vocational programmes, including construction, childcare, hairdressing, hospitality and catering, leisure and tourism, health & social care and photography.	DCoT and identified schools to develop a collaborative Junior Apprenticeship scheme and other programmes leading to NVQ Level 1.	From Sept 2004	Increase of 30 young people (on 2003 baseline) in young people accessing vocational programmes by Sept 2004.	SDO/EO	Monitoring via SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	£60,000  (Possible bid in June 2004 for matched funding via the European Social Fund Co-Financing Scheme)
		Interim review of Junior Apprenticeship scheme to inform planning for 2005/6 academic year.	Dec 2004	Increase in KS4 learners accessing WBL provision (on 2003 baseline) for the next three years.  Major contribution to WBL and FE Success Rates in Retention and Achievement at NVQ Level 1. (See Targets Section 4)			
		Survey of teachers and year 11 pupils.	March 2005	Teaching staff and pupils, when surveyed, indicate satisfaction with provision and access for this year 11 2004/5 cohort.			
	b) Schools share approaches to the development of 'alternative curricula' for pupils at risk of dropping out.	SDO/EO start to use Curriculum Planning Group for this activity	From June 2004	Exclusion targets met in each year.	PM	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
	c) Facilitate greater sharing of EOTAS approaches, including short-term secondments from mainstream and input from EOTAS staff.	First short term secondment Sept 2004	From Sept 2004	4 teacher short-term secondments arranged each year.	SDO/EO	Monitoring via SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	£2000

Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
<b>2.2 Participation</b>							
Ensure the consistent and cost-effective deployment of both learning mentor and Connexions Personal Adviser support for students across the town.	a) Darlington-wide Mentoring Group to plan collaboratively for learner support across the town. The Group will consider issues such as deployment, cost-effectiveness, a common approach to remuneration, CPD, the development of a strategy for future funding bids and the sharing of good practice.	Establish group and agree terms of reference  Establish a Darlington-wide Mentoring Network  PM and Darlington Aimhigher rep to work collaboratively  Review effectiveness of systems	March 2004  May 2004  March 2004  July 2005	Increased retention rates post 16 (see Targets, Section 4).    Review validates deployment and effectiveness.	PM / Locality Manager Connexions TV	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
	b) Transition mentoring pilot, targeting learning mentors on 'vulnerable' students at the point of transition.	Consultation through Mentoring Forum  Establish implementation group  Appointment of 4FTE mentors  First Review	Feb 2004  March 2004  May/June 2004  Nov 2005	Increased participation and retention post 16 (see Targets, Section 4).    Survey of target group indicates satisfaction with levels of support and access to learning.	PM	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost  [£90 000 from 2003/4 grant, £160,000 annual cost]

Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
<b>2.3 Guidance</b>							
Improve the information that young people receive on logical educational/ training/career pathways.	a) Define and agree a 'Statement of Entitlement' for all students – this should include the provision of <b>all</b> the information required for learners to make informed decisions.	Draft Statement of Entitlement produced	Sept 2004	Statement agreed and widely publicised.	PM	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
		Statement of Entitlement Agreed	Jan 2005	Y10 sample questionnaire indicates improved access to learning pathways.			
		Sample questionnaire used with Y10 pupils	Sept 2005	Contribution to Targets for improved progression and participation post-16 (see Section 4).			
<b>2.4 WBL</b>							
Improve the quality of work-based learning.	a) Establish a WBL Providers' Forum and ensure formal and regular links between that body and the Darlington 14-19 Trust.	WBL Providers Forum first meeting	May 2004	Providers' forum established and achieves minimum 75% attendance by members in first year.  Contribution to targets for Success in WBL (see Section 4).	PM	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
		Executive WBL Group established	Sept 2004	WBL providers when surveyed in Spring 2005 indicate satisfaction with changed routine.			
	b) Convene – as a sub-group of DT and the WBL forum (see below) – an Executive WBL group whose role is to: (a) establish closer links with schools; (b) agree how WBL might be extended, both in quality and perceived status.	Survey by Y12 & 13 students on YP views to establish WBL provision baseline	Oct 2004	Survey indicates closer match between learners' needs and provision so far as WBL is concerned.	SDO/EO	Monitoring via SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	£3,000 to cover survey costs.
		Group reports on how WBL can be improved	Jan 2005				
		Re-survey to enable progress to be measured.	Oct 2005				

<b>Actions to secure the aim</b>	<b>Specific activity</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcome/Impact</b>	<b>Responsibility for implementation</b>	<b>Monitoring activity</b>	<b>Funding source 2004 - 2005</b>
	c) Establish stronger links with local employers through a link associating employers with a specific school/college.	PM (with SDO/EO) to research 'buddy' system for schools, employers and professional bodies	From Jan 2005	Demonstrable increase in links between education, training providers and employers.	PM	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	No additional cost
	d) As part of the co-ordination of the DCoT-based Junior Apprenticeship scheme, appoint an Employer Engagement Business Adviser to promote Work-Based Learning to Employers to increase WBL placements in Darlington and increase capacity for 14-19 year olds.	Appointment of Adviser  Network of WBL Employers established  Increased WBL placements	Sept 2004  March 2005  March 2005	Increase number of apprentices on WBL by at least 30 young people per annum on 2003 baseline.  Increase number of placements  Increase post-16 participation in Darlington (see Targets, Section 4).  Decrease in NEET group by 5%	Principal DCoT	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	Costed at 2.1a
	e) Improve the consistency and reliability of WBL quality assurance.	LSC TV launch of Tees Valley Wide Pilot to develop good practice in the quality assurance of WBL (will involve one Darlington WBL provider).	From Sept 2004	Inspection of WBL QA reports on improved consistency and reliability.	LSC TV	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	£5,000
	f) Put in place a 'brokerage' system that ensures a closer match between need and provision.	WBL Forum to discuss and agree best way forward.	From Sept 2004	Survey of WBL providers suggests greater satisfaction with needs/provision match	PM		No additional cost



<b>Actions to secure the aim</b>	<b>Specific activity</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcome/Impact</b>	<b>Responsibility for implementation</b>	<b>Monitoring activity</b>	<b>Funding source 2004 - 2005</b>
<b>2.5 Disaffection</b>							
Enhance aspirations and develop strategies for motivating disaffected young people.	a) Extend and develop the use of e-learning for disaffected pupils building on pilot proposals developed at Carmel RC Technology College.	Carmel Project Meeting with PM, LEA, ICT staff and representative school staff to set up project.  Review of effectiveness	From June 2004  July 2005	Significant improvement in attendance and behaviour in disaffected within the project cohort.  Extend attendance by pupils outside Carmel RC Technology College.	Head Teacher, Carmel RC Technology College	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	To develop new projects: £9,500
<b>2.6 Higher Education</b>							
	a) Improve the quality of information, advice and guidance on progression to HE and in particular pathways to Foundation Degrees. Also, increase the capacity of such provision to ensure equal access for all students across Darlington.	Post-16 providers develop detailed plan	From April 2004	Y12 and Y13 students have access to guidance in 2004-5 (Report to DT)	Principal QE Sixth Form College	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	£32,500
	b) Appoint specialist HE progression advisers to work in collaboration with Aimhigher mentors and Connexions Personal Advisers to make key interventions for motivation and action planning across all post-16 providers.	Appointments made  Review	July 2004  March 2005	Qualitative targets to be determined	Principal QE Sixth Form College	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.	

Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
<b>Strategic Aim 3: Attainment &amp; Standards</b>							
<b>3.1 KS4</b>							
Improve KS4 attainment, with particular emphasis on those schools where attainment is below the national average.  <i>(See Links with Other Local Plans – Section 6 – Reference to EDP2)</i>	a)	Put in place a coherent programme of learning mentor support.  Darlington-wide Mentoring Group to work collaboratively to ensure the coherent deployment of mentors within KS4.  (See links with 2.2 and EIC proposals)	Establish group and agree terms of reference  Establish a Darlington-wide Mentoring Network  PM and Darlington Aimhigher rep to work collaboratively  Review effectiveness of systems	March 2004  May 2004  March 2004  July 2005	Improve 5A*-C at KS4 (see Targets, Section 4)	Chair of Darlington-wide Mentoring Group with PM support	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.  No additional cost  [£470,000 2004/5 EIC]
	b)	Establish 'Partnership Exchange Initiative' to enable staff to share and develop good practice with regard to mentoring.	Information to schools and colleges  'Exchanges'  First review	March 2004  April-July 2004  Aug 2004	Improved mentoring skills  Improved attainment rates for target cohort of pupils based on individual target setting data.	PM to lead with SDO/EO	Monitoring via PM and SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.  No additional cost  [£10,000 from 2003/4 grant]
	c)	Develop initiatives for Gifted and Talented Students in conjunction with EIC and Aimhigher.	LEA co-ordinating team to agree action plans  Put in place funded G&T initiatives  Review of impact	Sept 2004  From Sept 2004  Sept 2005	Improved grades 5 A*-C (see Targets, Section 4)	EIC and Aimhigher Planning Groups initially then co-ordinators if appointed	Monitoring via PM and SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT  No additional cost  [£470,000 EIC funding]
	d)	Establish strategies for improving boys' performance at GCSE in those schools where it is a significant problem.	Raising Achievement Group to agree strategies and allocate funding.	From May 2004	Gap between boys' performance at KS4 (5 A*-C) and girls reduces by 5%.  Also EDP2 success criteria – By 2007 boys' performance in English to meet that of girls.	SDO/EO	Monitoring via SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group and DT.  To develop new approaches - £4,000

Actions to secure the aim	Specific activity	Milestones	Timescale	Outcome/Impact	Responsibility for implementation	Monitoring activity	Funding source 2004 - 2005
<b>3.2 Teaching &amp; Learning</b>							
Improve the quality of teaching and training so that practice more closely matches the 14-19 vision in the borough.  <i>(See Links Priorities 2, 3 and 4 EDP2)</i>	a) Review in each school the implications of this plan and strategy for teaching and learning and accommodate within school's improvement plans.	Each secondary school reviews 14-19 strategy against SIP during Autumn Term 2004	From Sept 2004	Ofsted and other school monitoring identifies close match between declared vision and actual practice.	SDO/EO working with H/t and Principals.	Monitoring via SDO/EO reports to DLP Scrutiny Group.	No additional cost
	b) DT to support innovative practice in participating institutions, designed to improve achievement or remove barriers to learning and participation.	DT to encourage bids from participating institutions and prioritise for grant aid where funding permits.	From May 2004	Schools and colleges are able to demonstrate measurable quantitative and/or qualitative gains in the performance and skills of targeted pupils/students.	PM	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group.	No additional cost in 2004/5 but funding will be sought to support this action for 2005/6.
	c) Facilitate short term secondments between pre and post-16 providers.	PM to organise in Autumn Term	From Sept 2004	4 short term secondments successfully arranged in first year.	PM	Monitoring via PM reports to DLP Scrutiny Group.	£4,000

### **Introduction to Richard Knott's Report: *An Opportunity for Excellence***

The title of this report deliberately plays on that of *14-19: Opportunity and Excellence* published in 2003 by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). This set out a new direction and agenda for the 14 -19 phase of education and training in this country. *An Opportunity for Excellence* as a title is not just an extravagant wordplay, a rhetorical flourish: it is intended to emphasise the real opportunity for change that exists in Darlington as a result of a combination of factors. The strategy that is defined here includes within it a fresh approach to longstanding challenges, an approach that rests on mutual trust and working together in partnership, not stark competition or vulnerable isolation.

This report was commissioned by the Director of Education in Darlington and draws on a wide range of evidence and views in order to provide a coherent, sustained and deliverable strategy for 14-19 education and training in the borough. The fieldwork and research was completed during the Autumn term 2003 and January 2004.

#### **The preparation of this document has involved the following activities:**

- Auditing present 14-19 provision in each institution in the town, as well as considering and discussing planned developments.
- Collecting a range of performance and other data, including, for example, the extent of vocational provision pre-16 and current labour market information.
- Synthesising that information, relating it to the perceptions of people in the field, and drawing conclusions about needs and priorities.
- Preparing an initial position statement to be used as the basis for interviews with Headteachers and Principals.
- Accessing good practice in the 14-19 field; synthesising the findings and applying them to the Darlington context.
- Interviewing and discussing with a range of stakeholders, including representatives from the Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council, Connexions, the LEA, schools, colleges, and training providers.
- Testing out findings and priorities with a range of interested parties, including, for example, headteachers and officers at the Director's Conference in November 2003, the 14-19 Area Review Project Manager, and the Strategic Steering Group (SSG) at a specially convened meeting on 26 January 2004.

- Identifying the essential elements of a 14-19 strategy, testing each for feasibility and practicability.
- Analysing the potential for a whole town federation whereby all the town's schools and colleges collaborate in the delivery of a shared 14-19 vision.

(The list of those interviewed as part of this exercise is provided in Appendix 3 of the Area-Wide Action Plan. Appendix 4 lists each of the tables included in *An Opportunity for Excellence*).

The early phase of the exercise coincided with work being conducted in response to the 16-19 Area-Wide Review conducted<sup>15</sup> on behalf of the Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Darlington Learning Partnership (DLP). A Strategic Steering Group had been established to oversee the preparation of an Action Plan whose purpose was to address the issues identified for attention in the Area-Wide Review. A collective decision was taken however by all key partners - LSC, LEA, 14-19 Forum and Strategic Steering Group (SSG) - to defer the response until a wider 14-19 strategy had been defined. This report – *An Opportunity for Excellence* - sets out that strategy. It has been written to a broader remit than the Area-Wide Review Action Plan, including, it should be noted, Key Stage 4 of statutory education. At the same time, steps were taken to ensure that the two documents were mutually consistent and compatible. A series of meetings was held between the author of this report and the consultant charged with the facilitation and writing of the response to the Area-Wide Review. It is important to note that the early work of the SSG has been invaluable in the preparation of this report and strategy.

In shaping this strategy, the following key principles have been adopted:

- The need to make full use of the earlier Area-Wide Review, drawing on its breadth of data and taking careful note of the issues identified. At the same time, it has been thought fitting to synthesise the key messages and relate them to the wider 14-19 picture.
- The need to take full account of the LEA's 14-19 Pathfinder bid.
- The need to frame a realistic, accessible and deliverable report and strategy in language that is direct and clear. A number of interviewees commented that “what we need are quick wins” and that too has been a prevailing principle through the writing of this document.
- That the strategy should address confirmed needs, be aimed at the short, medium and longer terms, and demonstrably put learners' needs first.

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<sup>15</sup> By Bentley Jennison Consulting

### Group Membership

#### Strategic Steering Group Membership

##### Members

Nick James (Chair)	Director of Strategy & Communications, LSC Tees Valley
Ruth Ash	Area Review Project Support Officer, Darlington Learning Partnership
Sarah Bentley	Assistant Manager, Morrison Enterprise Trust
Ruth Bernstein	Head of Libraries and Community Learning, Darlington Borough Council
Paul Brignall	Senior Contract Manager, LSC Tees Valley
Helen Ellison	Area Review Project Manager, Darlington Learning Partnership
Sarah Farley	Principal, Darlington College of Technology
Eamonn Farrar	Chief Executive, Eastbourne / Hurworth Federation
John Gasper	DISC
David Heaton	Principal, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College
Ann Hughes	Deputy Head Teacher, Hummersknott School & Language College
Diane Hunt	Learning for All Director, LSC Tees Valley
Lynn Kilpatrick	Locality Manager, Connexions Tees Valley
Denise McNaughton	Centre Manager, North East Chamber of Commerce
Trevor Mortlock	Job Centre Plus
Jim O'Neill	Head Teacher, Carmel RC Technology College
Liz Orr	Senior Quality Manager, LSC Tees Valley
Val Pringle	Director, City Centre Training
Lauren Robinson	Manager, Darlington Association on Disability
Steve Rose	Chief Executive, Darlington Partnership
Dela Smith	Head Teacher, Beaumont Hill School & Technology College
Karen Taylor	Quality Manager, LSC Tees Valley
Christine Thompson	Work Experience Manager, Learn2Work
John Thorley	School Development Officer, Darlington Borough Council
Bob Tuddenham	Vice-Principal, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College
Alan Wallace	Planning Manager, LSC Tees Valley
Maureen Williams	Training Manager, Darlington Borough Council
Karen Williamson	Development Officer, Darlington Learning Partnership

##### Co-opted Task Group Members

Richard Knott	Education Consultant
Eric Reed	Education Consultant

## Strategic Steering Group - Terms of Reference

1. Establish priorities for the work of the group.
2. Be responsible for overseeing, leading and developing the Darlington Area Review Action Plan, providing advice on the structure, content and productive links.
3. Assist in the establishment of any key task groups and oversee group activity.
4. Ensure that interim targets are met and that outline/final plans are produced within required timescales.
5. Liaise with LSC TV representative where appropriate at various stages during the development of the Action Plan and implementation of agreed improvement activities.
6. Explore and make best use of the funding opportunities available for both the development of the Action Plan and implementation of agreed improvement activities.
7. Oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities contained within the Action Plan.
8. Review the Action Plan at regular intervals and update it as necessary.

## Darlington Learning Partnership Membership

David Heaton (Chair)	Principal, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College
Gary Adams	Training and Development Officer, Affinity Healthcare
Ruth Ash	Area Review Project Support Officer, Darlington Learning Partnership
Ruth Bernstein	Head of Libraries and Community Learning, Darlington Borough Council
Debbie de Muschamp	Head Teacher, Mount Pleasant Primary School
Kate Eldon	Careers Co-ordinator, Construction Industry Training Board
Helen Ellison	Area Review Project Manager, Darlington Learning Partnership
Sarah Farley	Principal, Darlington College of Technology
Eamonn Farrar	Chief Executive, Eastbourne / Hurworth Federation
Alf Fulcher	TUC Tutor, Darlington College of Technology
Nick James	Director of Strategy and Communications, LSC Tees Valley
Lynn Kilpatrick	Locality Manager, Connexions Tees Valley
Tony Lindsay	Acting Director, Darlington and Durham Council for Racial Equality
Jim O'Neill	Head Teacher, Carmel RC Technology College
Geoff Pennington	Director of Education, Darlington Borough Council
Lauren Robinson	Manager, Darlington Association on Disability
Steve Rose	Chief Executive, Darlington Partnership
Dela Smith	Head Teacher, Beaumont Hill School & Technology College
Nigel Vaughan	Tees Valley Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator
Alison Walton	Assistant Director – Head of Children's Services, Social Services Department
Lucy Wheatley	Children's Services Project Leader, Darlington Primary Care Trust
Maureen Williams	Training Manager, Darlington Borough Council
Karen Williamson	Development Officer, Darlington Learning Partnership
Clive Wrigley	Training Manager, Darlington Building Society

## **Darlington Learning Partnership Objective / Remit Statement, March 2003**

Darlington Learning Partnership was established, in common with other Learning Partnerships nationally, in 1999. It is part of a wider group, the Tees Valley Learning Partnership through which (via Government Office North East) it receives its funding. From April 2003 the Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council will take over the funding responsibility.

Darlington Learning Partnership is accountable to the Tees Valley Learning Partnership and GONE, and from April 2003 it will be accountable to the Learning and Skills Council.

The Learning Partnership is also incorporated into the structure of Darlington Partnership, the Local Strategic Partnership for Darlington, as the Learning and Skills Themed Group of the Local Strategic Partnership. As such, Darlington Learning Partnership is responsible for overseeing the delivery of elements of the Community Strategy for Darlington.

### **Aims**

Following the latest guidance from the DfES, Darlington Learning Partnership aims to:

- Promote provider collaboration in support of lifelong learning
- Maximise the contribution of learning to local regeneration
- Undertake wider roles where local partners recognise that they are the right body to do so. In Darlington it has been agreed that the Learning Partnership will facilitate the achievement of the Learning and Skills outcomes contained within the Community Strategy.

### **Key Objectives**

The key objectives of the Learning Partnership are to develop strategies, with partners, to:

- Improve access to learning opportunities
- Improve access to information relating to learning opportunities
- Increase and widen participation in learning at all ages
- Co-ordinate learning networks to enhance the quality of learning for all
- Improve levels of basic skills
- Raise levels of achievement at all ages
- Involve employers in workforce development
- Ensure comprehensive and high quality early years provision
- Improve attendance at schools

### **Remit**

The aims and objectives of the Darlington Learning Partnership apply to all learners and non-learners across the borough of Darlington. As a themed group of Darlington Partnership and component part of the Tees Valley Learning Partnership, it seeks to work with:

Early years providers  
Primary schools  
Secondary schools  
FE Colleges  
Connexions

Adult and Community  
Education  
Voluntary sector  
Private learning providers  
Private employers

Tees Valley Learning and  
Skills Council  
Darlington Borough Council  
Darlington Learning Town



### **List of Interviewees from *An Opportunity for Excellence***

Carole Akam, EOTAS Manager, Darlington LEA

Barbara Cole, Schools Directorate Adviser, Department for Education and Skills

Howard Clarke, Stockton LEA

Keith Cotgrave, Headteacher, Longfield Comprehensive School

Michael Davison, Headteacher, Haughton Comprehensive School

Helen Ellison, Project Manager 14-19 Area Review

Sarah Farley, Principal and Chief Executive, Darlington College of Technology

Eamonn Farrar, Chief Executive, Eastbourne/Hurworth Federation

Howard Gilfillan, Acting Head, Branksome School

David Heaton, Principal, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

Cheryl Hodds, Operations Manager (Work-based Learning), Tees Valley LSC

Pat Howarth, Headteacher, Hummersknott School

Diane Hunt, Director, Learning For All, Tees Valley LSC

Dean Judson, Headteacher, Hurworth Comprehensive School

Lynn Kilpatrick, Connexions Tees Valley

Denise McNaughton, NE Chamber of Commerce

Sandra Morton, Project Manager, Hartlepool 14-19 Area Review

Jim O'Neill, Headmaster, Carmel Technology College; Chair 14-19 Forum

Karen Pemberton, Headteacher, Eastbourne School

Geoffrey Pennington, Director of Education, Darlington LEA

Val Pringle, Director, City Centre Training

Eric Reed, Consultant

Dela Smith, Headteacher, Beaumont Hill School & Technology College

John Thorley, School Development Officer, Darlington Borough Council

Maureen Williams, Training Manager, Darlington Borough Council

In addition, the following interviewees contributed relevant insights during the Eastbourne Options Analysis conducted during 2003:

Paul Carvin, Senior Secondary Adviser, Gateshead LEA

Pam Eccles, Executive Director, Tees Valley LSC

Henry Edwards, 14-19 Action Plan Manager

Peter Parish, Head of Education Strategy and Achievement, North Tyneside LEA

David Smith, Senior Consultant, Nord Anglia

### List of Tables from *An Opportunity for Excellence*

Table 1: Employment in Darlington

Table 2: Deprivation in Darlington

Table 3: Secondary Schools in Darlington

Table 4: Comparisons at GCSE in 2003 (Tees Valley LEAs)

Table 5: Trends in GCSE Performance

Table 6: Improvements at GCSE 2000 -2003 (% 5 or more A\*-C)

Table 7: Variations at GCSE

Table 8: KS3 to GCSE/GNVQ Value Added Measure

Table 9: Value Added From KS2/3 and KS3/4 (Schools)

Table 10: Variations between boys and girls achieving GCSE 5 A\*-C

Table 11: Post-16 results

Table 12: Post-16 comparisons

Table 13: Destinations of Year 11 School Leavers

Table 14: Interviewees' views (a) The Curriculum and Achievement

Table 15: Interviewees' views (b) Structures and Systems

Table 16: Perceived Priorities

Table 17: Summary of Darlington's Needs

Table 18: KS4 Curriculum Provision

Table 19: Links

Table 20: Estimated Costs by Activity (Action Plan)

### List of Related Local Strategic Plans and Data Sources

- Aimhigher Draft Action Plan
- Connexions Tees Valley Local Development Plan for Darlington 2003 - 2004
- Connexions Tees Valley Business & Delivery Plan 2003 – 2006
- Darlington Borough Council Comprehensive Performance Assessment Review
- Darlington Behaviour Support Plan
- Darlington Community Strategy 2001 – 2006
- Darlington Learning Partnership Operating Plan
- Darlington LEA Education Development Plan 2002 – 2007
- Economic Regeneration Strategy
- EiC Delivery Plan
- Hartlepool 16-19 Area-Wide Inspection Action Plan
- Learning and Skills Council Tees Valley Local Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005
- Learning and Skills Council Tees Valley Skills for Life Adult Literacy and Numeracy Delivery Plan
- Local Authority Best Value Performance Plan
- Middlesbrough 16-19 Area-Wide Inspection Action Plan
- Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- One North East Regional Economic Strategy (RES)
- Provider Self Review Action Plans
- Redcar & Cleveland Area-Wide Inspection Action Plan
- Stockton 16-19 Area-Wide Inspection Action Plan
- Tees Valley Lifelong Learning Plan

### Data Sources

- Annual Survey of School Leavers' Destinations – Connexions 1992
- DfES Data on Examination results
- Individual Student Record Database
- LSC TV Local Data

Table A

## Summary of Additional Costs

Ref	List of Activities	2004 – 5 (£)	2005 – 6 (£)
1.1 a)	Appoint PM & Admin	31,500	67,000
1.1 d)	Appoint EO & Admin	To be funded by LEA	67,000
1.3 a)	Establish joint planning cycle	12,500	12,500
1.4 b)	Brokerage system for students to facilitate movement of staff and students	-	20,000
1.6 a)	Structures to ensure key information is acquired on the progress of the 14-19 strategy	-	3,000
1.7 b)	Extend the QE Virtual Learning Environment to partner schools	30,000	50,000
1.7 c)	Put in place a number of collaborative activities and courses open to 14-19 year olds	10,000	-
2.1 a)	Facilitate equal access to appropriate KS4 vocational provision	60,000	60,000
2.1 c)	Greater sharing of EOTAS approaches including short-term secondments	2,000	2,000
2.2 b)	Transition mentoring pilot	2003-4 grant	160,000
2.4 b)	Convene WBL Forum	3,000	-
2.4 e)	Improve the consistency and reliability of WBL quality assurance	5,000	-
2.5 a)	Extend and develop the use of e-learning for disaffected pupils	9,500	-
2.6 a)	HE Advisers	32,500	32,500
3.1 b)	Partnership Exchange Initiative	2003-4 grant	
3.2 b)	DT to support innovative practice	-	10,000
3.2 c)	Facilitate short term secondments between pre- and post-16 providers	4,000	6,000
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>£200,000</b>	<b>£490,000</b>

**Table B****Estimate of Total Costs from all Funding Sources**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>List of Activities</b>	<b>2004 – 5 (£)</b>	<b>Source</b>
1.1 a)	Appoint PM & Admin	65,500	LSC TV
1.1 d)	Appoint EO & Admin	44,000	LEA secondment
1.3 a)	Establish joint planning cycle	12,500	LSC TV
1.7 b)	Extend the QE Virtual Learning Environment to partner schools	30,000	LSC TV
1.7 c)	Put in place a number of collaborative activities and courses open to 14-19 year olds	10,000	LSC TV
2.1 a)	Facilitate equal access to appropriate KS4 vocational provision	60,000	LSC TV
2.1 c)	Greater sharing of EOTAS approaches including short-term secondments	2,000	LSC TV
2.2 b)	Transition mentoring pilot	90,000	LSC TV
2.4 b)	Convene WBL Forum	3,000	LSC TV
2.4 e)	Improve the consistency and reliability of WBL quality assurance	5,000	LSC TV
2.5 a)	Extend and develop the use of e-learning for disaffected pupils	9,500	LSC TV
2.6 b)	HE Advisers	32,500	LSC TV
3.1 a)	Improve KS4 attainment	470,000	EiC
3.1 b)	Partnership Exchange Initiative	10,000	LSC TV
3.2 c)	Facilitate short term secondments between pre- and post-16 providers	4,000	LSC TV
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>£848,000</b>	

**A Map Showing 14-19 Learning Providers in Darlington**





## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A Level	General Certificate of Education Advanced Level
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
AMA	Advanced Modern Apprenticeship
AS	General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary Level
AWAP	Area Wide Action Plan
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTV	Connexions Tees Valley
DCoT	Darlington College of Technology
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DT	Darlington 14-19 Trust
Dir. Of Ed.	Director of Education
DP	Darlington Partnership
DLP	Darlington Learning Partnership
EDP	Education Development Plan
EiC	Excellence in Cities
EO	Executive Officer
EOTAS	Education Other Than At School
ExCh	Excellence Challenge (Aimhigher)
FE	Further Education
FMA	Foundation Modern Apprenticeship
FTE	Full Time Employment
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
G&T	Gifted and Talented (strand of EiC/ExCh)
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KS	Key Stage
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSC	Learning and Skills Council (National Office)
LSC TV	Learning and Skills Council Tees Valley
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PAs	Connexions Tees Valley, Personal Advisers
PM	Project Manager
QA	Quality Assurance
QE6FC	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

SDO	School Development Officer
SIB	School Improvement Board
SSG	Strategic Steering Group
VCE	Vocational Certificate of Education
VFM	Value for Money
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
Voc.	Vocational
WBL	Work Based Learning

### **Acknowledgements**

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