

27 May 2010



Dear Stakeholder

East Midlands Skills Strategy Consultation

I am writing to invite your organisation to comment on the proposed areas of focus for the East Midlands Skills Strategy (EMSS) which is attached.

Skills will continue to be of vital importance to individuals, employers, communities and the economy irrespective of the wider changes that may happen in the coming months and years. The East Midlands needs to ensure that we have the skills required to meet the needs of the economy and the labour market, both now and in the future.

In this period of change and uncertainty, it is important that there is a clear approach in the region to strengthening the skills base. The EMSS will be a strategy that is owned and signed up to by organisations throughout the region and will form the basis on which the East Midlands is enabled to influence and drive expenditure on skills.

It is *emda's* intention to develop the EMSS during July and August following feedback from the consultation. The development of the strategy will be overseen by an Advisory Group which is formed from a broad range of stakeholders from across the East Midlands region. The EMSS will be submitted to BIS in September 2010. During the autumn, an implementation plan will be developed with stakeholders to ensure the strategy is fully embedded across the region.

If you should have any questions or concerns, please email *emda* on EMSS@emd.org.uk and we will respond.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. David Silke".

Executive Director of Regeneration

East Midlands Skills **Strategy**

Consultation Paper

Introduction

This consultation paper represents the first phase in the development of the East Midlands Skills Strategy (EMSS). The EMSS will be developed during the summer of 2010. It will set priorities for 14-19 provision, adult skills and HE provision. The evidence and underpinning analysis in the EMSS will then be used by *emda* to develop, with partners, a Regional Skills Priorities Statement. This statement will be used to directly influence the commissioning and delivery of adult skills in the East Midlands.

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) vision for the East Midlands to become a 'flourishing region' provides the strategic framework for the EMSS. The RES sets out three objectives against which the EMSS proposed areas of focus in this paper are aligned:

- **Raising Productivity** – building on **comparative advantage** and addressing **lagging performance** in drivers of productivity;
- **Ensuring Sustainability** – including meeting skills needs required for a **low carbon economy**; and
- **Achieving Equality** - tackling elements of the **low pay low skill equilibrium** and addressing economic **exclusion**.

This document provides a series of proposed areas of focus. You are invited to consider whether these will effectively contribute to the above objectives. To aid your contributions, we have organised this document in a number of skills-relevant themes. In each case we have provided our rationale, based on regional challenges identified in the latest evidence base¹, and have set out our objectives for each.

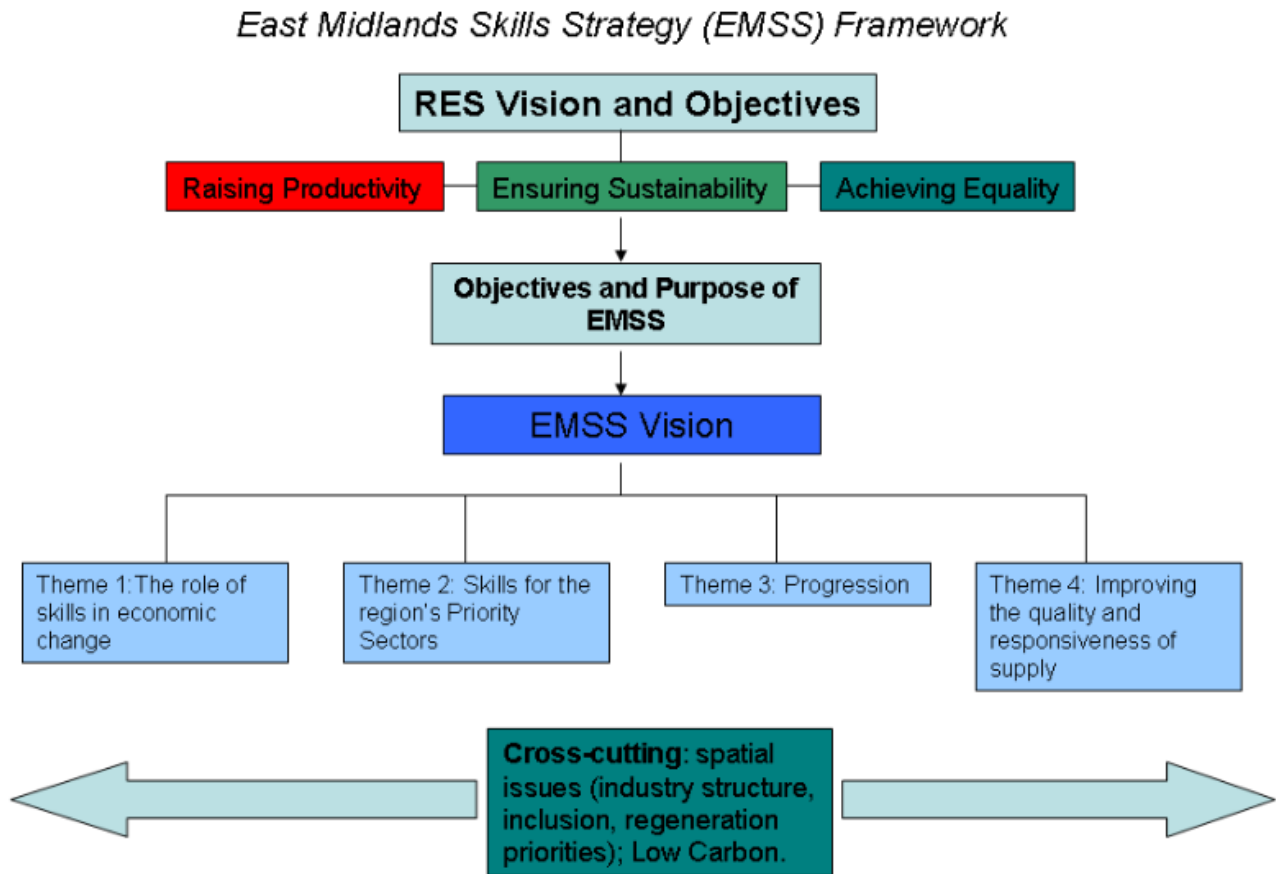
The proposed areas of focus are set out in the following four themes:

- **Theme 1: The Role of Skills in Economic Change** – examines the drivers for productivity and skills demands. It addresses replacement demand, economic exclusion and how skills support innovation and enterprise.
- **Theme 2: Skills for the Region's Priority Sectors** – explores the options for action across key sectors, which have been identified because they either present comparative advantages or significant opportunities for growth in the East Midlands.
- **Theme 3: Progression** – covers the issues of informing and supporting learners to progress from basic through to intermediate and high level skills, fulfilling individual aspirations and progressing in employment. Skills utilisation is also discussed as a way of assisting businesses and individuals.

¹ *emda*, 'The East Midlands in 2010: the updated Evidence Base for the Regional Economic Strategy', May 2010.

- **Theme 4: Improving the Quality and Responsiveness of Supply** – ensures that the structure of supply is flexible and responsive to the needs of the learner, changing employer demand, and specific sub-regional and spatial challenges.

This structure is set out in Figure 1 below.



Consultation on this document will be open until 28 June 2010, after which the responses will be used to inform the development of the East Midlands Skills Strategy. The consultation questions are summarised in Annex 1.

The EMSS will be produced in its final version by September 2010.

A Strategic Vision for Skills

The vision set out in the 2006 RES, 'A Flourishing Region', states that:

“By 2020, the East Midlands will be a flourishing region. A region made up of growing and innovative businesses. A region where skilled people are employed in good quality jobs. A region where we all feel part of healthy, inclusive communities and live in thriving, attractive places.”

The East Midlands Skills Strategy sets out how interventions to improve the demand, supply and mix of skills in the region will contribute to this vision, by ensuring that:

- All learners become 'informed' learners, aware of all their learning options and the opportunities that each presents;
- Enterprise and innovation are core drivers of all learning;
- Skills and qualifications required by business are truly demand led;
- Learning is open to all, regardless of background and location;
- The East Midlands is a place which both builds on the competitive advantages from its industrial past and uses cutting edge research and development to take advantage of new market opportunities in a low carbon and digital future;
- Skills and employment delivery is tailored to the needs of sub regions and population groups;
- Learners and businesses receive integrated support to progress in skills development and employment and;
- The East Midlands is a place which continually improves its skills and employment base, leading to higher rates of, business growth and survival, economic inclusion, and retention of our highly skilled people.

Theme 1: The Role of Skills in Economic Change

Overview

Business demand for skills is driven by the strategies they adopt in order to compete in particular markets. The East Midlands is said to be in a 'low pay low skills equilibrium' because of a relatively high proportion of activity in low value production and services. This leads to an over-representation of employment in low skill, routine occupations compared to high performing English regions (such as the South East and East of England).² This in turn can provide limited incentives for individuals to improve their own skills. The outcome of this is lower productivity, both within individual businesses and at a regional level, which is reflected in lower than average earnings for many employees in the East Midlands.

Skilled workers are better able to adopt and apply new technologies, knowledge and techniques, enabling employers to take advantage of new market opportunities. The EMSS should seek to optimise the relationships between skills, innovation and enterprise, which will result in increased productivity, higher individual wages, and a greater capacity to respond to economic shocks and changing conditions.

Despite lower demand for skills compared to elsewhere, East Midlands employers still encounter difficulties in recruiting and deploying staff with the necessary skills. During the recession, there has been a reduction in recruitment across much of the economy. However, the proportion of employers who report skills issues in their current workforce ('skills gaps') has been increasing, from 15% to 18% in the East Midlands according to the 2007 and 2009 National Employer Skills Surveys (NESS).

Businesses in both high and low skilled sectors have also addressed recruitment difficulties by employing migrant workers. Evidence suggests that large numbers of Eastern and Central European migrants in the East Midlands are particularly concentrated in low skill, routine activities in agriculture, food processing, retail and hospitality, when many may have intermediate and high level skills. There is a challenge in better utilisation of the skills of migrants as well as UK-born workers.

² The South East and East of England are cited as examples of 'high performing regions' compared to the East Midlands because they outperform the national average in a range of economic and labour market indicators, such as productivity, employment rate, qualifications, and earnings. Although both areas have pockets of deprivation (such as the Norfolk coast), this is compensated in the regional level indicators by high proportions of employment in knowledge-intensive, high value sectors and high levels of R&D and enterprise activity.

Innovation and Enterprise

In an increasingly globalised economy, it is becoming ever more important for UK businesses to maintain a competitive advantage through new goods and services. Climate change also poses additional challenges and opportunities in this respect, requiring step-changes in areas such as power generation, building construction and design, and manufacturing technologies. With regional strengths in all these areas, low carbon technologies provide particular skills challenges for the East Midlands.

The region has a rich tradition of innovation, built on well established academic assets alongside a number of regional employers who invest in world leading Research and Development (R&D). The Higher Education (HE) sector is a key partner in innovation and knowledge exchange. The East Midlands' HE sector has been proactive in employer engagement for learning and teaching alike, and has provided hubs of research excellence and commercial collaboration. Assets closely related to the region's Priority Sectors (Theme 2) are located around Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Lincoln and Loughborough.

Enterprise enhances business stock and increases competition. Enterprise skills not only describe the skills required to start and manage a new business, they also encompass skill sets and qualities which enable individuals to be more enterprising when going about their current jobs. Increased enterprise skills can result in growth in employment, reduced unemployment rates, and take the form of community and social enterprise. Leadership and management is crucial in the drive towards greater levels of enterprise and innovation – it is imperative that leaders and managers understand the competitive advantages that innovation and enterprise can bring.

The East Midlands falls behind other regions in measures of employer demand for skills that support innovation and enterprise. Although investment in R&D is relatively high, much of this is concentrated in a few large firms, and conversion of innovation activity into market-ready products is far lower than elsewhere in the UK. The East Midlands has lower than average new business birth rates and lower pay levels, particularly for highly skilled occupations.

Skills and Replacement Demand

Replacement demand describes the need to replace workers who leave their jobs, often because of retirement. The East Midlands is projected to experience the largest growth in its pensionable-aged population of all English regions in the future. All occupations are expected to have a significant replacement demand, but it is projected to be most significant among high skilled occupations. Replacing these groups will require persons qualified to the equivalent of Level 3 and higher. As stated by Leitch, the majority of the workforce of 2020 is already in employment and as such, meeting replacement demand will require substantial improvements in the skills level of the current workforce. An ageing workforce is most prevalent in **Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Rutland**, but less of an issue in the urban centres.

People and Places

There are pockets of severe deprivation across the region, with low levels of employment, skills and income. There were 717,000 people living in deprived areas when last measured in 2007, which accounts for 16.6% of the East Midlands population. These areas are concentrated around the three cities of Nottingham, Leicester and Derby, the former coalfield districts and the Lincolnshire coast. At the same time, certain groups face barriers to employment in all areas of the region. Economic activity rates for women, young people, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and people with disabilities are below average. Skills in their widest sense can contribute to communities developing greater resilience and can expand the opportunities open to individuals beyond their immediate local labour market, helping people and places avoid becoming locked in a path of long term exclusion.

In the East Midlands, sectors such as Wholesale and Retail comprise a large proportion of employment opportunities, strongly influencing overall demands for skills and qualifications. Whilst many of the skills demanded in these sectors are equivalent to Level 2, they often provide entry level opportunities for young people and those who have experienced barriers to employment. It is therefore important to consider opportunities for integrated service delivery in job-creation, employment and skills support alongside targeted physical regeneration.

There are particular challenges in some sub-regions, especially in areas such as coastal **Lincolnshire**, and parts of northern **Derbyshire** and **Nottinghamshire**, where the past and current structure of employment has led to concentrations of low-skilled labour. Due to the relative isolation of some of these areas, employers are reliant on local labour pools, which perpetuate a low pay low skill trajectory.

Tackling the relationship between low skills and economic exclusion requires action to raise aspirations, increasing awareness of the benefits of learning and development and improving access to provision.

The proposed areas of focus and key questions for this theme are outlined below. This theme has clear links with the existing RES priorities and these are detailed in Annex 2.

EMSS Proposed Areas of Focus

- Support business improvement through skills development and utilisation.
- Ensure that leadership and management skills for the region's businesses are continuously developed.
- Stimulate demand for skills at level 3 and above, in order to support business improvement in times of economic change.
- Develop enterprise skills, both to better equip individuals to start new businesses and enable employees to be more enterprising in their current jobs.
- Facilitate greater collaboration between FE, HE and businesses to provide skills that support innovation and enterprise.

- Prepare a strategic response for all sectors to articulate the needs arising from replacement demand and technological development. This should be both sectoral and sub regionally focussed.
- Ensure continuous employment and skills support for those facing economic exclusion.

Key Questions

- 1) Do you agree that the proposed areas of focus will help to ensure that skills play a role in economic change?
- 2) Have we got the right balance between provision for new economic opportunities and the skills needed to meet replacement demand?
- 3) Do you agree that replacement demand and technological development is a significant issue and warrants the preparation of a strategic response for each sector? How would you propose that the strategic response is managed?
- 4) Do you agree that a focus on innovation, enterprise skills and leadership and management development is key to supporting economic change? If not, what areas do you think should be focussed on?
- 5) Do you believe that promoting skills at Level 3 and above is an effective method of supporting business improvement? If not, what levels and types of skills do you suggest?
- 6) What do you believe is the best way to combine employment and skills support to help those individuals facing economic exclusion?

Theme 2: Skills for the Region's Priority Sectors

Overview

In order to improve the region's overall performance, it is important to build on advantages as well as addressing challenges. At the heart of the RES is a focus on enabling key sectors to reach their full potential and act as drivers of growth. The pattern of industrial development in the East Midlands has led to the Region having a number of sectors where it has a competitive advantage.

These sectors have some or all of the following characteristics:

- They have higher productivity than the national or the regional average;
- They account for a larger share of employment and/or a larger share of economic output than nationally. The four sectors prioritised in the RES account for 21% of Gross Value Added in the East Midlands, compared to 17% in the UK.;
- They present opportunities for public policy intervention, such as procurement strategies that encourage private sector investment in employment and skills when competing for public contracts; and
- They exhibit other comparative advantages (e.g. geographical clustering, 'flagship' firms with large supply chains, or are supported by centres of excellence in Higher Education).

The priority sectors are:

- **Transport Equipment:** includes the aerospace, automotive, defence, marine and rail manufacture sectors and is particularly important in **Derby, Derbyshire and Northamptonshire**;
- **Healthcare and Bioscience:** covers the manufacture of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, R&D in Life Sciences and also the Healthcare sector, principally represented by the NHS. These sectors are of particular importance in **Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire**;
- **Sustainable Construction:** The quality of the built environment is hugely important to the quality of life, economy of the East Midlands and to the development of Low Carbon technologies. The region is projected to experience the fastest increase in households of any English region over the next decade, providing significant opportunities for the house building sector
- **Food and Drink** covers a range of different activities, from food production, preparation and packaging across **Lincolnshire** to innovative food production sciences around **Leicester**.

These sectors reflect knowledge intensive growth areas, key for the East Midlands' future competitiveness and adaptive capacity. They also include significant employers who account for significant proportions of employment requiring low, intermediate and high level skills.

As well as developing interventions specific to each sector, there are a number of cross-cutting themes for skills activity that will facilitate greater competitiveness across all four sectors:

- **Skills for a Low Carbon future**: the region has a number of existing strengths, such as in its power generation sector. Ongoing investment in skills development at all levels and facilitation of university collaborations present opportunities for the Transport Equipment and Sustainable Construction sectors in particular;
- **Digital Technologies** will play an increasing role in delivering a low carbon economy. The region has acknowledged strengths in Transport Technologies (identified in the region's Innovation Strategy).

The proposed areas of focus and key questions for this theme are outlined below. This theme has clear links with the existing RES priorities and these are detailed in Annex 2.

EMSS Proposed Areas of Focus

- Encourage skills delivery that supports an innovative and enterprising workforce with effective leaders and managers, focussed on improved business performance and the exploitation of new opportunities and technologies
- Ensure that employer needs, for priority sectors, are adequately articulated.
- Capture the current and future needs of employers in priority sectors to inform the development of skills provision.
- Develop opportunities to build a flexible and multi-skilled workforce for new technologies and opportunities.
- Ensure an adequate supply of skilled labour to reflect the sub regional variations in the priority sectors.

Key Questions

- 7) Development of employers' and individuals skills in enterprise and leadership and management is an important driver for all business. Do you feel that the priority sectors need a different approach?
- 8) Are these actions sufficient to develop opportunities for a flexible and multi-skilled workforce in the priority sectors, in order to exploit new technology and opportunities? Are there any other interventions that we can consider?
- 9) Can you suggest any further action to ensure that variations in the supply of skilled labour at a sub regional level meet the demands of local employers in the priority sectors?

Theme 3: Progression

Overview

Qualifications are key to individuals accessing employment and progressing to higher level jobs. Although employers place less emphasis on qualifications rather than skills, qualifications are used by employers to ‘signal’ the sort of skills and characteristics they value in their employees.

Technicians and Intermediate Skills are key to future growth. The drive to a higher skilled workforce at Level 3 and higher will help to improve business performance, raise individual aspiration and provide the skills needed to cope with replacement demand in the higher occupational groups.

High level skills underpin the growth of knowledge-based businesses and contribute to innovation and enterprise within business as well as increasing individual aspiration.

The higher the qualification level, the more employable an individual becomes in their chosen field. People with higher qualifications have access to a wider range of options in the labour market and higher earnings.

However, the high demand for low skilled jobs in the East Midlands means that qualifications have less of an impact on regional employability. Earnings for higher skilled occupations are lower in the region and almost two-fifths of respondents reported that their highest qualification was above that required for entry of their current job. Therefore, achieving a better match between the skills and qualifications available in the regional workforce and the skills and qualifications demanded by employers is essential to ensure labour market progression.

To encourage individual progression in the workplace requires employers to effectively utilise the skills of their workforce. Skills utilisation requires organisations to effectively link business issues such as training, recruitment, strategy, company culture and employee attitude together. As a business makes more of these links and puts them together as a cohesive package, the more likely it is that business performance will be improved and individual progression will be achieved.

Skills utilisation and progression will only be achieved if both the employer and the individual are “informed learners” who are aware of the wide array of study options and potential outcomes.

The “informed learner” starts with young people and their early study and career decisions. Young people need information, advice and guidance that enables them to make informed decisions about their further studies and progression into employment. The region needs to increase the aspirations of young people as well as ensuring the supply of skilled people for the jobs and technologies of the future.

Adults, both in and out of work, need to understand the potential career paths arising from their studies and have access to ongoing support with career planning and skills development. Employers need to understand the wide array of skills development options and their potential impact on business performance in order to become an “informed learner”.

The proposed areas of focus and key questions for this theme are outlined below. This theme has clear links with the existing RES priorities and these are detailed in Annex 2.

EMSS Proposed Areas of Focus

- Ensure that the commissioning of 16-19 provision aligns with the priorities in the East Midlands Skills Strategy.
- Examine how all learners, whether in or out of work, become ‘informed learners’ aware of the full range of educational options including diplomas, apprenticeships, further and higher education and career opportunities that each presents.
- Increase the skills of managers in relation to improving skills utilisation.
- Develop opportunities with employers to increase the number of Level 3 qualifications being offered, with a particular focus on Apprenticeships and those technical areas which support the priority growth sectors.
- Strengthen life long learning opportunities through increasing the promotion of skills progression options available to individuals, whether they are studying in the workplace or outside of it.
- Continue to develop the links between business, further education and higher education. This will help to ensure progression to higher level skills and widening participation across the workforce.
- Develop mechanisms to allow employers to adequately articulate their demand for skills.

Key Questions

- 10) Do you feel we have adequately addressed the strategic issues which affect individual skills progression within employment? If not, what other areas do you feel should be included?
- 11) Do you believe that linking the Regional Commissioning Statement for 16-19 with the priorities in the East Midlands Skills Strategy will ensure that we have a skilled workforce for the future? If not, what more do you think should be done?
- 12) Do you believe that a focus on skills utilisation by helping businesses to use cohesive packages, will lead to improved business performance across all sectors? If not, how would you suggest that skills utilisation is improved?
- 13) Do you believe that there need to be increased links between business, further and higher education in order to increase opportunities for skills acquisition and progression for those currently in employment? How would you propose to improve these linkages?
- 14) How would you propose that the region supports those who are out of work to become “informed learners”?

Theme 4: Improving the Quality and Responsiveness of Supply

Overview

In order for the East Midlands to flourish there is a need to ensure the quality and responsiveness of the skills system in supporting both individuals and employers. Skills provision should be of high quality and relevant to demand, both for aspirational learners and productivity driven employers.

This system should not only be demand-led, responding quickly and effectively to changing economic needs; but also pro-active, anticipating and then delivering a more mixed and flexible skills base.

Recent Performance of the Skills System

The available supply of skills and qualifications remains a challenge for the East Midlands. In terms of **qualifications**, the East Midlands has a lower than average proportion of the workforce qualified to Level 4 and above and a higher than average proportion of workforce without a Level 2 qualification. Although workforce qualifications levels have increased more rapidly than the national average in the East Midlands, the region still lags behind leading regions such as the South East and East of England. High proportions of the workforce in the former coalfields, the Lincolnshire coast, Nottingham and Leicester lack a Level 2 qualification.

In terms of **skills**, although the proportion of 15 year old pupils achieving five or more GCSEs including English and Maths is in line with the average in England, more than 30% of employers who recruited 16 years olds direct from school still thought that they were not work-ready (describing them as either 'poorly prepared' or 'very poorly prepared'). Skills in **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) underpin the skills that employers need in the above sectors and in the wider economy.

Although pupil attainment has demonstrated significant overall improvement in the East Midlands, achievement varies significantly by ethnic group, by local area, and by Special Educational Needs. Educational attainment of pupils who would describe their ethnic group as 'Black: British' or 'Mixed' is generally lower than average. Absenteeism is higher and achievement is generally weaker for pupils from all groups in Nottingham and in Leicester Cities highlighting the challenge of tackling the intergenerational nature of disadvantage.

The East Midlands is a mix of urban and rural areas and this poses challenges in terms of skills delivery, especially in areas which do not have ready access to a skills provider. Whilst the needs of rural businesses and individuals are largely the same as those in urban areas, skills programmes need to recognise rural access issues.

The East Midlands has an ageing workforce and replacement demand is expected to be a key need in the future. As outlined in Theme 1, replacement demand, when coupled with the expected demographic changes in the region, creates a considerable challenge.

Furthermore, technological change creates new skills and qualification needs which will need to be met to ensure the region continues to grow and cope with economic change.

The proposed areas of focus and key questions for this theme are outlined below. This theme has clear links with the existing RES priorities and these are detailed in Annex 2.

EMSS Proposed Areas of Focus

- Strengthen skills provision to adequately meet the needs of those facing economic exclusion through an integrated employment and skills offer.
- Continued efforts to reduce the lack of Level 2 qualifications in the former coalfields, Lincolnshire Coast, Nottingham and Leicester as well as tackling the issues surrounding variation in the attainment in some BME groups.
- Ensure that skills provision is able to meet the needs of a mature workforce, including re-skilling to respond to industrial restructuring and technological change.
- Develop skills provision relating to innovation and enterprise to raise both the aspiration of learners and business performance.
- Ensure that the education curriculum has an emphasis on providing young people with the transferable and generic skills required for work-readiness.
- Ongoing development of STEM expertise and skills within the region.
- Support innovative methods of rural skills delivery which reflect the particular needs of rural business and individuals.

Key Questions

- 15) Can you identify other actions that might improve the responsiveness of supply in the context of changing demand?
- 16) What further actions can you suggest to improve the integration of employment, skills, information, advice and guidance in order to tackle economic exclusion?
- 17) What kind of skills do you feel that young people need to make them work ready?
- 18) Are the areas of focus identified above appropriate to the needs of urban, rural and remote communities? If not, do you have any further suggestions?
- 19) Can you suggest any further actions for skills delivery to meet the growing challenge of an ageing workforce and replacement demand?

How to Respond to this Consultation

We welcome views on the questions listed throughout this consultation document, which are summarised in Annex 1. Comments and views on issues not directly addressed in the questions will also be welcome.

In setting out the context and the proposed areas of focus, we used the latest evidence, presented in '*The East Midlands in 2010*'. We would encourage you to refer to this and other sources that you are aware of, when responding to this consultation. We would also welcome identification of any additional evidence which we may not be aware of that supports your comments.

You can contribute views and comments in a number of ways:

- In writing, by post to

EMSS Consultation Responses
East Midlands Development Agency
Apex Court
City Link
NOTTINGHAM
NG2 4LA

- Or by email to: EMSS@emd.org.uk

The deadline for all responses is 28 June 2010

Responses to this consultation will inform the preparation of the East Midlands Skills Strategy. We are aiming for the final East Midlands Skills Strategy to be published in September 2010.

Annex 1 Consultation Questions

Theme 1: The Role of Skills in Economic Change

- 1) Do you agree that the proposed areas of focus will help to ensure that skills play a role in economic change?
- 2) Have we got the right balance between provision for new economic opportunities and the skills needed to meet replacement demand?
- 3) Do you agree that replacement demand and technological development is a significant issue and warrants the preparation of a strategic response for each sector? How would you propose that the strategic response is managed?
- 4) Do you agree that a focus on innovation, enterprise skills and leadership and management development is key to supporting economic change? If not, what areas do you think should be focussed on?
- 5) Do you believe that promoting skills at Level 3 and above is an effective method of supporting business improvement? If not, what levels and types of skills do you suggest?
- 6) What do you believe is the best way to combine employment and skills support to help those individuals facing economic exclusion?

Theme 2: Skills for the Region's Priority Sectors

- 7) Development of employers' and individuals skills in enterprise and leadership and management is an important driver for all business. Do you feel that the priority sectors need a different approach?
- 8) Are these actions sufficient to develop opportunities for a flexible and multi-skilled workforce in the priority sectors, in order to exploit new technology and opportunities? Are there any other interventions that we can consider?
- 9) Can you suggest any further action to ensure that variations in the supply of skilled labour at a sub regional level meet the demands of local employers in the priority sectors?

Theme 3: Progression

- 10) Do you feel we have adequately addressed the strategic issues which affect individual skills progression within employment? If not, what other areas do you feel should be included?
- 11) Do you believe that linking the Regional Commissioning Statement for 16-19 with the priorities in the East Midlands Skills Strategy will ensure that we have a skilled workforce for the future? If not, what more do you think should be done?
- 12) Do you believe that a focus on skills utilisation by helping businesses to use cohesive packages, will lead to improved business performance across all sectors? If not, how would you suggest that skills utilisation is improved?
- 13) Do you believe that there need to be increased links between business, further and higher education in order to increase opportunities for skills acquisition and progression for those currently in employment? How would you propose to improve these linkages?
- 14) How would you propose that the region supports those who are out of work to become "informed learners"?

Theme 4: Improving the Quality and Responsiveness of Supply

- 15) Can you identify other actions that might improve the responsiveness of supply in the context of changing demand?
- 16) What further actions can you suggest to improve the integration of employment, skills, information, advice and guidance in order to tackle economic exclusion?
- 17) What kind of skills do you feel that young people need to make them work ready?
- 18) Are the areas of focus identified above appropriate to the needs of urban, rural and remote communities? If not, do you have any further suggestions?
- 19) Can you suggest any further actions for skills delivery to meet the growing challenge of an ageing workforce and replacement demand?

Annex 2 Links with RES Priority Actions

Theme 1: The Role of Skills in Economic Change

Theme 1 links with the RES priority actions as follows:

RES Priority Actions

1a Develop the skill levels of the current and future workforce

1b Stimulating business demand for skills: including integration of skills delivery with business support and diagnostics, high performance working, use of public procurement, and management and leadership.

1d Exploiting the opportunity of higher education.

2a Building an enterprise culture: including increasing enterprise awareness.

2b Creating a dynamic SME base: targeted provision to business creation and increasing business survival.

3a Increasing investment in Research and Development.

Theme 2: Skills for the Region's Priority Sectors

Theme 2 links with the RES priority actions as follows:

RES Priority Actions

1b Stimulate business demand for skills

2c Supporting innovation and diversification in manufacturing.

3e Growing the region's Priority Sectors: focussing on Transport Equipment, Healthcare, Sustainable Construction and Food & Drink.

3b Developing and applying new technologies.

3c Resource efficiency through effective use of technology and management practices.

5b Exploitation of low carbon markets.

Theme 3: Progression

Theme 3 links with the RES priority actions as follows:

RES Priority Actions

1a Developing the skill levels of the current and future workforce: engaging with schools, colleges and businesses; developing adult workforce skills.

1b Stimulating business demand for skills: including high performance working, use of public procurement, business support, management and leadership.

1d Exploiting the opportunity of Higher Education: developing lifelong learning networks to link further and higher education; supporting HEI's to increase the flexibility of their offer

10a Employability: including enhancing the employability of the most disadvantaged and improving the diversity of the workforce.

Theme 4: Improving the Quality and Responsiveness of Supply

Theme 4 links with the RES priority actions as follows:

RES Priority Actions

1c Improving the infrastructure and responsiveness of skills supply: matching skills provision to employer demand.

10a Employability: including enhancing the employability of the most disadvantaged and improving the diversity of the workforce and ensuring equality of access to skills and employment regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, location or past educational attainment.

10c Develop entrepreneurship skills: promoting entrepreneurship as a viable career choice for people from all backgrounds and integrating entrepreneurship skill at all levels of the education curriculum (schools, FE and HE).