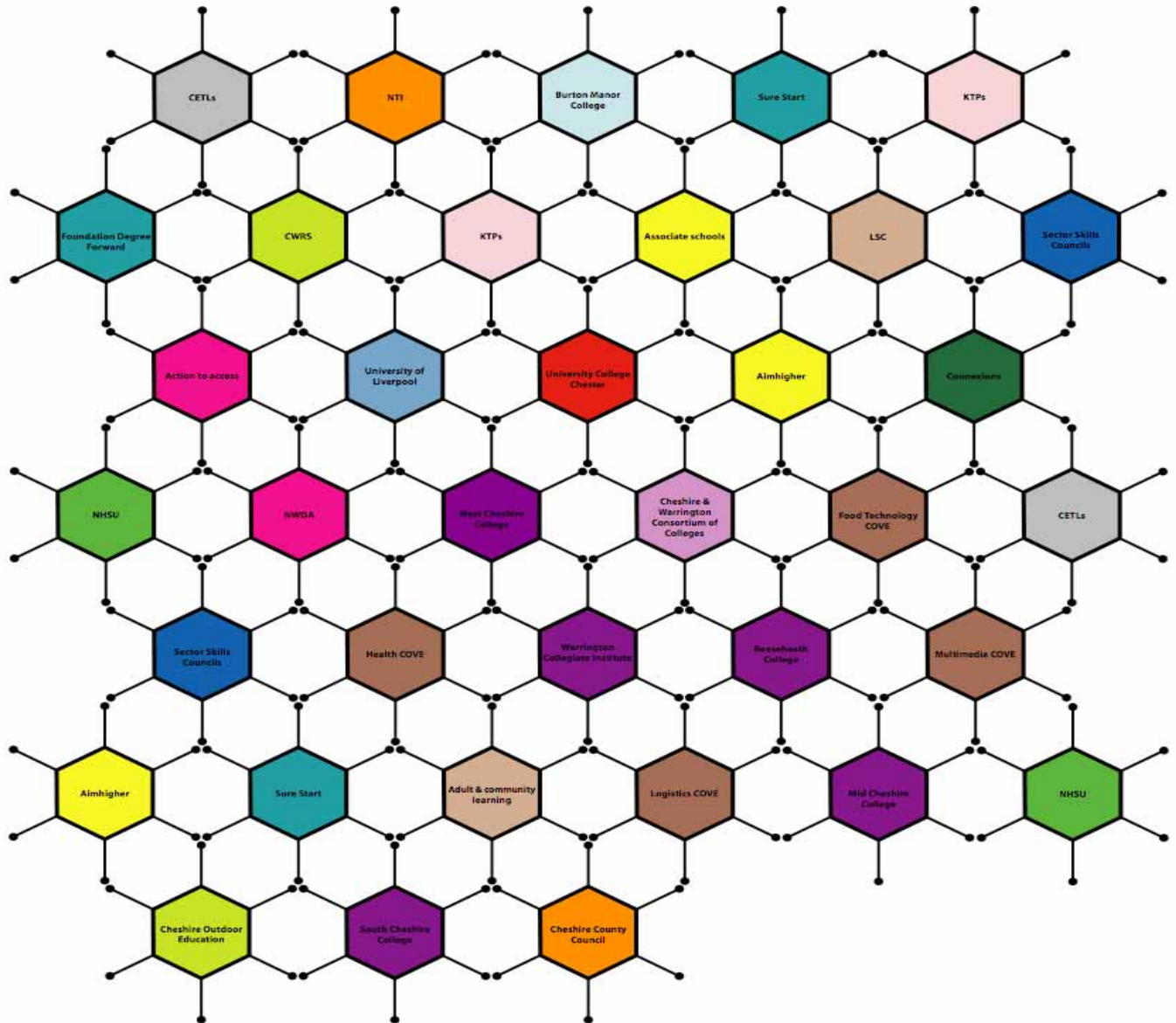


# Lifelong Learning Networks

## Final Proposal



**A proposal to develop a Cheshire and Warrington  
Lifelong Learning Network  
MAY 2005**

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# **Lifelong Learning Networks: A Proposal to develop a Cheshire and Warrington Lifelong Learning Network and Learning Matrix**

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the sub-region of Cheshire and Warrington there are no clear or simple pathways for progression into higher levels of vocational learning. This is especially so for adults who tend to enter Higher Education through the non-A level route. Various routes exist in different skills sectors and occupational areas, but for a learner embarking on a vocational route they have some significant barriers and bridges to cross. This LLN intends to remove the barriers to higher educational vocational learning via (a) deep engagement with 14-19 learners to offer a clear alternative vocational route to HE and (b) re-engaging adults in the workplace who are neither in education nor training and have never realised their full potential. We intend to deliver a non traditional vocational HE curriculum which does not exist at present across the sub-region that will become a permanent feature in the delivery of HE in Cheshire and Warrington.

All financial aspects of this project including possible HEFCE grant is in total circa £16,145m.

### **Key points**

#### **1.1 New vocational HE curriculum**

This Lifelong Learning Network will be an educational skills and business partnership that will bring 2,000 part and full time learners into 7 **areas of regional skills shortages**. This will be through a mapped and signposted 14-18 and 19+ further and higher education curriculum. This curriculum will form a non-traditional qualification framework across providers and levels of learning leading into employment. The LLN will develop new Higher Education (HE) vocational curriculum, 20+ new Foundation Degrees (FDs), and signpost routes through the existing School/Further Education (FE) national qualifications curriculum.

#### **1.2 New local delivery**

Delivery of new HE Foundation Degree provision will be in the centre of the community, locally based, across Cheshire and Warrington, delivered at:

- Higher Education Institutions;
- Further education colleges/CoVEs; and
- 3 new **LINC (Learning in the Community)** centres, to be established by the LLN.

#### **New LINC centres**

The 3 new **LINC** centres will significantly enhance and facilitate local HE learning. The key features of these LINC centres that make them unique in complementing existing provision in Cheshire and Warrington are:

- Geography – located in areas of social deprivation (Wards in the highest 10% of national IMD in Warrington, Winsford, Chester), where hard evidence shows learners will not travel out of community to study;
- Co-locational 14-16 (focus on the Gifted and Talented cohort), FE, HE, Adult and Community Learning provision;
- Value For Money – sharing of facilities, resources and subject staff;
- It builds on the specific local curriculum expertise and needs of each location, then provides HE progression routes; and
- A 'one stop shop' with all levels of learning available, particularly at times to suit the part-time learner. A distinct feature being that evenings and weekend learning provision will be supported by the presence of advice and guidance workers.

Three LINC centres are proposed each making a curriculum offer that reflect one of two aspects of the local community:

- Specific curriculum expertise, for example local schools with specialist subject status, or an FE with a CoVE.
- Local skills shortage areas where partners in the LLN who are employers, will help gain Professional Body recognition for curriculum developments via Sector Skills Council partner involvement.

### LINC Curriculum Funding

LINC centre curriculum will be funded for FDs via the ASNs requested. It is proposed that curriculum other than HE provision will be funded by 'redirecting' mainstream funding from partner institutions who will use the LINC centre to deliver aspects of their own curriculum should they wish to make use of resources. This will not 'take' resource from partners; they will simply spend it in the LINC Centre. No additional funding will be needed to maintain this. The FE level 2/3 curriculum will be funded via the LSC and rather than delivery being in the FE college, it will be in the LINC centre using the high specification facilities, and the ACL curriculum will be funded through the LSC via the Local Authority in the same way as currently exists.

### 1.3 Network development based on existing successful collaboration

This LLN has an 'open to all' approach to educational institutions but is based on an existing collaboration of educational partners, four HEIs and fourteen FECs who have worked together in partnership to successfully deliver a curriculum climbing frame in skills areas needed for Health Assistant Practitioners across Cheshire, Warrington and Merseyside. Aimhigher has been involved with all aspects of both the Health and this LLN proposal, making a major contribution in all respects. Cheshire and Warrington LLN have and will continue to work in partnership with the Greater Merseyside LLN to further expand upon this existing educational network development. Partnership work with the Greater Manchester LLN will be explored and actively sought in the future to further link LLN work across the North West.

### 1.4 Role of Key Delivery Partners

University of Liverpool	Research HE in FE, project evaluation, progression accord. learner passport e-learning developments
Cheshire & Warrington FE and HE Consortium	CoVE provision, co- creation and delivery of FDs. Progression matrix curriculum providers
Further Education Colleges (UCC)	As above
Aimhigher C & W and Crewe Excellence in Cities	Vocational HE pull-through via fieldworkers. Aspiration/ awareness raising
Edge Hill	Delivering aspects/outcomes other than ASNs by linking to Merseyside LLN, CETL in e-learning MLE partner progression accords shared CATS
RDA/LSC	To advise and guide developments
Connexions	Network advice and guidance

### 1.5 Focus on 7 vocational pathways

Consisting of 35 + partners the focus of this LLN will be on pathways into and through 7 areas of vocational higher education also highlighted as regional skills shortage areas:

- Health and Social Care;
- Environmental and Bio-Sciences;
- Business Enterprise and Public Services;
- Sports, Education and Well Being

- Engineering/Aerospace
- Creative and Cultural Industries
- ICT.

Working in partnership with Sector Skills Councils and Professional Bodies, these programmes will be 'Kite marked' as suitable provision by both sets of organisations.

### 1.6 Draws on available expertise in the region

Within this network the learner will also benefit from the expertise provided by:

- A Regional Skills Agency;
- Four Sector Skills Councils;
- Five CoVEs;
- Two Centres of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELTS);
- A New Technology Initiative (NTI);
- Two Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs);
- Aimhigher/Crew Excellence in Cities
- Adult and Community Learning (LA).

### 1.7 Development of a curriculum climbing frame

Concentration will be focused on developing a climbing frame of qualifications in each of the 7 identified skills areas, from Level 2/3 School/Further Education, through to post graduate level 5 Higher Education supplemented by enrichment, bridging and access programmes from ACL. The primary focus will be on facilitating Level 3 to HE level 4 transfer, on to a suite of Foundation Degrees.

### 1.8 Signposts existing FE curriculum

It is not intended to concentrate on writing new curriculum at School/ FE level 2/3, but instead to 'signpost' pathways through the existing national qualification framework provision more effectively, with better advice and guidance to support progression. New curriculum will only be developed when obvious gaps have been identified in existing provision across the network. HE provision needs to be developed in the following areas, Foundation Degrees, Year 0 programmes and CPD provision. These new HE learning programmes will be written in partnership with employers, professional bodies and sector skills councils and will be a major benefit to HE provision in Cheshire and Warrington. This new provision will be delivered in two phases, 2006-8 and 2008-10. ASNs are sought in this way.

#### 20+ New FDs targeted at 7 Skills areas

PATHWAY	NEW AND EXISTING FD PROVISION PROVIDED BY MMU/UCC	NUMBERS REQUESTED FOR ASN GROWTH		
		PHASE 1		PHASE 2
		2006/07	2007/08	2008 – 10
Health and Social Care	FdA Complementary Therapy Year 0 Medicine, Nursing and Allied Health Professions FdA Applied Professional Studies	40	40	80
	FdS Biological Industries			

Environment and Bio-Sciences	FdS Countryside and Environmental Management FdS Food Technology FdS Forensic Science	60	60	60
Business Enterprise, Public Services	FdA Local Government FdS Enterprise FdA Enterprise Computing FdS Financial Services FdA Logistics FdA Tourism and Leisure FdA Advertising FdS Games Technology FdS ICT FdA Foundation for Government FdA Teaching Assistance	135	125	100
Sport/Health/Education	FdS Sports/Health FdS Sports Well being FdA Outdoor pursuits	30	30	0
Engineering	FdA Mechanical Engineering FdA Electrical/Electronic Engineering FdA Engineering Project Management	To be decided		
Creative and Cultural Industries	FdA Media Graphics Advertising FdA Fashion/photography /Cultural Heritage FdA Pop and Rock Music Technology	120	120	0
ICT		35	35	60
Total ASNs		420	430	300

### 1.9 Admissions, Progression tracking/Accords and Credit Transfer arrangements

**Admissions** Entry criteria to programmes across the LLN will be standardised to improve access to programmes between providers, making access fair. This LLN will create a dedicated Admissions, Advice and Guidance team that will admit learners on to signposted vocational curriculum progression routes through higher education from all types of feeder programme provision. This team will work with the LLN Development Officer responsible for advice and guidance to develop a CPD programme which will be followed by all staff involved in educational advice and guidance across the network, producing a standard and high quality of support across the LLN. Matrix accreditation for these IAG services will be sought.

**Progression tracking and Accords** Learner tracking has always been a fundamental problem across institutions. This LLN will develop an electronic Learner Passport to track individual learner's educational development which will be developed in partnership with the University of Liverpool. Entitled 'Lusid', it is an established electronic individualised learner tracking document that will allow all partner institutions to monitor learner progression and track learner movements within the network. Individualised learning plans will also be carried on this passport to allow future educational providers

or employers to know exactly what programme of learning an individual has followed. This passport is part of an integrated Managed Learning Environment (MLE) that will be progressively rolled out, allowing learner information to pass freely to all network providers. Greater Merseyside LLN would use the same Lusid system and MLE allowing cross network collaboration breaking down the false geographical barriers that inhibit learner progression beyond the county. This system will ensure all educational providers have appropriate information on learners at admission and exit from an institution.

**Progression Accords** This LLN will set out to make explicit existing progression opportunities, through creating Progression Accords, for the mutual recognition and acceptance by individual partners of learning demonstrated in member institutions. Such progression accords will be formally adopted on behalf of the LLN by the Executive Management Group. The Admissions Advice and Guidance Group will produce such Accords, with all Key Delivery partners represented at such meetings.

**Credit transfer arrangements** for the network will be further developed from the existing system already set up for the Health project. This enhanced credit transfer system will use the combined expertise of a team of staff formed from the Centre for Work Related Studies, University College Chester, MMU, 'University of Liverpool's Lusid team, and Edge Hill College of Higher Education's CETL in ICT team. Credit transfer arrangements will be agreed between this team and an admissions team with a representative from each HEI, that will agree upon network credit value for units of curriculum that make up each programme of learning. Each HEI will then validate the programmes that contain each unit of assessment. In this way a credit of learning assessment will be transferable between both FE and HE partners in the same way as in the Health project. Mutually agreed climbing frames for each of the 5 vocational areas, that are transparent to the learner and clear to both the provider and employer, will enable this CAT system to work effectively. These CAT developments will take cognisance of the current national initiative in this area to ensure they 'fit' with national developments.

This partnership work within the LLN will:

- Create an Admissions, Advice and Guidance group (AAGG) to agree common programme entry criteria across programmes and providers within the network that will deliver the provision targeted at the 7 skill areas. This group will also further develop individualised learner agreements working within institutional progression accords, that will underpin Associate College/School agreements (see appendix 6)
- Development of 6 further Sector Skills curriculum groups to work with the AAGG to prepare new learning programmes (Health is already in existence).
- Further expand upon the QA team that represents each of the HE validating institutions.
- This LLN working in partnership with the Greater Merseyside LLN will ensure programme learner outcomes are consistent across the two networks in all areas of mutual qualification delivery. This will mean learner outcomes found in a qualification from a specific skills area programme in one LLN will reflect the same learner outcomes as the same qualification being delivered within another LLN. This will support progression to all HEIs for top-up provision. It will be the role of the Cheshire and Warrington Executive Management Group and the Greater Merseyside Executive Group to action this process through the different organisational structures found within the two LLNs.
- Cheshire and Warrington LLN in partnership with the Greater Merseyside LLN will then reach out to the Greater Manchester Alliance, the East Lancashire LLN and other regional LLNs to further joint activity with these LLNs.

## **1.10 Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

An ongoing monitoring/evaluation exercise is to be carried out on this project by the Directorate of Lifelong Learning, University of Liverpool. Evaluation will inform the direction of the LLN. Greater Merseyside LLN will also benefit from this analysis.

## **1.11 Student Need/desire for FDs**

Whilst this proposal deals in detail with the evidence for regional skills needs/shortages, individual learners must need/desire such provision.

This project has researched individual learner desire for Foundation Degrees in two ways.

1 Each of the key delivery partners has established FE level 3 provision in a number of the 7 chosen curriculum areas to assure the network of pull-through learner cohorts. FD recruitment across the sub-region shows a significant increase in uptake and student surveys have shown learner intent to follow such provision. Also 5 areas of curriculum highlighted by this bid have CoVES and the research carried out for these initiatives underpins confidence that learner desire exists

2 Employers within the network, 35,000 are employed within the network, wish to make use of this new matrix of learner provision. Added to this is the work carried out by partner sector skills councils who are confident members will access this provision.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

Cheshire and Warrington is characterised by relatively high HE participation rates in respect of A-level students. However, there are wards and parts of wards with low participation rates. In addition the sub-region shares with much of the rest of the country a relatively low participation rate in respect of its students undertaking vocational programmes at level 3 or apprenticeships, and its work-based population. Although there are two established and well-regarded HEIs in Cheshire and Warrington, there are no clear or simple pathways for progression into higher levels of vocational learning. This is especially so for adults who tend to enter Higher Education through the non-A level route. Various routes exist in different skills sectors and occupational areas, but for a learner embarking on a vocational route they have some significant barriers and bridges to cross. Consequently, collaboration between further and higher education institutions is a key element of widening participation strategy. Current collaborations and links between these institutions are both extensive and varied; they also extend beyond the immediate area. Consequently, collaboration between further and higher education institutions is a key geographical area. Moreover, they have, over the past several years, been increasingly structured and coherent through the emergence of two distinct, albeit sometimes overlapping, FE/HE 'networks'. One of these comprises University College Chester [UCC] and colleges in North, West and Mid Cheshire, and has partners in neighbouring Merseyside. The other, the Cheshire & Warrington FE & HE Consortium, comprises Manchester Metropolitan University, Cheshire and core college partners in South, East and Mid Cheshire. The latter network has links with partners in the Greater Manchester region, not least the rest of MMU, and to the south, Staffordshire University Regional Federation. In order to more fully address the continuing participation challenge, the two networks have engaged in substantial discussions and have come together to develop this inclusive proposal. Moreover, the membership of the existing networks is such as to facilitate exploration of extended partnership work with both the potential Greater Merseyside and Greater Manchester LLNs.

The vision is to replicate and further develop the successful 'Health based Learning Network' already in operation across Cheshire, Warrington and Merseyside. Using the experience and expertise gained in developing this network, this approach will be rolled-out to 6 other targeted areas of regional skills shortages and partnership expertise. This project will further expand a genuine alliance of educational providers across Cheshire, Warrington and subsequently Merseyside that, working together, can supply the local population with vocational/academic learning pathways from 14 years of age onwards with a specific emphasis on re-engaging adults back into learning via appropriate pathways and modes of study. Opportunities will not be limited by geography, age, gender, ethnicity, mode or level of study. Learners will be able to study from basic skills at start-up centres placed at the heart of their community to postgraduate level study at partner HEIs and will be able to enter and exit at the point most appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

### 2.1 THE VISION

The vision of this LLN is to permanently change the delivery of HE in the sub region by taking a dual approach to both widening access and increasing the number of learners in higher education. It will:

- **Create a coherent 14-19 phase of learning**
- **Develop a comprehensive Work-based Learning and Continuing Professional Development qualifications framework**

Cheshire and Warrington LLN seeks to transform access to and participation in higher education in Cheshire and Warrington. By forming an effective and enduring collaborative partnership amongst employers, schools, colleges, HE institutions and guidance agencies, the LLN will;

- Stimulate demand for all forms of Higher Education from groups of society who are currently under-represented in higher education
- Better meet the learning needs of current and potential learners so as to raise aspirations and

promote achievement

- o Increase the responsiveness of the education community to economic and social development needs of the sub-region

**Priorities**

In order to realise the vision and its component aims, the LLN will:

- Develop and support an infrastructure for the delivery of high quality, locally accessible, advanced vocational education
- Work with NWDA, SSCs/SSPAs and the LSC to integrate vocational HE development with local and regional workforce development and skills strategies
- Work to promote foundation degrees amongst employers and engage their involvement
- Market and promote vocational HE and foundation degrees in the key 19-30 target group identified in the White Paper
- Work with Aimhigher to raise the aspirations and achievements of the 14-19 age group and to provide clearly articulated progression pathways, both within and around the sub-region
- Offer progression pathways in vocational and non-vocational HE for adult learners
- Develop and implement an enhanced system of credit transfer
- Integrate student advice and guidance and administrative systems between delivery partners in order to facilitate transfer and progression routes
- Provide opportunities to build on existing curriculum links to improve the quality of vocational HE
- Develop common modules, within and across validation pathways, to improve efficiency of delivery
- Develop innovative modes of delivery of vocational HE, including VLEs

**3 COMPOSITION OF THE PROPOSED NETWORK**

The Cheshire and Warrington LLN will only be able to fulfil its mission through the collaboration of key delivery partners, stakeholders and a supporting network of advisers. These have been identified as primarily consisting of the following. However the list is not exhaustive and in the spirit of flexibility and inclusivity will inevitably be added to as the project and its influence develops.

PARTNERS	DETAILS
<p><b>Key Delivery Partners</b></p>	<p><b>University College Chester (lead)</b>            The University of Liverpool (Research partner)            Cheshire and Warrington FE &amp; HE Consortium, including MMU Cheshire. Edge Hill delivering outcomes other than ASNs (see section 1.4)            Mid-Cheshire College      <b>CoVE</b>      New media            West Cheshire College      “      Logistics, Health &amp; Care            Macclesfield College      “      Aerospace Engineering            Reaseheath College      “      Food Technology            Warrington Collegiate            South Cheshire</p>

	College Burton Manor College  Aimhigher Cheshire and Warrington + 15 target schools Crewe Excellence in Cities + target schools Connexions Cheshire & Warrington
<b>Stakeholders</b>	NWDA Cheshire & Warrington LSC Business Link Cheshire and Warrington Sector Skills Councils/Productivity Alliances – E-Skills; Engineering and Aerospace; Skills Smart; Summit Skills; NHS Sure Start (Starting Points)
<b>Advisory Network</b>	HEFCE Action on Access NW Node Foundation Degree Forward
<b>Examples of expertise provided</b>	A Regional Skills Agency Five CoVEs Two CELTS A New Technology Initiative (NTI) Two Knowledge Transfer Partners (KTPs) Adult and Community Learning Cheshire and Warrington 14-19 groups Cheshire Outdoor Education Services

In line with Annex A “Criteria for Lifelong Learning Networks”, this LLN intends to draw on the strength of the partners below who match all six identified characteristics in this HEFCE document;

- A Regional Development Agency (NWDA)
- Three Sector Skills Councils, three of which, Summit Skills (Business/Enterprise), E-Skills (ICT) and NHS/Skills for Health and Skills for Care have been actively involved in this proposal. Contact is still to be made for the area of Sport
- Five CoVEs, each of which have been heavily involved in this proposal
- Two successful CELTs, University of Liverpool’s ‘Developing Professionalism In Medical Students’, and Edge Hill College’s ICT CELT, supported by University College Chester’s unsuccessful proposal for a CELT in Workbased Teaching and Learning.
- Cheshire and Warrington’s New Technology Initiative (NTI).
- Two Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, ABTEC International (Drugs manufacturer) and L A Drape (Soft Fabrics)

ALL six of these organisations will be a part of the relevant Sector Skills Curriculum Group (SSCG), tasked to endorse/suggest signpost pathways and propose enrichment activities to further improve the vocational curriculum offer.

Twenty one Sector Skills and Productivity Alliances already exist in the North West and it is proposed to maximise the use of existing networks rather than replicate them. A number of existing networks will benefit from the inclusion of the work done by the (SSCG). It is proposed that with the help of employers, SSCG’s will bring to the classroom and the curriculum, learning opportunities fully understood and valued by employers.

## 4 PROGRESSION STRATEGY

The nature of the network will be to supply both learning and advice and guidance frameworks for the sub-region thus helping the local population to develop skills to meet the identified skills gaps and to ensure that learning links to employment opportunity. Specific skill needs will be met via the further development of the CoVEs found within the network. The LLN will bring together existing centres of curriculum excellence, and areas of previously identified skills shortage, and ensure that further resources and funded student numbers will be targeted where they are most effective. By involving relevant Sector Skills Council, employers, LSC, Trades Unions, NWDA, and other interested parties, CoVEs will lead for the network on the development of business links for a specific curriculum/skills area.

Further CoVE initiatives will see the development of incubation units for enterprise students following Foundation Degree programmes. This incubation unit initiative could lead at a later stage to the development of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), between the SME and the educational supplier. The concept of (KTPs), already well established within HEIs, are now able to be developed in FE/HE partnerships with businesses, and each CoVE will be encouraged to explore such developments. CoVEs will also be central to the development of work based learning and Continuing Professional Development qualifications.

It will be the role of the New Technology Initiative (NTI) to deliver e-learning developments for the network, full use also being made of Edge Hill University College's CETL to provide e-learning expertise. The NTI will maintain a proposed Managed Learning Environment (MLE) to allow a sharing of learner resources and student information across the Cheshire and Warrington LLN, thus removing many of the barriers of 'time and place' for learners. The power of ICT will be harnessed through a centrally managed Learning Platform which will provide opportunities for e-learning, e-teaching, e-IAG (information, advice and guidance), e-work-placements and e-job search to support all other forms of learning.

At the core of this LLN progression strategy are three fundamental beliefs that have shaped the vision:

- All learners from 14 years of age onward must have access to transparent vocationally orientated educational pathways, which are clear to and recognised by all educational partners as having real educational value, and by all employers as having real employment 'currency'
- Participating educational institutions will be encouraged to work within the network to create a qualifications progression matrix within which the most appropriate providers deliver to their recognised curriculum strengths. Learners will be able to move between different programmes of study, and, where appropriate educational institutions, in order to maximise their full learning potential, following clearly signposted progression pathways. The LLN will provide the stimulus for partner providers to work together to resolve Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and admissions issues and learner support needs across the network. that the aim would be to ensure that information, advice and guidance (IAG) is timely, accurate, relevant and freely available, in order to allow for informed progression onto appropriate Higher Education qualifications.
- Re-engaging learners will mean the removal of many of the traditional barriers to learning and will be a major challenge to the success of this initiative. Re-engaged learners will require access to learning resources, study space and advice at the times and places that suit their lifestyles. This support will be facilitated by a number of LLN initiatives, for example maximising the use of the library and information centres which have come together to form Cheshire Partnerships for Learning. The benefits of e-learning can be used to minimise barriers of time and place with short, modular programmes using credit accumulation and transfer support for adult learners. Part-time study, particularly in local colleges, is recognised as a central mechanism for the achievement of the Government's aim of increasing participation in Life Long Learning and Higher Education

The LLN will bring together learner providers and expand existing alliances of educational providers across the Cheshire and Warrington. The aim will be to supply the local population with

vocational/academic learning pathways from 14 years of age onwards and emphasise the re-engagement of adults back into learning via appropriate pathways and modes of study. Opportunities will not be limited by geography, age, gender, ethnicity, mode or level of study. Learners will be able to study from basic skills at start-up centres placed at the heart of their communities to postgraduate level study. Learners will be able to select personalised programmes and gain qualifications that will meet their needs and aspirations, as well as developing the economic prosperity of Cheshire and Warrington.

The LLN will create;

- A coherent **14-19** phase of learning by developing a rich mix of vocational learning opportunities, including the maximisation of the use of apprenticeship routes.
- **Re-engaging 19+** learners who are not at present participating in education or training activity through a comprehensive Work-Based Learning and Continuing Professional Development qualifications framework, including the accreditation and recognition of employer-based development and training.

## **5 TARGET LEARNER COHORTS**

### **Three Target learner cohorts**

The vast majority of young 14-18 learners studying at school are taking the traditional academic programmes (GCSE/'A levels'). In FE most 16-19 year old learners are following vocational routes, many at (NVQ) level 3. These learners will be a prime target for the LLN for widening participation in Higher Education. A sub-group of this cohort, 19-21, study mainly part time, are involved in employment and have a different set of learner support needs.

#### **(A) Target cohort 14 19 years**

The vast majority of young 14-18 learners studying at School/FE Level 2/3 are taking the traditional academic programmes, these are mainly GCSE/ 'A Levels' (82%), and the learner is mostly full time in a school or college.

14-16 year old Gifted and Talented learners studying in schools local to the LINC centres will be 'intellectually stretched' in the specific curriculum areas offered in that centre by the quality of teaching and resources to be found in the facility. This will concentrate resource on one site for this cohort and open up the possibilities for fast-tracking into HE.

A major impact this LLN will have on the 14-19 cohort will be on raising their aspirations toward HE study.

#### **(B) Target cohort 19 - 30 years**

For 19 - 30 learners studying at FE Level 2/3 the situation and learner need is very different. Only 42% are following traditional academic programmes, with the majority taking vocational or other qualifications mostly part-time. Different learning programmes (Academic/Vocational) experienced at FE level 2/3 act as a particular barrier to choice of HE programmes for these learners. This LLN seeks to widen the options for the over 21s by providing 20+ new vocational routes into HE that significantly increase subject choice for vocational learners.

#### **(C) Target cohort - (the not-engaged, would be learner)**

This LLN will concentrate on developing programmes of study at all levels of HE to re-engage learners not presently involved in learning. Higher Education providers will develop more flexible learner focused provision particularly in the areas of CPD year zero and bridging programmes to supply learning where and when this cohort wish to access it. This LLN will develop new initiatives to support the key business parks in the region (Omega, Birchwood, Gemini, Winsford,

Ellesmere Port, Crewe, and Daresbury where many of this cohort will be found). Programmes will include FDs but also a flexible work based graduate trainee scheme for employers who do not have their own in-house provision.

## 6 EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

### 6.1 Local Delivery of HE

This LLN will be an educational skills and business partnership that will bring 2,000 part and full-time learners into 7 areas of regional skills shortages. This will be through a mapped and signposted 14-18 and 19+ further and higher education curriculum. This curriculum will form a qualification framework across providers and levels of learning leading into employment. The LLN will develop new Higher Education (HE) vocational curriculum, with 20+ new Foundation Degrees (FDs), and signpost routes through the existing School/Further Education (FE) national qualifications curriculum.

Delivery of new HE Foundation Degree provision will be in the centre of the community, locally based, at all strategic and economically important locations across the Cheshire and Warrington sub region:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher Education Institutions</li> </ul>	UCC (Chester & Warrington Campus) MMU (Cheshire & Manchester)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further Education Colleges</li> </ul>	Macclesfield Learning Zone Mid-Cheshire College, Hartford South Cheshire College, Crewe Reaseheath College Warrington Collegiate Institute West Cheshire College (Chester & Ellesmere Port)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three new LINC (Learning in the Community) Centres to be established by the LLN (Appendix 5)</li> </ul>	Chester Winsford Warrington

The three new LINC centres will significantly enhance and facilitate local HE learning. The key features of these LINC centres that make them unique in complementing existing provision in Cheshire and Warrington are:

- Geography – located in areas of social deprivation (Wards in the highest 10% of national IMD in Warrington, Winsford, Chester), where hard evidence shows learners will not travel out of community to study;
- Co-locational –14-16 (focus on the Gifted and Talented cohort), FE, HE, Adult and Community Learning provision;
- Value For Money – sharing of facilities, resources and subject staff;
- Builds on the specific local curriculum expertise and needs of each location, then provides HE progression routes; and
- A ‘one stop shop’ with all levels of learning available, particularly at times to suit the Part-Time learner. A distinct feature being evenings and weekend learning provision will be supported by the presence of advice and guidance workers.

Irrespective of delivery point, the LLN will encourage a curriculum offer that offers specific curriculum expertise, for example local schools with specialist subject status, or an FE with a CoVE, and addresses local skills shortage areas.

Employer partners in the LLN will be asked to help gain Professional Body recognition for curriculum developments, via Sector Skills Council partner involvement, etc.

## 6.2 Vocational Pathways

The focus of this LLN will be on pathways into and through seven areas of vocational higher education:

- Business Enterprise and Public Services
- Creative and Cultural Industries
- Engineering/Aerospace
- Environmental and Bio-Sciences
- Health and Social Care
- ICT
- Sports

## 6.3 Development of a Cheshire and Warrington LLN Curriculum Map

A key priority of the LLN will be to undertake a comprehensive and thorough mapping of provision from School/FE level 2/3 and apprenticeships. This will be to highlight 'gaps' and barriers to accessing HE provision. The exercise will also allow for signposting of vocational progression routes into HE. As this activity is being carried out, mapping of HE provision and routes through to HE level 5 will also take place. This activity will be based on an existing model provided by the William Beamont Community High School Progression Mapping Project, funded by Aimhigher (see appendices 9)

## 6.4 School Curriculum Development

This LLN working in partnership with schools, Aimhigher, the LSC, Connexions staff and LLN Development Officers will create transparent vocational pathways from Key Stage 4 through to Higher Education. Existing vocational curriculum will be developed in target schools identified by Aimhigher staff. In some cases, further development of previously funded curriculum initiatives designed to maximise vocational progression opportunities will take place. This reshaped curriculum will use National Vocational Qualifications packaged to suit individual learners. Using both Young and 16-18 apprenticeships as examples, school and FE curriculum will map onto Higher Education. This will create a matrix of qualifications, which the relevant Sector Skills Council and local employers have been involved in developing.

## 6.5 FE and HE curriculum – 20+ new Foundation Degrees

Foundation Degrees are the new intermediate level vocational qualification and the primary means by which the governments target for participation will be met in the sub-region. Working in partnership with CoVEs, School and FE/HE staff, the LLN will bring together existing Curriculum Groups, and encourage them to engage with Sector Skills Councils, employees, local employers, Trades Unions, LSC and NWDA members to articulate progression pathways into specific skills areas. Relevance, quality and progression in FDs will be ensured by pooling the present expertise and experience in developing Foundation Degrees within the partner colleges, and linking with external agencies such as Foundation Degree Forward (fdf).

## 6.6 Development of curriculum climbing frames

Concentration will be focused on developing a climbing frame of qualifications in each of the seven identified skills areas, from Level 2/3 School/Further Education, through to post graduate level 5 Higher Education supplemented by enrichment, bridging and access programmes from Adult Community

Learning (ACL). The primary focus will be on facilitating Level 3/4 transfer on to a suite of Foundation Degrees.

A climbing frame has already been developed in the area of Health. Appendix 7 details this and also indicates what a frame might look like in respect of one of the other skills areas [ICT].

## 6.7 Integrating Adult and Community Learning

Working in partnership with Cheshire and Warrington ACL Managers, learning programmes will be developed that have no external accreditation, but sit within an established and structured curriculum framework. Programmes can be specifically developed to act as entry points or 'vocational gateways' to larger programmes of accredited learning and could be very useful with flexible provision to support CoVE developments within the large college providers.

ACL provision can be used to engage learners in priority wards (Starting Points Partners) in the county using its network of field workers that have established relationships with their communities and then support learners forward on the next stage of their 'Learning Passport'. ACL provision can also be developed to bridge gaps in provision within and between providers at every level, and to develop particular skill sets required by employers that do not naturally fall into a full qualification. This will ensure all providers involved in the network recognised the value of all learning taking place within the matrix, whether it is externally accredited or otherwise.

Cheshire's ACL team has a very responsive 'Skills for Life' initiative and can provide Maths and English support to individuals right across the county to enable them to progress within their vocational pathway effectively.

## 6.8 Development of common school/FE timetables and curriculum offers

Once local curriculum mapping is complete vocational curriculum climbing frames will be installed across local geographical areas. Timetabling of School/FE provision in order to allow learners from different institutions to move onto this climbing frame and to access learning opportunities between providers at fixed times is essential. This common local timetabling maximises use of educational resource whilst minimising replication of provision. Local 14-19 groups are central to the development of common timetabling. All schools with whom partner HEIs already have 'compact/progression' agreements will be in the first cohort to join this timetabling initiative. Eventually all schools that wish to participate in vocational educational pathways will be included. To encourage all schools to participate in this project our partner, Cheshire LEA, has agreed to work with the schools to highlight the advantages of vocational routes particularly as a response to the recently announced 'Specialist Diploma'. It is essential that schools agree to common timetabling as this will allow different providers to deliver curriculum to their strengths with viable groups of learners. This will be done through the existing 14-19 groups in Cheshire and Warrington which have already started this process. Curriculum Enhancement Activities will also be timetabled in this way seek to make existing curriculum as relevant and up to date as possible, and to include work related learning and employer input. This is a very similar model to the 'Aimhigher Health Open Road' model.

## 6.9 Development of Guaranteed Progression Routes

It is the intention that all 11-16 Schools and post-16 providers within the geographical area of the LLN will eventually become part of this network. The aim will be to provide suitable progression opportunities into Higher Education, should they be willing and able to take it. It is the responsibility of the network partners, supported by the project appointed development officers, to remove any barriers to this and be able to eventually offer vocational progression opportunities in, not just seven, but all areas of curriculum and employment.

Each HEI within this network will have a contract with the individual institution/learner to assure a student place and, where appropriate, to guarantee its funding. A guaranteed place onto a Foundation Degree must also then guarantee a place upon its completion, to a 'top-up' (Honours) programme. A Credit

Accumulation and Transfer system developed by the LLN will mean a 'top-up' year could be taken at either partner institution. This (CAT) system will be helped into operation by a £50,000 two year 'tracking' project, supported by Aimhigher North West Region, which will research the tracking of learners following progression pathways within and through the network. In partnership with UCAS, this research project will then measure the effectiveness of 'guaranteed progression routes' within the Cheshire and Warrington LLN.

A career escalator will be developed by each of the seven Sector Skills Curriculum Groups. Based on the Health model, the level of curriculum and level of career skills needs are matched. Career progression is often halted by lack of sufficient 'Bridging Programmes' from one career level to another, so it will be necessary to develop such programmes. CPD opportunities have to be developed in partnership with employers to allow the learner time to learn.

Clear information about what learning entails has to be available to the learner, employer and parent where appropriate. 'Where next' information has to be supplied by the IAG group to the **SSCG**

The network, via its curriculum mapping exercise, will be able to ensure that where movement between programmes/institutions is possible. By developing bridging programmes and joint recognition of curriculum outcomes, all partners will be in a position to recognise the value of a learning unit. This will become the basis for a CAT system, built around the mapping of programmes, progression points (vocational/educational) as well as pathway change points.

#### 6.10 Further adaptation of Personal Learning Plans (Learner Passport)

It is proposed to develop a Cheshire and Warrington LLN Learner Passport. This will be electronic and a further adaptation of the University of Liverpool's electronic student record, 'Lusid' that will carry personalised learning plans. All partners will recognise this document, and will be able to track student progress across the curriculum matrix. This document is already in use with learners within the Health curriculum matrix. It will carry all modules followed and achievements of the learner on them, and allow for individual learner pathways to be created and tracked. This passport will help with the integration into the LLN of initiatives envisaged by the Tomlinson proposals and Framework for Achievement.

An Aimhigher funded project mentioned above, is being led by the Admissions department of University College Chester. This project will track, via Personal Learner Passports, the content of student's educational programmes and their progression through them from schools, FE into HE and employment, and then ACL. In partnership with UCAS and Connexions Cheshire and Warrington, this electronic Passport will be recognised by all LLN partners and because UCAS will also credit it, national recognition is possible.

#### 6.11 Improved Information Advice and Guidance System (IAGS)

As these vocational progression routes and flexible programmes of delivery are developed, the need for accurate and up to date careers advice and guidance will become critical. As young people are offered more choice of study pathways "Tomlinson's 2004-10 agenda", the LLN curriculum will need to reflect this. It is essential that learners, their teachers, parents and employers are offered accurate and timely advice on the expanded choice of vocational educational opportunities now being made available to them. Following recommendations made by our Connexions partner, this LLN will provide a full time development worker who will work with Careers teachers in schools to ensure Careers Education and Advice and Guidance is of the highest quality and those involved in its delivery understand the options made available to them.

The role of support agencies is crucial in raising aspirations and improving achievement for learners particularly from social classes C2, D and E, essentially semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations. Whilst the traditional 'A' level student benefits from clear progression pathways, it is clear that a vocationally focused student has many more issues surrounding of informed progression.

'What kind of advice intervention best suits different learners?' is an ongoing two year project between Aimhigher North West and University College Chester. This project will produce the North West Aimhigher regional Newsletter that will inform the network of 'best practice' in Advice and Guidance intervention. Information on HE progression will not be left to Connexions and Aimhigher staff alone. Employers, Sector Skills Councils and HE Admissions Officers will all have a role to play in this process.

From the membership of the LLN, an IAG/Admissions sub-group will be formed to develop systems, procedures and marketing information needed to ensure smooth progression along vocational pathways. This group will need to link to the Curriculum development group to support the development of bridging programmes and other curriculum needed to aid transition including the development of Foundation degrees. Once pathway routes have been established, this IAG/Admissions group will need to develop a workable 'credit accumulation and transfer system' for each programme within the framework, this will be done in line with developments on introducing a CAT system.

The development of this Learner Passport will be LLN wide and is a fully branded system (to the LLN) and based on the standards of 'Matrix'. University College Chester currently has Matrix accreditation but Matrix accreditation for the IAG services delivered by LLN partners will be sought for the collective LLN rather than the current situation of individual institutions going for Matrix accreditation of IAG. IAG providers such as Connexions and Next Steps will be a fully integrated part of the system and will be able to support their clients in and out of the LLN as appropriate as well as supporting learners within the LLN.

#### 6.12 Admissions, Information and Advice Services and Transfer Arrangements

To counteract the impact previous educational experience can have upon limiting an individual's choice of HE programme, this LLN will bring together a dedicated Admissions, Advice and Guidance team that will signpost vocational curriculum progression routes into and through higher education from all types of feeder programme provision. This team will work with the LLN Development Officer responsible for advice and guidance to develop a CPD programme which will be followed by all staff involved in educational advice and guidance across the network, producing a standard and high quality of support across the LLN. Matrix accreditation for these IAG services will be sought. Advice will be supplemented with special study skill training.

Progression tracking has always been a fundamental problem across institutions. Through the electronic Learner Passport to track individual learner's educational development which will allow future educational providers or employers to know exactly what programme of learning an individual has followed. This passport is part of an integrated Managed Learning Environment (MLE) that will be progressively introduced, allowing learner information to pass freely to all network providers. Greater Merseyside LLN would use the same 'Lusid' system and MLE allowing cross network collaboration breaking down the false geographical barriers that inhibit learner progression beyond the county. This system will ensure all educational providers have appropriate information on learners at admission and exit from an institution.

Credit transfer arrangements for the network will be further developed from an existing system already set up for the Health-based Learning Network in operation across Cheshire, Warrington and Merseyside. This enhanced credit transfer system will use the combined expertise of a team of staff formed from the Centre for Work Related Studies, University College Chester, who have a long history of credit transfer activity, University of Liverpool's Lusid team, MMU Cheshire and Edge Hill College of Higher Education's CETL in ICT team. Credit transfer arrangements will be agreed between this team and an admissions team with a representative from each HEI, that will agree upon network credit value for units of curriculum that make up each programme of learning. Each HEI will then validate the programmes that contain each unit of assessment. In this way a credit of learning assessment will be transferable between both FE and HE partners in the same way as in the Health project. Mutually agreed climbing frames for each of the six vocational areas, that are transparent to the learner and clear to both the provider and employer, will enable this CAT system to work effectively. These CAT developments will take cognisance of the current national initiative in this area to ensure they 'fit' with national developments.

An Admissions, Advice and Guidance group (AAGG) will be created to agree common programme entry criteria across programmes and providers within the network that will deliver the provision targeted at the six skill areas. This group will also further develop individualised learner agreements that will underpin Associate College/School agreements (see appendix 6 for an example).

### 6.13 Managed Learning Environment (MLE)

The linking of partner's VLEs and data tracking of students as they progress across the partnership will be developed using Partner's resources, and existing expertise. For example Connexions Cheshire and Warrington already have an extensive data base, and this is being currently expanded to cover all Aimhigher activities.

Also Edge Hill have a CETL in e-learning and this expertise will be used to develop the MLE across both LLNs.

Resources will also be sort outside this bid for the implementation of a Managed Learning Environment (MLE) to cover both this network and eventually the Greater Merseyside LLN. Although this may seem ambitious such learning networks would benefit hugely from the advantages an MLE would bring.

Based upon the Colchester FE Pilot Research which found Virtual Learning Environments were not effective until linked with the management information systems. It is intended to develop a network wide MLE, created and maintained by the partnership's expertise found within the New Technology Initiative. With development funding to support this initiative, this MLE will:

- Streamline administration and information transfer, aiding student tracking;
- Become a catalyst for instigating a cultural change toward network working within and between institutions;
- Improve curriculum collaboration between both institutions and networks
- Allow learners to access learning materials from outside their own institution;
- Fully integrate systems across the curriculum and business support areas;
- Bring ILT closer to curriculum;
- Allow linkage with external partners/ customers;
- Aid the transfer of learners around the network;
- Create a "real" APEL system;
- Deliver "combined institutional provision";
- Dramatically widen participation opportunities for none traditional learners by delivery in the home/workplace; and thus
- Add value to network activities.

The MLE would be a joint project between the NTI, the University of Liverpool and Edge Hill College of Higher Education.

## 7 PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

An ongoing monitoring/evaluation exercise is to be carried out on this project by the Director of Lifelong Learning, University of Liverpool. Evaluation will inform the direction of the LLN .

Greater Merseyside LLN Will also join in with this process so as to add value for money. It is hoped to eventually share such practice with the Greater Manchester Alliance

## 8 HOW THIS LLN PROPOSAL MATCHES HEFCE LLN CHARACTERISTICS

HEFCE Characteristics of an LLN	LLN Target Outcomes	Exec. Summary key points
1. LLNs will offer a focus on vocational routes into and through Higher Education. In the context of Lifelong Learning this means the possibility of moving from first cycle entry level of FE to achievement at the highest level as needs and abilities develop.	By identifying specific learner cohorts, specific vocational pathways are available for these learners from pre FE Level 2/3 up HE Level 5 postgraduate study	1,6
2. They will combine the strengths of diverse HE and FE institutions: at least 2 HEIs and 5 FECs	Programmes will be delivered by the institution with the best provision	2
3. LLNs will link with the RDA and at least one sector skills council and build on one or more local strengths. E.g., CoVEs, CETLs, NTIs, knowledge exchanges.	All of these links have been made by this proposal	5
4. They will work closely with Aimhigher to ensure that schools, colleges, employers and others are aware of opportunities offered.	Aimhigher are a major partner and have made a significant contribution to composition of this bid	3
5. LLNs will clarify existing progression opportunities and engage in collaborative curriculum development where this is necessary to facilitate progression	Existing provision will be mapped and signposted all new curriculum will be a collaboration of all educational providers, sector skills councils and employers.	7
6. They will offer the advice and guidance necessary to provide individualised learning plans, and offer the varied and flexible means of delivery required so that learners can meet their objectives.	Advice/Guidance is central to the LLN proposal, as are individual learning plans	9,10
7. LLNs will add to current provision rather than re-badging FE-HE partnerships. For example, they will guarantee progression to any award offered within the network for which learners are adequately prepared and from which they can benefit, enabling learners to move between programmes and institutions.	This LLN will Signpost through existing provision and fill curriculum gaps with new provision. Common progression agreements will exist at both an individual learner ,and institutional level	7,8,
8. LLNs will develop some kind of progression infrastructure, such as credit frameworks, to underpin the	Credit Accumulation agreements will be further developed as will guaranteed	

guarantee of progression. They will be concerned in the first instance with what works. But whatever means are used to ensure progression LLNs will be expected to contribute to the development of CAT systems.	progression arrangements	
9. LLNs will establish targets for the number of students (a) accessing initial HE from vocational pathways, (b) progressing within HE to programmes on offer within the network	Target numbers will be phased. In Phase 1, 2006-8 a request for 850 ASNs and in Phase 2, 300 ASNs.	7
10. LLNs will be willing to participate in an evaluation of the networks	The Centre for Lifelong Learning University of Liverpool will monitor, advise, and evaluate this project	10

## 9 KEY MILESTONES

PHASE ONE Quarter year	Target Outcome number (from above table)	Milestones
June 2005		Commence design and planning of Warrington capital build.
Aug-Oct 2005	1,2 ,4, 5, 6	Infrastructure; Establish Executive Management and Project Management Group. Appoint Project Director and LLN Development team  Advertising/Marketing strategy group formed  LLN Strategic plan to be constructed/Outreach strategy planned CoVE curriculum developments commence  To begin the development of a common progression agreement between partners. Work on Network Credit Accumulation and Transfer agreement to begin.
Nov 2005-Jan 2006	2,9,10,12 13	Establish capital budget allocations.  Commence curriculum signposting activity  Sector Skills curriculum groups formed for each of the 6 new skills areas/Commencement of curriculum framework  Formation of LLN Advice and Guidance/learner centred support sub-group, commence reciprocal admissions policy  Commence guaranteed progression routes work and Personal learning plans  Construction work to start capital build in Warrington.  University of Liverpool/Project Director to supply baseline monitoring report to Executive Management Group
Feb-April 2006	2,3,7,9, 10,14	New HE curriculum provision for Sept 2006 start prepared for 'steering group'.  Matrix accreditation for LLN Advice and Guidance

		<p>'Lusid' Electronic passport group to begin work /Lucid; NTI; Edge Hill CELT to begin feasibility study for MLE</p> <p>Commencement of work on Personal learning plans</p> <p>Establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure effective development of FDs, including employer involvement. Present provision to be mapped and evaluated.</p> <p>Project Director to report to Executive Management Group.</p>
May-July 2006	7	<p>FD documents complete and prepared for validation</p> <p>Signposted progression pathway work complete</p> <p>LINC Centre curriculum established in Chester</p> <p>Branded marketing information complete</p> <p>Advice and Guidance group to begin the development of CPD programme for the network</p> <p>University of Liverpool/Project Director to supply Monitoring Report to Executive Management Group</p>
Aug-Oct 2006	8	<p>To complete case study curriculum mapping in Warrington and commence development of guaranteed progression routes between provider institutions</p> <p>Validation of FDs for September 2006 start</p> <p>PD to report to Executive Management Group.</p>
Nov 2006-Jan 2007	2,3,8,12	<p>LINC Centre established in Chester.</p> <p>To agree a Warrington wide timetable/progression and learner placement system</p> <p>First cohort of ASN learners</p> <p>Credit Accumulation and Transfer agreement complete</p> <p>Completion of Warrington capital new build</p> <p>University of Liverpool/PD to supply Executive Management Group with Monitoring Report</p>
Feb-April 2007	6	<p>Executive Management group to receive monitoring report from UL and Project Management group to respond</p> <p>Advice and Guidance group begin roll-out of CPD programme</p>
May-July 2007	8	<p>7 Sector Skills Curriculum Groups complete curriculum mapping and highlight 'gaps'</p> <p>Development of 'gap' curriculum provision, preparation of FD documents for validation</p> <p>University of Liverpool/Project Director to supply Monitoring Report to Executive Management Group</p>
Aug-Oct 2007	9	New FDs for January start validated
Nov 2007-Jan	8,10	Completion of common timetabling for vocational educational providers in

2008		Chester and Winsford  LINC Centres Chester and Warrington established  Completion of Guaranteed progression routes  University of Liverpool/Project Director to supply Monitoring Report to Executive Management Group
<b>PHASE TWO</b> Feb-April 2008		Proposal to HEFCE for 300 ASNs to complete project target learner numbers. Contingency plan to scale down numbers if ASNs unavailable. Project Director to supply Monitoring Report to Executive Management Group.
May-July 2008		Warrington campus development complete to locate new Level 3 learners.  University of Liverpool to supply Executive Management Group with Monitoring report
Aug-Oct 2008	7,13	MLE active and able to increase data sharing amongst partners
Nov 2008-Jan 2009	14	All 20+ new FDs available and final target numbers enrolled University Monitoring complete
May – July 2008		Warrington campus development complete to locate new Level 3 learners. University of Liverpool/Project Director to supply Executive Management Group with Monitoring report
Aug – Oct 2008		MLE active and able to increase data sharing amongst partners.
Nov 2008 – Jan 2009		All 20+ new FDs available and final target numbers enrolled Monitoring complete Project Director report ongoing

## 10 TARGET LEARNER NUMBERS

### 10.1 Funding Arrangements

Significant resource is requested from HEFCE to support this development and the creation of new HE learners. Funding arrangements have been agreed and ASNs will be directed to University College Chester and to the Consortium as and when they become available

Directly funded institution	Indirectly funded programmes
University College Chester	Mid Cheshire College  Warrington Collegiate Institute  West Cheshire College  Reaseheath College
Macclesfield College	Mid-Cheshire College  South Cheshire College

### 10.2 Summary of Target Learner Numbers

20+ new Foundation Degrees are projected to be introduced between 2006 and 2010

Institution	ASN allocation		
	06/07	07/08	Total
Mid Cheshire	47	35	82
Macclesfield	37	39	76
South Cheshire	2	37	39
Reaseheath	40	40	80
West Cheshire	45	45	90
Warrington Collegiate	50	50	100
Sub total	221	246	467
UCC	173	210	383
Total	394	456	850

### 10.3 Justification for requesting additional Student Numbers (ASNs)

Justification for the request for additional learner numbers comes from evidence supplied by the partner institutions, of unmet supply of places to match learner demand. Added to this is the clear market intelligence that shows in the 7 targeted skills shortage areas within this LLN, there are gaps in appropriate higher education vocational learning programmes at present in existence thus creating the demand for appropriate curricula to be developed. This creates the demand for 20+ new Foundation Degrees.

The consortium experience also shows that conversion of HND to FD has a stimulating effect on recruitment. The 1150 ASNs requested over two phases, (850 between 2006-8 and 300 between 2008-10) are needed to support the students on these new and existing programmes.

Bridging programmes into and through H E will need to be developed as will further CPD programmes

A further justification for growth in learner numbers is that some HEI's have many more student applications than places, for example, University College Chester is six times oversubscribed. A full analysis of applications will mean that partner Further Education Institutions will be able to take many of these at present unplaced local learner applicants onto courses of study. Recruitment to this Foundation Degree provision therefore will not be led by individual colleges alone, but a central mechanism will be developed to re allocate UCAS applications. Coordinated admissions led by the LLN will significantly aid recruitment for F E partners, who will also continue to recruit directly.

The requested additional student numbers are in 7 specific areas of curriculum that display the following characteristics:

- A clear student demand for Foundation Degree provision
- Demonstrated employer support
- A regional skills shortage area
- An area of curriculum excellence within the network
- Clear vocational progression routes can be developed via Apprenticeship and other vocational routes.

The Cheshire & Warrington FE & HE Consortium in particular has a successful record of recruiting to FD programmes. In 2004-5 the directly funded colleges of the Consortium had a total of 141 unweighted FTEs on FDs out of a total of 562.5 FTEs. These ranged across a number of different programmes, but particularly strong recruitment has occurred in Business & Management, Coaching & Sport Development,

and Supporting Teaching & Learning (Teaching Assistants). HE recruitment was so successful in the colleges that the Consortium exceeded its contract range by 8.9%.

Foundation Degree initiatives recently developed, and successfully recruited includes;

- FD in Assistant Practitioners for health professionals. 400 NHS staff 2005-2007
- FD Foundation for Government, for Central Government Departments, developed with the Cabinet Office and the DfES. Target numbers are +100 per year
- Arrowe Park and Clatterbridge hospitals – currently +80 staff are undertaking WBL courses.
- Shropshire County Council
- Liverpool City Council + 150 students per year.
- FD in Laboratory science for the National Blood Authority. 20+ learners 2005-2006
- FD in Health Informatics, 20+ learners 2005-2006
- Partnership
- Staff will be targeted for workplace education and training. This proposed partnership will be one of the largest employment networks within the region.

This will significantly assist in widening participation as these employed staff do not have higher education qualifications.

New initiatives are planned to support the key business parks in the region (Omega, Birchwood, Gemini, Winsford, Ellesmere Port, and Daresbury), including a flexible work based graduate trainee scheme for employers who do not have their own in-house provision. Growth in the provision of higher educational opportunities in and around the Winsford/Northwich area will produce new learners which research clearly shows will not travel to learn.

## 11 PROPOSAL COSTINGS

### 11.1 Revenue Costs

The revenue costs for management and operation of the project are shown in the table below. These costs will be met for the first two years by SDF monies and from then on as this is a permanent feature of HE in Cheshire and Warrington partner institutions will contribute to staffing costs.

	<b>Gross Salary</b>	<b>Salary + on costs</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Staff</b>			
Project Director	42,000	50,400	50,400
5x Development workers	28,000	32,800	164,000
PA to the Project Director	23,000	27,600	27,600
<b>Non Staff Costs</b>			
Travel			4,000
Consumables			5,000
<b>Total recurrent costs</b>			<b>250,000</b>
Set up equipment			
Office furniture			3,000
Laptops & printers			8,000
<b>Total set up costs</b>			<b>11,000</b>

#### **Sustainability of this project.**

This project has to be sustainable in the long term as:

- the curriculum will be written to directly link to known existing progression cohorts, and to replace known demand in HND
- the curriculum will also address identified skill shortages in Cheshire & Warrington ensuring that students will be recruited to the ASN places, and that these new and existing foundation degrees have 'value' in the regional market place and therefore will continue to recruit students over the medium and long-term.
- the Strategic Development funds will be used to fund new buildings necessary to provide quality learning accommodation for the new learners, and to further develop environments in FE institutions that allow for parity of HE experience for learners in FE institutions
- Delivery of FDs will take place at existing FEC/HEI premises
- New LINC centres bring together FE/HE and LEA activity and therefore overheads and running costs will be supported from these different funding streams.
- Staff employed by the LLN will be funded from the SDF for the first two years, but as this LLN is to be a permanent feature of HE in this sub region, partners have agreed resource will be found to maintain the day to day activity of LLN staff on a permanent basis.
- It is envisaged that possibly other Widening Participation initiatives within Cheshire and Warrington may be assimilated into this network. The development of the OFFA initiative may see a general synergy between the work of this LLN and that of Aimhigher; it is possible that further articulation of these kinds of initiatives is feasible over time. A feasibility project to do this would need to take place and such an initiative has been discussed with the Cheshire and Warrington Aimhigher Area Steering Group and also the Cheshire and Warrington LLN group. Both parties have approved in principle further development of a feasibility study to bring this partnership to fruition.

Whilst keeping the two HEFCE funding streams separate, the feasibility study could examine the possibility of staff being integrated into the LLN overtime. Any further discussions will be dependent upon the outcomes of the ongoing Aimhigher consultation .

It is envisaged at this time that £250,000 for each of two years will be needed to employ staff to establish and develop the LLN .As the LLN needs to appoint staff who have a good working knowledge of the sub-region, staffing the LLN will be done via advertising the roles within the network itself

## 11.2 Capital Costs

### Request for HEFCE Strategic Development Fund

	£	
<b>LLN revenue costs</b>	500,000	Network staff for 2 yrs
<b>Capital</b>		
LINC centre Winsford/ Mid Cheshire College	325,000	Part of a larger £11m Learning Village project with Mid Cheshire College & other partners
Partner HE in FE Colleges		See later detail
Macclesfield	193,079	
South Cheshire	154,868	
Reaseheath	149,079	
West Cheshire	149,224	
Warrington	178,750	
Warrington Build	2,345,000	Level 3 progression, central LLN facilities
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,995,000</b>	

#### Total LLN Costings

SDF     £ 3,995,000  
Other    £12,150,000

£ 16,145,000

### Use of Capital Funds

#### 11.2.2 Business Case for LINC Centres

##### WINSFORD

Of the monies needed to establish three LINC Centres only 4.5% of the Capital resource needed for just one of them is being sought from HEFCE. A request for £325 000 to contribute to a new build at Winsford that is part of a circa £11m project is incorporated in this bid. This will support the development of a learning zone initiative in Winsford, and complement Mid Cheshire Colleges HE offer. An initial draft of this bid asked for £1.4m for this project, however Mid Cheshire College is now able to make a larger sum of money available for this project, this allows funding to be distributed to partner FECs to improve the HE in FE experience for all learners across the sub region

The Winsford LINC Centre will be an integral part of the larger 'Winsford Learning Zone'; this will co-locate the following education producers;

- Mid-Cheshire College of Further Education

- Sixth form centres (joint facility shared between Woodford Lodge High School and The Verdin High School)
- Adult community learning., ongoing contribution, ACL Contract

<b>Capital For Winsford LINC Centre</b>				
	05/06	06/07	07/08	Total
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Mid Cheshire College	£ 3,720	£ 1,275		£ 4,995
NWDA	£ 2,500	£ 2,500		£ 5,000
LSC	£ 1,650			£ 1,650
SDF (LLN Bid)	325			£ 325
	£ 8,195	£ 3,775		£11,970
ASN		420	430	850
<b>Revenue</b>		<b>Funding Provider</b>		
Premises		Shared costs (majority to Mid-Cheshire)		
IT/other teaching & learning facilities		"		
14-16 education		LEA		
16-18		LSC		
Adult community learning		LEA		
Higher education		HEFCE – LLN additional		

The capital investment in the new learning zone in Winsford will be used solely to provide facilities for HE students, within the wider project (FE College and 2 schools).

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR THE TWO OTHER LINC CENTRES

The three LINC Centres will provide educational provision (HE, FE, Adult Community, schools 14-16), which will be funded multiple funding streams.

### 1 Warrington LINC Centre

The Warrington LINC Centre will be housed in Warrington Collegiate and will be part of the £25M redevelopment of the Winwick Road site. Adjacent to the FE College is William Beaumont High School. Again the LINC Centre will encompass;

- FE, Warrington Collegiate
- 14-16, William Beaumont High School
- ACL, run by Local Authority and Warrington Collegiate
- HE a sharing of resource between Warrington Collegiate and University College Chester

**Capital** No new build required, redevelopment of Warrington Collegiate is being funded by LSC/Warrington Collegiate

**Revenue** ALC - LEA  
14-16 - LEA  
16-18 LSC  
FE - LSC  
He – HEFCE LLN additional numbers, delivered at both Warrington Collegiate and University College Chester (Warrington Campus).

### 2 Chester LINC Centre

This will be housed in a LEA owned former school site.

<b><u>Capital</u></b>	Outside this bid
<b><u>Revenue</u></b>	ACL – LEA 14-16 Gifted and talented 16-18 West-Cheshire College HE – Additional LLN funded student numbers

### **Risk analysis**

A full risk management review has been carried out for the LLN. The detailed review, listing risks, control procedures and actions/contingency plans is shown in Appendix 1.

The process of risk management is well embedded at University College Chester, and is carried out for all new ventures, including courses, projects and capital projects. All departments also complete an annual risk management assessment that is formally reviewed twice a year. Risk management is an integral part of the annual operating statement process in the College. Ongoing risk review for the project will be subsumed into this robust process.

### **Accountability and audit**

Accountability for the LLN will be discharged through the College's management structure. The LLN will have both a Strategic Management Group and an Operational Management Group. Clear lines of reporting and authority will be established, with a detailed update report being presented by the LLN Project Director at both the LLN Strategic Management Group and University College Chester Senior Management Team quarterly.

### **Option Appraisal for Capital New Build LINC Centres**

The following options were considered for the LINC Centres;

#### **1 *Build on existing HE sites***

##### Benefits:

- Link directly to HE Provision.

##### Weaknesses:

- Not located in key areas of social need.
- No 'synergy' with other funders FE/LEA
- HEI to bear all overheads and running costs

#### **2 *Rent***

##### Benefits:

- Quick to implement, flexible over time.

##### Weaknesses:

- Higher costs per m<sup>2</sup>. Payment includes fee for land and profit.
- Similar premises close to other Schools/FE/LEA providers are not available.

#### **3 *3 LINC Centres (Warrington, Chester, Winsford)***

##### Benefits:

- Co-location with Schools/LEA/FE.

- Sited in key socially deprived wards
- Able to share running costs with other providers, this making the premises more sustainable and cost effective.
- Winsford - £325,000 helps 'unlock' the wider £11M project of the Winsford Learning Zone, co-location of FE/Schools and HE. (The HEFCE grant will be used to fund space which will be used by HE students)
- Warrington LINC – part of £25M redevelopment of Warrington Collegiate, which is adjacent to William Beamont High School. No capital or revenue costs required to set this up.
- Chester – funded separately from a venture between University College Chester and the LEA and a disused secondary school.

### 11.2.3 FE College Capital Request (Allocation based on new FD growth)

	Existing	06-Jul	07-Aug	Total	Band B	Band C	Band D	Total	Capital
								Weighted	£
Mid Cheshire	188	60	50	298	0	283	15	382.9	325,000
Macclesfield	117	37	56	210	7	173	30	266.8	193,079
South Cheshire	178	15	21	214	0	0	214	214	154,868
				0					
Reaseheath	60	40	40	140	60	80	0	206	149,079
West Cheshire	79	45	45	169	0	124	45	206.2	149,224
Warrington Collegiate	90	50	50	190	0	190	0	247	178,750
				0					
Sub total		247	262	509				1140	<b>£1,150,000</b>
UCC		121	200	321					
Total		368	462	830					

### Use of Capital Money by FECs

These figures are indicative and the exact distribution to partner colleges will be determined by the Executive Management Group once it is operational. However all funds will be used to improve the resource base for the additional students, and will therefore be used either solely or predominately by HE students in partner FECs.

Provider	Item	Total
West Cheshire College	To provide  specialist vocational teaching areas, as realistic working environments, to deliver the new curriculum related to new automotive and manufacturing programmes at Ellesmere Port. This will enable progression opportunities from young apprenticeship programmes through to a new foundation degree in manufacturing/process management.  dedicated I.T learning resource facilities for learners who are studying on higher level courses to facilitate independent and flexible learning  specialist equipment for the new F.D in Games technology at Ellesmere Port	<b>£149,224</b>
Reaseheath	To provide;  animal care unit health building  range of intensive pig buildings	

	<p>equine health facility</p> <p>To replace the observation facility &amp; recoding &amp; monitoring facilities for dairy cattle</p>	<b>£149,079</b>
Mid-Cheshire College	<p>To provide;</p> <p>a suite of two new general teaching spaces fully equipped with appropriate information and learning technologies including internet and VLE access and interactive whiteboards.</p> <p>one dedicated Information Technology facility to support both formal teaching and independent learning by adult students on higher level courses.</p> <p>an enhanced learning resources centre including appropriate quiet area accommodation for higher level students.</p> <p>one small tutorial room for small group or one-to-one learning activity and support.</p> <p>an appropriately equipped and resourced advice and guidance accommodation for those wishing to progress to Higher Education and for those progressing from the higher level courses provided in Winsford. This space will also support Aimhigher activities.</p>	<b>£325,000</b>
Warrington Collegiate	<p>To provide;</p> <p>Alternative Therapies Suite</p> <p>High specification IT Suite to support ICT Fd (with vendor qualifications), Logistics and Enterprise Forensic Science lab</p> <p>Fitness and performance monitoring suite</p> <p>Media Suite</p> <p>Mechatronics industry standard software and hardware resources</p> <p>HE dedicated Learning Resource Centre facility</p> <p>Laptop pool supporting off site learning</p> <p>Blackboard VLE upgrade to facilitate an advanced engagement with HE learners</p>	<b>£178,750</b>
<b>Macclesfield College</b>	<p>These two institutions joined the LLN as full members on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2005. Financial allocation has been made on the basis of ASNs requested. Whilst a full and complete guarantee can be given that all HEFCE monies will be spent on HE learners a detailed breakdown will be forthcoming by 31<sup>st</sup> May 005.</p>	<b>£193,079</b>
<b>South Cheshire College</b>		<b>£154,868</b>

### Capital costs For Warrington Campus

A further capital resource request to HEFCE is made for circa £2.345m to support four main LLN developments needing to take place on the presently 'full' Warrington campus

- Progression opportunities at HE Level 3 for Foundation Degree LINC students
- A Base for the Managed Learning Environment

- An electronic Library to complement the MLE

	<b>Cost / m2</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Floor area</b>	<b>Equipment</b>
Refurbishment	£1,000	£ 500,000	500 m2	£100,000
New build	£1,200	£ 1,66,500	1,388 m2	£80,000
<b>Grand total</b>			<b>£2,345,000</b>	

A further capital resource request to HEFCE is made for circa £2.345m to support four main LLN developments needing to take place on the Warrington campus.

- **Progression opportunities at HE Level 3 for Foundation Degree LINC Students.**  
These capital monies are needed for a new build on the Warrington campus to house these new learner cohorts as they complete FD study. At present no facility exists within the network to cope with the physical demands this size of increase in learner numbers, 2000 ft/pt over four years will create. This campus is now up to its learner number capacity and without 'new build' could not accommodate these new learners.
- **A Base for the Managed Learning Environment (MLE)**  
A resource base is needed to 'house' the NTI staff and resources necessary to manage the MLE. Due to the close proximity of the Warrington campus to Edge Hill the lead HE institution for the Greater Merseyside LLN who will be sharing the MLE, it is sensible to base the MLE here. This new facility will also manage all the IT training links with the Cheshire and Warrington Strategic Health Authority, these initiatives include an FD in Health Informatics, Basic IT skills, ECDL and Postgraduate IT courses.
- **An Electronic Library to complement the MLE**  
An opportunity exists with this new facility focusing on the part-time learner, to 'import' a learner attitude of 'on-line learning from the moment they enter the LLNs e-learning library. All partner institutions and the learners they support will benefit from this facility

#### **Incubation Facilities**

Warrington campus will house the first FD/Incubation students who will be learners following a 'joint' FD that will allow them to study a subject qualification eg Fashion, at the same time as learning to manage a micro business, by studying enterprise skills.

### **Business Case for Warrington Build**

#### **Extra teaching and learning space at the Warrington Site, University College Chester.**

The current substantial programme of redevelopment of the Warrington Campus which commenced in 2002 and is scheduled for completion in this phase by autumn 2005, will involve the demolition of approximately 3,600 metres<sup>2</sup> of teaching and related space no longer fit for purpose. Until 2002-03, these buildings were used as teaching accommodation but for more than a decade have represented an increasingly unsustainable burden in terms of long term maintenance costs and in recent years have presented serious and irresolvable health and safety concerns. The planned extension of the Learning Resources Centre facility to support the additional ASNs associated with the extended Foundation Degree provision within the LLN bid, in essence constitutes the replacement of these teaching and learning resource facilities.

Outside this LLN bid, the student population at the Warrington Site will increase from 950 ftes to 1,600 ftes by 2007/08. This will affect the room utilisation rate moving it from 23% (as measured in 2004/05) to 31% in 2007/08.

Additional space is therefore required for the LLN given the current and planned use of the site.

#### **Purpose and use of capital build at Warrington**

In order to support the considerable number of students undertaking Foundation Degrees through the proposed LLN, a purpose built learning resource centre on the Warrington campus of University College Chester is required. What is envisaged is a new and distinctive resource to

support the different style of learning associated with the Foundation Degree, namely Work Based Learning.

A large number of the additional student numbers proposed in this bid will be part-time learners in full-time employment undertaking their academic FD studies through Work Based Learning. To be successful, work based learners require the same levels of support from academic tutors as any other mode of learning. This includes accessibility to tutors, access to appropriate and relevant learning resources, advice and guidance networks, and up-to-the-minute information on all aspects of their programmes of study. Academic tutors also need access to resources to enable them to be efficient as learning facilitators.

The proposed Work Based Learning Resource Centre will provide traditional print, media and e-resource library collections, study space, group work areas and access to networked computers together with resource discovery and information retrieval support from professional librarians for tutors and learners. Social interaction will be encouraged by a Books @ Café style refreshment area with wireless links for laptops. The existing Learning Resources' distance learner support service will be extended to ensure that hard copy materials are delivered to individuals where necessary and that learners are registered to access networked resources requiring authentication. A book security system allowing self-issue will allow the Centre to have an open and welcoming entrance.

The Centre will be high in technological specification, including work areas for e-learning technologists whose role will be to prepare e-learning "knowledge banks" for each of the vocational areas covered by the FD provision. Facilities will also be provided for on-line seminars, workshops and conferencing, as well as one-to-one tutorials conducted at a distance. In addition to the availability of on-line texts, other hard copy literature, in the form of journal articles and text books, will be stored for dispatch to learners by request. Tutorial rooms for academic staff, flexible spaces for meetings, provision for conventional style teaching, workshops and seminars will also be featured in the building design. (This will have the advantage of complementing the provision within the North West Media Centre thus permitting maximum usage.) The virtual learning environment provided will offer 24 hour access and will include up-to-the-minute information on all aspects of FD provision, including information on support systems and career guidance.

### **Option Appraisal for Capital Build – Warrington**

This is required to provide teaching and learning facilities for the delivery of some FDs, Level 3 top-up and to provide space for central student support for the LLN/MLE, learning resources, library.

Option considered for this

#### **1 Rent**

##### Benefits:

- Flexible over time, quick to implement.

##### Weaknesses:

- High cost
- Appropriate premises nearby are not available
- Additional costs of running on additional off-site location/security, reception, cleaning, IT links etc).

#### **2 Use of Existing Space**

##### Weaknesses

- No spare existing space available.

### **3 New Build at Warrington Site**

#### Benefits:

- Fit for purpose building
- Overheads already paid for on the existing site.

#### Weaknesses:

- Build lead time (but this fits with implementation plan of LLN).

## 12 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND NETWORK ORGANISATION FLOWCHART

### 12.1 ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

An executive management group will meet four times per year and will direct financial expenditure, guide policy and assure the quality control of this initiative. Accountability for the financial management and realising ASN numbers rests with this group. This group will consist of:

University College Chester	Prof Tim Wheeler (Chair)
Cheshire LEA	Ms Joan Feenan
Manchester Metropolitan University	Dennis Dunn Dean of MMU
University of Liverpool	Catherine Jones
Project Director	LLN
Consortium of HE in FE Colleges Cheshire and Warrington	Ms Wendy Wright
Reaseheath College	Meredydd David
UCC Partner FE Colleges	Paul Hafron (Principal Warrington Collegiate Institute)
Aimhigher	Project manager
Cheshire and Warrington Local Learning Skills Council	Liz Davies (as observer)
Private Training Providers Network	TBA
Connexions	Mr Steve Hoy
Warrington LEA	Malcolm Roxburgh
Government Office North West	TBA
North West Development Agency - Northwest Node	Fran Hulbert
North West Sector Skills Council Partnership	TBA
Adult & Community Education, Cheshire County Council	TBA
Edge Hill College of Higher Education (CETL and Lead for Merseyside LLN bid)	Mr Steve Igoe
Director of New Technology Initiative	Mr Garfield Southall
University College Chester Director of Business Development (Project Writer)	Charlie Woodcock
University College Chester (Director of Resources)	Andy Riggs
HEFCE	TBA (As observer)

### 12.2 Role of the Project Director

The Project Director will be responsible for the day to day management of the project. This individual will need to establish the functional groups within the network, and to create the channels of communication. It will be the Project Directors role to inform the project management group of decisions the Executive management group wish to implement, and to keep the Executive group informed of the projects progress.

### Role of the Personal Assistant to the Project Director

This LLN is a very complex and extended network of partners distributed around Cheshire and Warrington. The project director will need the support of a highly efficient assistant to cope with the running of this project. It is proposed to appoint this individual from within the network to minimise 'start-up' time as with the project director.

### 12.3 Role of the Operational Management Group

This group will report to the executive management group. The purpose of this group will be to implement executive management group decisions and to monitor the day-to-day management of this Lifelong

Learning network.

## OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

LLN	Project Director (Chair)
University College Chester	Widening Participation Manager
Manchester Metropolitan University	Widening Participation Manager
FE Colleges	CoVE Managers
Cheshire & Warrington FE & HE Consortium	HE Development Manager
LLN	Area Development Managers
Cheshire & Warrington Aimhigher	Aimhigher representative
Local Education Authority	Adult & Community Learning representative
SME	Employer representative
Connexions/Next step	IAG representative
Edge Hill College of Higher Education	Director of Merseyside LLN

***NB This project management group will be constructed in negotiation with the executive management group at its first meeting.)***

### 12.4 Role of Curriculum Development Officers. (CDOs)

To develop routes through vocational curriculum in the geographical areas surrounding a LINC Centre/Learning zone. These individuals will link the curriculum found within a CoVE to that of a LINC Centre and local Schools/FE/HE/ACL.

- Warrington
- West Cheshire
- Mid Cheshire (Winsford/Hartford/Northwich)
- East Cheshire (Macclesfield)
- South Cheshire (Crewe)

As well as this local remit, each Development Officer will contribute to:

- Linking the curriculum found within a CoVE to that of a LINC Centre/Learning Zone and local Schools/FE/HE/ACL.
- In close partnership with the appropriate Aimhigher fieldworker, working between local School/FE timetable groups to pull-together programmes of curriculum to timetables of delivery.
- Leading on a particular area of 'curriculum mapping', leading on either School, FE, HE, or ACL non accredited learning.
- Liaising with appropriate HEI staff to ensure the effective implementation of QA procedures
- Ensuring the standardisation of IAG across the LLN, including appropriate CPD for all network members involved in IAG will also be developed by this individual.
- Establishing across LLN partners a common means of electronic communication, learning, and learner tracking, including link to the Greater Merseyside LLN to allow cross network interaction.

### Role of the Development Officer Quality Assurance.

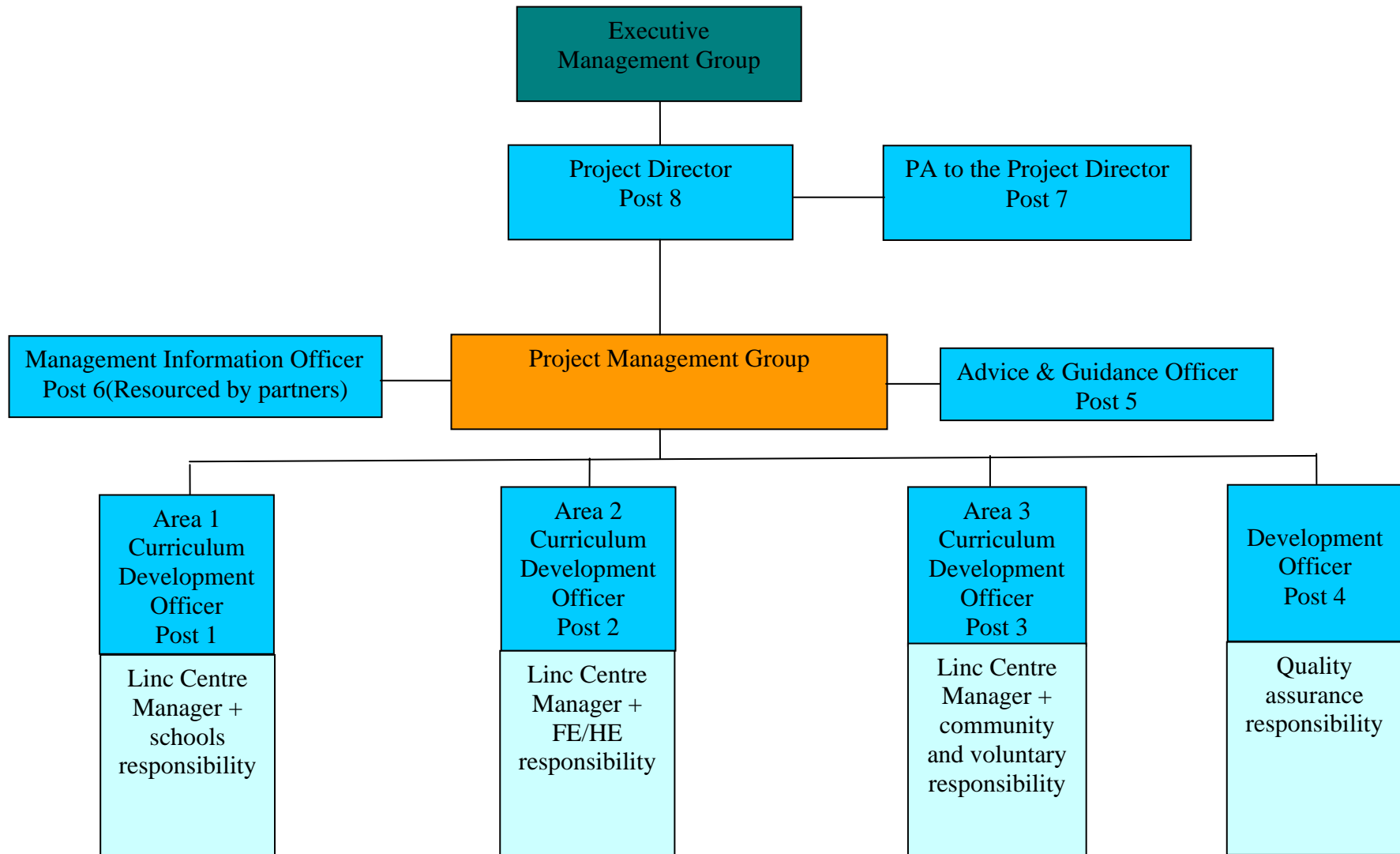
With so many educational providers delivering so many mutually recognised qualifications, and 'units' of qualifications, QA process is crucial. This individual will be responsible for developing network QA procedures, building on existing good practice; they will examine present systems, and create new ones to allow for the highest quality of educational provision.

### Role of the Development Officer Advice and Guidance

This role is central to the network. IAG and the standardisation of IAG across the LLN will directly effect

the success of the entire project. It is intended that this individual will be present on all the 'working groups' within the LLN and will influence network structures and systems. A programme of CPD for all network members involved in IAG will also be developed by this individual.

## LLN NETWORK MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



### 13 ROLE OF EACH PARTNER SUPPLYING NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

All institutions that participate in this LLN do so as equals, on an equal footing and make the same commitment to the network as each other. In addition they will bring particular expertise which will be reflected in the division of activity within the network, but specific contributions described in the section below, do not define or limit what each institution does within the LLN.



#### The Role of the Lead Institution

University College Chester will play the same role in this Lifelong Learning Network as it does in the Health Network, therefore it will:

- 1 Act as the accountable body for this project
- 2 Act as employer for the life of the project for staff appointed to this project
- 3 Assure the quality of the curriculum developed for the network
- 4 Lead on the validation for the Higher Education qualifications necessary
- 5 Support the Project Director in all aspects of their job
- 6 Co-ordinate the Managed Learning Environment
- 7 Ensure the quality of the data for data tracking and data mining

University College Chester will also supply the expertise for the success of the project from the areas listed below.

- The New Technology Initiative
- The Centre for Work Related Studies



#### The Role of The University of Liverpool

The role of the University of Liverpool within the network is becoming more firmly established. Since this document was initially sent to HEFCE for evaluation, the following areas of activity have been developed to further enhance University of Liverpool's role within the Cheshire and Warrington LLN:

- 1 The University of Liverpool will evaluate the effectiveness of this LLN and possibly that of the Greater Merseyside LLN. Discussions held with the Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Liverpool suggests that they want to make this an 'on going' research project that will help inform the development of the LLN and not simply evaluate it at completion. As the Cheshire and Warrington LLN and the Greater Merseyside LLNs have been developed to complement certain aspects of developments common to both (see Characteristic 2 point 5), they have also been designed to 'try different approaches' to certain activities. Value for money from an analysis of 'best practice' carried out by a

research intensive institution and fed back to allow for changes of LLN direction is obvious. Monies for this will have to come from administrative top-slice of the overall budget and will be circa 5% of total project funds

- 2 Development of a standard Continuing Professional Development programme for students following Nursing and Allied Health/Health Sciences to be made available throughout both LLNs. This will make maximum use of their CETL in Developing Professionalism in Medical Students. Level 3 CPD programmes as well as level 4 will also be developed
- 3 Bridging programmes to explore possibilities of mature students who obtain Foundation degrees through the LLN will be developed in partnership with the University of Liverpool to allow them to progress on to post-graduate research programmes in 5 curriculum areas specified in Section 1 of this response.
- 4 Linking with the Admissions/Information and Advice sub-group of the LLN, Liverpool University will support the development of a common APEL framework to enable learners to progress from Foundation degrees to post graduate research degrees within the University of Liverpool.
- 5 Vocational progression pathways in the area of Medicine and professions allied to Medicine. This development will be to support amongst others, LLN students who are seen as 'Gifted and Talented' within their schools, but who do not typically progress onto HE.
- 6 Bring expertise in business interaction, in particular International activities, and to further support the development of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.

In summary, these two Higher Education institutions have been linked for many years and, over this time, have developed excellent internal relations that will help lead to the successful conclusion of this project.

### **Manchester Metropolitan University**

It is recognized MMU has a significant presence in Cheshire and has developed close relations with FEC in the South, East and Mid County. Its continued involvement in the LLN is vital for successful achievement of the LLN's aims and priorities. In pursuance of this, MMU will:

- Share responsibility with UCC for assuring the quality of the curriculum developed for the network and for leading on the validation for the Higher Education qualifications necessary
- Play a key role in facilitating productive discussions and explorations between this LLN and the Greater Manchester LLN
- Facilitate progression to post-graduate research programmes in MMU's highly rated research areas [e.g. Sports Science]
- Support the development of a common APEL framework to enable progression to post-graduate studies
- Maintain its current role within the constituent Cheshire FE and HE Consortium
- Contribute its own expertise in the development of KTPs

### **Cheshire & Warrington FE & HE Consortium**

Macclesfield College acts as the Lead Institution for the Consortium, recognised by HEFCE for funding and development purposes. Three colleges within the LLN will receive HEFCE funding through this body, and the remaining FE colleges are associate members, sharing in curricular and other developments. In undertaking to play a significant part in the Cheshire & Warrington LLN, the Consortium will act to ensure:

- Effective representation of FE interests with the network
- Efficient communication between UCC, officers of the LLN and colleges represented in the Consortium
- Transfer of HEFCE grant to funded member colleges operates efficiently and transparently
- Promoting excellence in delivery of HE in FE, including broadening the basis and membership of its present Curriculum groups to all delivery partners in the network
- The development of effective partnerships with FE and HE partners in neighbouring regions and nationally
- Providing data returns to HEFCE on behalf of member colleges.

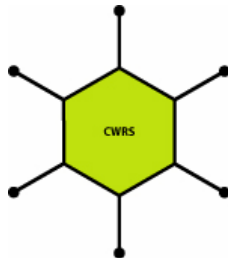


### **The Role of the Cheshire & Warrington New Technology Initiative (NTI)**

The Cheshire & Warrington NTI is responsible for developing ICT provision in FE & HE colleges across the region as a pathway to achieving the goal of filling ICT skills gaps in SME's and organisations. Cheshire and Warrington NTI is also playing a leading role in e-Learning development for the NHS and local industry.

One major initiative is the construction of 'IT for Life' - a skills 'escalator' for all levels from pre-ECDL to PhD across all learning outlets in the region. This scheme, launched in January 2005, aims to provide people from all walks of life with a coherent skills path to encourage and develop their use of IT both at home and at work. NTI curriculum initiatives will tie in with ICT learning for both adult and community learners and also Aimhigher learners.

Cheshire and Warrington NTI has very close links with all Merseyside colleges of Further Education, plus the MANCAT NTI so further curriculum developments could be rolled out across both Merseyside and Manchester. The C&W NTI will also develop and maintain the platform for the Network Managed Learning Environment. Very close links exist between the NTI and E-Skills, the Sector Skills Council for ILT developments.



### **The Role of the Centre for Work-Related Studies**

The Centre for Work Related Studies at University College Chester is one of the largest providers of programmes of Work Based Learning in the UK HE sector and is recognised nationally for its innovative practice. It is currently pioneering, in partnership with HMG Cabinet Office and seven Government Departments, a Foundation Degree for the Civil Service. Through its pioneering Work Based & Integrative Studies framework, it can support the development of programmes of Work Based Learning at all HE levels, including Foundation Degree awards, either for individually or group negotiated approved studies.

The design, development and delivery of all Foundation Degree provision will be done in partnership with employers and, where appropriate, Sector Skills Councils. Such provision will articulate, wherever possible, with Apprenticeships, thus giving access and pull-through to higher education for learners accustomed to work based learning methodologies and allowing them a route to continue in this mode of learning, where appropriate.

FD provision will also recognise the large number of potential learners employed full-time in local government and allied organisations who may not possess formal HE level qualifications and to whom a work based approach to learning might be appealing. In particular, market research indicates the need for FD provision in the following areas:

- 1 Environmental Management
- 2 Urban Studies/Regeneration Studies

### 3 Financial Services

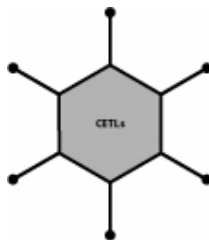
A Work Based & Integrative Studies (WB&IS) programme offers the following facilities:

- Learning review (an audit of existing skills, competences and capabilities);
- Credit for prior learning (credit transfer) and prior experiential (work based) learning;
- Learning needs analysis;
- Specification of a programme tailored to the learning needs of the individual;
- Core WBL skills and WBL methods of enquiry modules that deliver the cross cutting generic skills needs identified as a skills shortage in Cheshire and Warrington;
- Choice of conventionally delivered taught modules and work based project modules; and
- Incorporation of National Occupational Standards into a programme of learning.

As part of the Lifelong Learning Network it is proposed that this innovative model of learning facilitation is adapted for use across the range of FE/HE awards including the addition of level 0 to facilitate the pull through from FE to HE. Working with the evolving 'Framework for Achievement', it will be possible to map existing qualifications, to identify the next steps in learning for the individual, and generally to provide a comprehensive qualifications framework for use across the LLN.

Funding will be used to adapt and develop the WBIS model for use in partner FECs. Considerable staff training and development will be required in its use. At the same time, an electronic management system will be designed and developed to enable learner achievements to be appropriately recorded both centrally and on the individual learner passport. The system is already successfully in operation within the University of Liverpool and will facilitate the identification of gaps in the students learning profile, pointing to, for example, a knowledge deficit in relation to skills achievement or vice versa, with indicative progression routes. This will need to be supported with face to face advice and guidance, but the intention is to provide the learner with initial further motivation to go on learning.

Overall, this will be a sizeable undertaking which, if successful, could act as a model for use elsewhere in the UK. Development funding to develop this initiative further is proposed to ensure the appropriate mix of academic and technical expertise to guarantee its success



#### **The Role of Edge Hill College of Higher Education (CETL in e-learning, and lead partner of LLN bid for Merseyside)**

Edge Hill will provide expertise in e-learning and managed learning environments (MLEs) via its CETL in e-learning. Together with the New Technology Initiative (NTI), an integrated MLE will be developed to enable data analysis and tracking of students through all partners in the Network.

The MLE will also be implemented in the Merseyside LLN. This will ensure that;

- The tracking software and link mechanisms to each partners' Management information Systems system will be standardised across two adjoining LLNs (if they both are approved)
- Tracking, and data analysis which will facilitate proactive progression and intervention as "gaps" are identified
- Student tracking and data analysis can be carried out across both LLN Networks, as many students will move between the network areas.
- Sharing of best practice and intelligence between both Networks

- Common Accreditation of Prior Learning
- Common Admissions systems
- Joint recognition of curriculum and qualifications

### **The Role of Centres of Vocational Excellence**

Within the LLN it is intended to concentrate initially on areas of curriculum excellence as highlighted by the successful acquisition by an institution of a CoVE "Centre of Vocational Excellence". Each CoVE will be used as a hub surrounded by satellites in the form of employers, sector skills councils, private training providers, schools and other agencies that require vocational education and training.

In this way the network will respond to skills needs within the sub-region as identified by the original need for a CoVE. Growth in Learner numbers at both Further and Higher Educational qualification level has already been established, as has the employment opportunity for such learners once qualified. A curriculum will be developed in partnership, to allow pull-through from year 10 to post graduate levels, which will clearly signpost vocational pathways through education. Each skills cluster supported by a CoVE will have a steering group who will be responsible for assuring their appropriate curriculum offered is appropriate and to guarantee the currency of qualifications obtained.

Employers will both advise and guide new proposals for Foundation Degree. Additional student numbers have been identified as needed for growth in these areas due to "skill shortage" and demand for qualified employees. Detailed research is available from the market intelligence compiled in each separate CoVE proposal.



### **The Role of Aimhigher**

This LLN will concentrate on seven main skill clusters:

- Health and Social Care
- Environmental and Bio-sciences
- Business, Enterprise and Public Services
- Sport, Education and well-being
- Engineering/Aerospace
- Creative and Cultural Industries
- ICT

This LLN shares objectives with Aimhigher of encouraging progression from schools and colleges, amongst young people and adults, to Higher Education.

This network will work closely with Aimhigher, including sharing plans, building on the work of Aimhigher in areas of vocational progression.

This proposal has been conceived and written in partnership with the Cheshire and Warrington Aimhigher Project Manager. This in turn is the partnership that has worked with the Greater Merseyside LLN team. As a strategic plan is produced for this project it will complement the regional strategic plan for Cheshire and Warrington Aimhigher.

Six of these areas have an Aimhigher Vocational Development Officer, and a project is being funded at Mid Cheshire College which focuses on pull-through to FDs in Sport Management. These Development workers and projects will work closely with the LLN Development Officers. It is not intended that this LLN produce new School/FE curriculum, this would not be desirable, except in particular cases where curriculum gaps are evident. A clear curriculum

gap is evident in Year Zero provision, Bridging programmes, both into and through HE, CPD provision, and now the Specialist Diploma will create the need for further adaptation. Generally it is intended to use existing programmes found in the current provision more flexibly and efficiently, not to write new 14-18 curriculum but to map, signpost and improve the use of existing provision. This activity will take place in partnership with the 14-19 groups for each part of the sub-region, and also with the SSCGs. This activity will build on best practice and allow each educational provider to deliver to their strengths for the learners in that particular catchment area.

The role of these fieldworkers is to be the link between schools, FECs, HEIs, Private Training Providers, employers and Sector Skills Councils. Their remit is to work with these stakeholders to enhance curriculum 14-18 and offer advice and guidance relating to HE and employment opportunities in their specific areas.

It is envisaged that a programme of activities will be developed in these areas linking relevant work placements with curriculum and HE activities. It is planned that this programme of activities will be accredited and progression agreements will be developed not only with FECs and relevant HEIs but also with Private Training Providers and employers to provide progression pathways via apprenticeships. These programmes will include generic HE activities which will give the qualification validity across all curriculum areas.

Aimhigher is currently funding further projects developing this model focussing on Science, Business and IT, Engineering and the Creative Industries in addition to the work with the NHS.

As well as focussing work on specific vocational areas, Aimhigher Cheshire and Warrington is geographically focussing activity on 'Priority' schools (identified through analysis of data relating to attainment, post 16 staying-on rates and Indices of Deprivation), there are clusters of these schools around each of the identified CoVEs ie Warrington (WCI), Ellesmere Port and Chester (West Cheshire College) and Vale Royal (Mid Cheshire College). The latter falls within the Winsford and East Northwich Test Bed Learning Community, of which Aimhigher is a major partner. Aimhigher currently networks with many existing and new partners, and would support the newly proposed Area Development workers.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Risk Analysis**

**Appendix 2: What are LINC centres?**

**Appendix 3: Role of other partners within the Network**

**Appendix 4: Local area institutional curriculum mapping and progression routes with flowchart**

**Appendix 5: Example of individual learner programming mapping across institutions**

**Appendix 6: Example of a negotiated Progression Agreement**

**Appendix 7: Proposed start up timeline**

**Appendix 8: The Health Climbing Frame**

**Appendix 9: William Beamont Community HS Progression Mapping Project**

**Appendix 10: Demand studies – evidence of unmet skills / learner needs in Cheshire and Warrington**



