



Norfolk Skills Economy Project

A Baseline Report

September 2010

For: Shaping Norfolk's Future

**By: Andrew Wheeler
Trainagain**

Filename: Norfolk Skills Economy September Report V6

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	8
Background	8
What this project will do	10
Project Aims	10
Project Outcomes	10
Norfolk – A rural county	11
Norfolk – Skills Base	11
Nuances of the Skills Economy	12
Gaps & Shortages	12
Framework of Labour Market Mismatch	14
Demand for Skills	14
Apprenticeships	14
The Supply Side – Universities; Colleges & Private Training Providers	15
FE Environment & Challenge	15
Norfolk Provision – Some examples	16
City College Norwich	16
Easton College.....	18
The Institute of Food Research (IFR),.....	19
The University of East Anglia (UEA)	19
The College of West Anglia	21
Business Survey	23
Common themes.....	23
Responses from very small companies (1 – 10 staff)	24
Small companies (10 – 50 staff).....	24
Larger companies (100 + staff)	25
Multi-Nationals	26
The Skills Economy – Challenges of Supply and Demand	26
Conclusions	29
Recommendations	29
Appendix 1 - Contrasting themes from different stakeholders	31
Appendix 2 - Shaping Norfolk’s Future – Skills Economy Priorities	32
Appendix 3 – Norfolk Training Provider Database	35

Norfolk Skills Economy Project

A Baseline Report

September 2010

Executive Summary

This ESF project will work with key growth sectors in Norfolk to identify vocational skills gaps in the workforce and explore how providers in the county can work together to deliver the skills that employers want for their workforce, and employees need for their personal development.

The Norfolk economy is diverse, dispersed between large rural areas and key urban conurbations, and its skills base is uneven.

This project will attempt to gain better understanding of sectors and get underneath the issue of skills, and gain a clearer insight into how supply and demand works for the skills economy.

Gaps & Shortages

The importance of the distinction between a gap and a shortage cannot be overemphasised because it impacts directly on funding and allocation decisions in FE.

A shortage implies a deficit in supply, “in short supply” we might say. Whereas a gap is less about supply and more about shaping the skills of existing employees to meet the needs of the company. This is an important distinction – and without it, there is a danger of policy being made which confuses gaps with shortages:

Demand for Skills

The demand for skills is more complicated than it may first appear, and calls for demand led training often lack clarity about whose demand it is they’re talking about. “Demand” is a multi-faceted term – sometimes referring to individual demand (the student), at other times demand as anticipated by government as a proxy for macro demand for the nation; and occasionally, it has meant the actual demand for skills from employers – based on their individual company need. These different demands pull in different directions, so, to use the overworked but clear example, teenagers may choose (demand) hairdressing as their vocation. The college provides the course, the (often very good) facilities, and the teachers; and the government pays for the delivery of skills. But the local economy, and probably the national economy, may not have a need for new hairdressers.

There is a further problem with demand in connection with skills shortages and perceived recruitment difficulties; employers naturally seek a labour and skills market where both the labour and skills required are in abundant supply. This not

only improves choice and depresses labour cost, but also keeps existing labour ‘on their toes’. Intervention based on ‘perceived employer demand’ may simply create a dis-equilibrium in the market – an oversupply of specific labour or skills.

Apprenticeships

It is worth dwelling on the value of apprenticeships in terms of supply and demand. In the report we refer to addressing skills gaps as akin to a precision tool whilst addressing skills shortages is seen as more of a scatter gun approach.

Apprenticeships result from a skills shortage, but because the trainee is employed by the business, the shortage turns into a skills gap – apprenticeships can therefore also be viewed as a precision tool – in fact they can offer a perfect model of supply and demand.

Ideally apprenticeships should be driven by businesses themselves – the employer ‘demands’ the skill and the labour, which is delivered (to the employer’s requirements) by the local training provider and the apprentice. In theory this economic symmetry cuts out waste and addresses skills needs with optimum effectiveness. In our later sector specific reports, this project will fully test out that theory.

The Supply Side – FE Environment & Challenge

FE has sometimes had a hard time convincing the world that it can respond to employers needs. Train to Gain contracts haven’t always helped their cause: free training, for NVQ work based training isn’t necessarily the same as meeting an employer’s needs for training. What is free may not be valued and what is delivered to prescribed pre-defined contracts (NVQ outcomes) can appear more of a supply led initiative rather than a demand led outcome.

Colleges and universities vary in their approach and understanding of sectors. Some colleges in the past have been too keen to please the primary demand of the (government funded) student and this has led to an over-supply of skills in some sectors (e.g. hairdressing) and an apparent under-supply of skills for other sectors (e.g. engineering). As part of the research undertaken for this report, we interviewed most public sector providers in the county to gain an insight into their workforce development and sectoral strategies.

The findings are positive and the FE and HE sector have many good examples of employer engagement. Below are some key questions derived from the interviews:

What more could City College do to ensure that it is the first choice provider for workforce training in the greater Norwich area?

To what extent is the college meeting the needs of smaller companies and micro businesses?

How can the Easton example of sector based engagement be used as a model for other colleges to use in meeting the needs of employers from other sectors?

To what extent is 'entry level' supply an issue which requires public sector intervention? What is the danger of non intervention?

To what extent can the Institute for Food Research (IFR) help solve the perceived need for soil scientists in Norfolk?

To what extent can the Research, Enterprise & Engagement Office at University of East Anglia (UEA) help develop SME's innovative capacity in the county?

How can UEA's EVOLVE programme continue beyond its current funding?

How can initiatives such as the IDEA Programme (focusing on apprenticeships) be harnessed for better engagement with SMEs?

To what extent could NUCA's experience of working with SMEs be transferred to other sectors and other skills providers?

How can NUCA help create a sustainable model for incubator start ups at EPIC?

How might it be possible to experiment with a wider portfolio of short courses to bring more businesses into NUCA's orbit?

How can the College of West Anglia's experience of delivering training across predominantly rural areas be effectively harnessed for wider SME engagement across the county?

To what extent is National Skills Academy accreditation a sign of good employer engagement? What other means might an employer have to identify good training practice?

Business Survey

As part of this initial survey of the skills landscape in Norfolk, we also visited 16 companies across the county from a range of sectors:

These businesses provide a snapshot of employer's views about training, upskilling and FE provision. The responses come from a range of companies that include SMEs and National organisations.

Common themes

Many of the companies have a small permanent staff base but employ contract or agencies staff to undertake additional work; this has a knock on effect in terms of commitment to training. None of the smaller companies had any formal diagnostic program in place to check skills levels. The cost of training was perceived as a major barrier to providing training and most businesses sought ways to externally fund mandatory training. Many questioned the value of qualifications provided by FE or

private providers, and took issue with the lack of underpinning knowledge delivered by providers. The apprenticeship scheme was perceived as “very confusing” – especially sourcing an apprentice. Quality of provision came up several times. Some companies could not name an FE college that provides qualifications in their sector; and where a company did use an FE college it was sometimes a long way from their site and costly to send a learner to it. Training meant down time in the company and almost all felt this was difficult in these current economic conditions.

It is worth noting that no matter how good FE training provision is, there will always be businesses who don't use the local college for a range of reasons. Some have historically never used a college, perhaps because of what they had heard about FE provision (the old “tech”) many years ago; others have tried FE but found that it didn't meet their needs, was unable to be flexible and could not respond to changing business circumstances; and a few claim no knowledge of their local college.

This report is an introduction to the skills economy and is intended to serve as a qualitative baseline for further sector studies within the project. Much has been written about the mismatch of skills but unfortunately this complex issue is all too often reduced to sound bites which end up confusing rather than clarifying the situation.

The report explores the background to a local news article written about Norwich based manufacturing firm, Milltech, in which certain assumptions about the supply of skills are made. This mini case study reveals some interesting solutions to skills needs and some potential opportunities for other sectors to explore. It concludes with the following questions:

Was Milltech's need an isolated problem or does it point to a more general issue to do with a mismatch of skills in this sector?

What lessons can be learnt from this example which can be applied to other sectors?

Conclusions

This report sketches out the issues relating to the skills economy in Norfolk. It shows that many of the issues are complex and there are rarely simple solutions. Supply and demand factors always need further clarification to determine what the supply actually relates to, and whose demand it is we're talking about (employers; government's; employees; pre-work students etc..). The report demonstrates that there is a key difference between skills gaps and skills shortages and that these need to be treated differently. Skills shortages are rare and difficult to predict or overcome without potentially causing an over-supply of a particular skill. Employers react to changes in labour supply with understandable concern but this is sometimes translated into a skills shortage problem when it is usually a local (and possibly temporary) problem.

On the supply side, it is clear that there is some very good practice in employer engagement. Both the universities and the colleges have excellent track records in

areas of workforce development, however there are still many obstacles to overcome in terms of engaging SMEs and micro businesses – who are so important for the county’s economic development. As the brief business survey shows, there are many small businesses who have no interest in training beyond compliance. How can colleges play a greater role in reaching out to this disengaged sector? Many small businesses tend to ‘firefight’ and react to market conditions rather than plan strategically for the future. But to understand the small business person’s mindset really requires direct experience of being a small business and few people in the public sector support network have that experience or knowledge. So bridges need to be built which will encourage small businesses to consider new ways of working, to think the unthinkable – and put training and development at the top of their agenda. But it can only happen if the training is flexible and relevant to their needs – if not it will simply cement the old view that the whole public sector offer is a waste of time.

The report sets the tone for a series of sector studies which will involve both employers and training providers – sharing the good practice that is evident throughout the county, applying successful models of engagement & delivery to other sectors and geographical areas – and where necessary, challenging both sides to do things differently and build a thriving skills economy.

Recommendations

Explore Norfolk sectors in detail – starting with manufacturing; gain a better understanding of the mechanics of delivery, the nuances of supply and demand, and the value of apprenticeships.

Further develop the www.skilluppnorfolk.co.uk website – to ensure information on training is available and easy to access and book.

Circulate this report to training providers and employers – and incorporate feedback into a follow up report for next steering group meeting.

Introduction

Shaping Norfolk's Future has produced sector development plans and action plans for a range of key sectors in the county. These cover economic development and business competitiveness; sustainability issues; and actions relating to skills in the workforce and skills needed for the future workforce.

This ESF project aims to build on this work by carrying out in depth analyses of key growth sectors particularly in relation to the skills base of people working in those sectors and the possible skills gaps which exist; discussing findings with employer focus groups; developing sector skills strategy through the Norfolk Employment & Skills Board and engaging local providers in the quest for effective solutions.

Background

The Leitch Report (2006) sets the context for skills development and a productivity challenge for the UK as a whole. In order to become a 'world leader' in skills there needs to be a greater emphasis on engaging with employers and creating a genuinely 'demand-led' system for the planning and delivery of skills.

Last year's (November 2009) "Skills For Growth" provided a "national skills strategy" building on the themes developed in the 2006 Leitch report and adopting many of the recommendations from the UKCES Simplification of Skills report (2008). Along with several workforce development strategies the report proposed much greater flexibility between the division of "in" or "out" of work for those wishing to upskill.

In "A Strategy for Sustainable Growth" (July 2010), a new agenda is proposed to achieve a "more balanced and sustainable – both economically and environmentally – model of growth to address our long term challenges". (A Strategy for Sustainable Growth (July 2010) Vince Cable – Foreword).

Vince Cable goes on to suggest that the UK economy has been "reliant on debt, inflated house prices and a swollen financial sector. Opportunity was spread unevenly, with the private sector weak across swathes of the country, and we were not investing enough in preparing for a greener, low carbon future. (Ibid – Foreword)

The new strategy promotes the efficient operation of markets to support growth; smarter public and private investment in the economy, including creating a highly skilled workforce; and encouraging entrepreneurialism and individual engagement in the economy to support growth. (ibid Page 4)

Whilst a skilled workforce is seen as paramount, a new emphasis on individual responsibility is highlighted, to the point where ultimately "they would be willing to support the costs of their own education".

The consultation on the future direction of skills policy – Skills for Sustainable Growth (July 2010) is equally forthright about the way forward:

“It is essential that learners should gain the skills that are most useful to them, economically and socially. The previous Government did this by making choices for individuals which were promoted through training subsidies. The system was held to account for delivering what Government thought was needed”.

It concludes “We think this was the wrong model... Rather, employers and learners should have access to good information about the value of different types of learning and what it might help them achieve and about the quality of different providers. They then must be free to choose the training they think best suits their needs and therefore more prepared to invest in it. The training system must be easier to navigate and should be held to account by its customers rather than by Government.” (Skills for Sustainable Growth (July 2010) Executive Summary)

At the same time, The 2010 update report for Ambition 2020 shows that the UK is making progress on skills against its international counterparts in a number of areas: we are ahead of target for higher level qualifications and there is even a danger of an over-supply of skills in some sectors of the UK economy. Moreover, STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths) continue to be taken up as a degree choice and we are performing well in the supply of STEM graduates compared to EU benchmarks. (Ambition 2020 pp 66-67). Whilst on adult lifelong targets we are over-performing there is concern that the UK’s workforce is undertaking less training than it should be. This is a particularly important indicator given that 80% of the 2020 UK workforce is already in work. (Ambition 2020 page 8).

This is reinforced in a recent joint EU-China report: “Both China and the EU share a common aim to upskill the labour force and recognise that the majority of those that need upskilling are already in work.” (New Skills New Jobs: CHINA AND THE EU- Foreword July 2010).

What this project will do

This project will work with key growth sectors in Norfolk to identify vocational skills gaps in the workforce and explore how providers in the county can work together to deliver the skills that employers want for their workforce, and employees need for their personal development.

Much work is already being undertaken to help unemployed adults into work. Action on equipping young people with the skills they need to join the future workforce is also in hand. This project has a separate aim: it is to engage employers in a debate about skills gaps in their existing workforce and to work with providers to find solutions to address the problem.

Project Aims

- ✓ Analyse and report on skills activity in key growth sectors in Norfolk.
- ✓ Set up sub-regional growth sector skills focus groups comprising generic business representative organisations; sub-regional business groups and associations; FE & HE representatives. Present and discuss findings and seek solutions.
- ✓ Work with colleges, universities and private training providers in the sub-region to develop new ways of responding to employer needs.
- ✓ Analyse the wider “skills economy” for key growth sectors in Norfolk and produce composite report.

Project Outcomes

- ✓ Better understanding of the skills economy and workforce development opportunities of key growth sectors in Norfolk;
- ✓ Improved communications between employers and providers potentially leading to new ways of delivering skills and improved response times;
- ✓ Improved understanding and link between the separate strands of the skills economy (young people; unemployed; adult workforce);
- ✓ Improved strategic direction relating to sectoral skills interventions; funding issues; and the aspirant seamless skills provision.

Norfolk – A rural county

Norfolk is a largely rural county. It has 90 miles of coast, 250 miles of waterways, 6,329 miles (10,189 kilometres) of roads and 541 parishes. There are over 200 conservation areas, more than 10,000 listed buildings and more than 350 scheduled ancient monuments.

The population of Norfolk is around 840,700. Norfolk's population has a relatively elderly age profile. Compared with England and Wales it has higher proportions of people aged 50-54 and over, and lower proportions in all the younger age groups.

Around 38 per cent of the County's population live in the three major built up areas of Norwich (207,000), Great Yarmouth (68,400) and King's Lynn (42,800), and a further 19 per cent (158,000 people) in the market towns. Around 40 per cent live in parishes of over 300 population, and the remaining 4 per cent in parishes with less than 300.

Norfolk has above average deprivation compared with the English shire counties, and on most summary measures is the most deprived county in the East of England Region. Norwich and Great Yarmouth are the most deprived areas within Norfolk. Norwich has improved recently but Breckland, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn and West Norfolk have worsened.

Norfolk – Skills Base

In terms of a skills profile; Norfolk is rather polarised; it is a county that stands to gain from addressing skills gaps in sectors such as Manufacturing and Construction, Hotel and Catering, Land Based, Rental and Business Activities and from addressing higher level skills shortages by attracting graduates to roles especially within SMEs, benefiting the more highly skilled areas of the economy. There is also a significant opportunity for skills matching in key new sectors such as low carbon technologies; bio-science; and digital media.

Around 15% of Norfolk people have higher qualifications (compared with 20% nationally) and nearly a third have no (academic, vocational or professional) qualifications. Around 17% of people are retired compared with under 14% in England and Wales as a whole.

Overall, we see a lower skills base than neighbouring counties and the Norwich skills base is lower than that found in Cambridge. There are fewer people with higher levels of qualifications, and hence less ability to take up highly skilled jobs in the new industries generating higher levels of wealth. (However, this needs to be seen in the context of a national over-supply of high level skills – suggesting a need to 'market' Norfolk as an attractive place to live for graduates currently living in other counties). There are more workers in Norfolk in lower-paid jobs in the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector. These lower levels of skills, fewer people working in high level professional jobs and differences in business sectors, result in both lower productivity and significantly lower earnings in Norfolk.

Norfolk has both prospering economic areas and pockets of deprivation. Already a significant force in the knowledge economy, with a growing base in Health and Life Sciences, the county is well placed to attract innovative and high value businesses. But Norfolk's economic performance lags behind the rest of the region and the UK in terms of productivity. With the prospect of significant growth in Norfolk, a key priority for the county is helping to create the right conditions for accelerated economic growth. Although business survival rates are very good, start up rates are low, approaching 25% below the regional average.

Nuances of the Skills Economy

What is it we are trying to achieve in this project? A better understanding of sectors is certainly a start. But its more than that; we're trying to get underneath the issue of skills, and gain a clearer insight into how supply and demand works for the skills economy.

Looking at industry learning, on the supply side there are many private providers and a few public providers (mainly FE colleges and universities). To what extent these providers deliver what is needed in industry must be examined more closely, especially in light of the fact that many companies consistently say that their local college plays no part in their training plans; or that their experience of FE offers little reward. Equally, we need to look more closely at private provision to gain a clearer insight into the market for skills and where public funding intervention is required.

Gaps & Shortages

The importance of the distinction between a gap and a shortage cannot be overemphasised because it impacts directly on funding and allocation decisions in FE.

A shortage implies a deficit in supply, "in short supply" we might say. Whereas as a gap is less about supply and more about shaping the skills of existing employees to meet the needs of the company. This is an important distinction – and without it, there is a danger of policy being made which confuses gaps with shortages:

"We have skills gaps in Norfolk" means there are people in the Norfolk workforce who need to gain new skills to help them do their work effectively.

"We have skills shortages in Norfolk" means there are not enough people to do the skilled jobs that exist (or will exist in the near future) in the county.

It is clear that increasing the supply of skilled people (say through new courses for teenagers at college) based on the first statement will do little to alleviate the problem – it may even exacerbate it. Conversely, focusing on a workplace upskilling strategy based on the second statement will be equally ineffective.

So skills shortages refer to the need for new people with the right skills to join the workforce of a particular sector. This forms the bulk of FE work, training people to

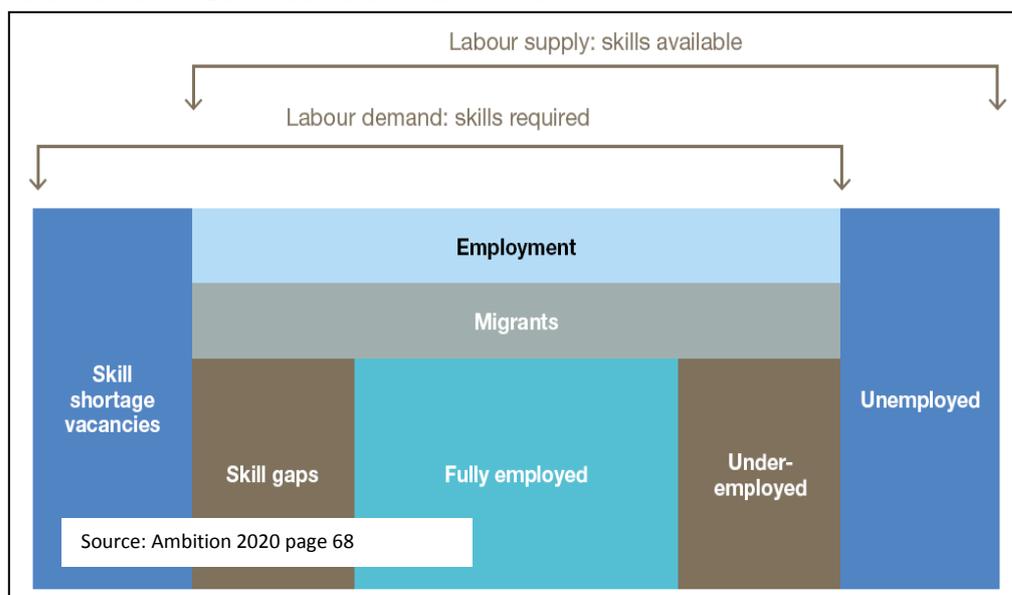
fit job vacancies of the future. Of necessity, it involves a lot of planning, forecasting and guesswork. It is also very much a scatter gun approach to matching supply with demand because, first of all there is no guarantee that the forecast demand for a skill in a particular sector actually turns out to be in demand two or three years down the line. But also, there is no guarantee that the person with the new skill will actually take up work in the sector which originally forecast the demand. So colleges are tasked with delivering skills to the economy as a whole rather than delivering pinpointed demand led skills for particular sectors or localities; hence the reference to a “scattergun” approach.

Skills gaps are about existing people in the workforce not having the right skills to perform the job they are doing. This is a very specific problem which requires a specific remedy. Addressing skills gaps can be called a “precision” tool in the arsenal of training providers; it delivers the skill to the person who is required to the job. Once this distinction is fully appreciated, one can begin to separate out certain ‘myths’ about further education. The myth for example, that FE doesn’t deliver what employers need may be caught up in the skills shortages debate in which case it should be made clear that main stream full time training is a role given to FE by society and not one which can, with any accuracy, give employers what they want, when they want it. Equally the myth that colleges are not places for businesses may be dispelled by referring to the different roles FE has.

Skills gaps can often be addressed through short courses and many employers refer to this as part of their criticism of government funded training. But colleges are in an excellent position to deliver short courses to businesses and to build long term “follow-through” relationships which ensure that a company isn’t wasting a training investment on a ‘single shot’ course.

The diagram below (taken from Ambition 2020) provides a useful picture of how the skills economy works. It places all those in employment in the middle section of the diagram – and breaks them up in terms of resource utility (some who are underskilled therefore under performing; some fully employed; and some underemployed (i.e they have the skills to contribute more). On each side of the central section are key variables in the skills economy – on the left hand side there is a demand for new labour with the right skills and on the right hand side there is a supply of labour (from the unemployed) but not necessarily with the right skills for the job. Whilst an ideal solution would be to train those on the right to meet the skills needed on the left, in reality this is extremely difficult to achieve. Leaving aside the extent of individual skills deficiencies, in a dynamic market place, employers don’t wait for the skills to arrive but go out and find the new recruits they need, sourcing from as far a field as they need. So a reskilling initiative may simply be too late to fulfil the “momentary” demand.

Framework of Labour Market Mismatch



Demand for Skills

The demand for skills is more complicated than it may first appear, and calls for demand led training often lack clarity about whose demand it is they're talking about. Leitch suggested that there needs to be a greater emphasis on engaging with employers and creating a genuinely 'demand-led' system for the planning and delivery of skills. But of course "demand" is a multi-faceted term – sometimes referring to individual demand (the student), at other times demand as anticipated by government as a proxy for macro demand for the nation; and occasionally, it has meant the actual demand for skills from employers – based on their individual company need. These different demands pull in different directions, so, to use the overworked but clear example, teenagers may choose (demand) hairdressing as their vocation. The college provides the course, the (often very good) facilities, and the teachers; and the government pays for the delivery of skills. But the local economy, and probably the national economy, may not have a need for new hairdressers.

There is a further problem with demand which needs to be mentioned here. It is in connection with skills shortages and perceived recruitment difficulties; employers naturally seek a labour and skills market where both the labour and skills required are in abundant supply. This not only improves choice and depresses labour cost, but also keeps existing labour 'on their toes'. So when we 'listen' to employers, we need to be aware of the demands which reflect normal market conditions, and demand which needs public sector intervention to address the need. Intervention based on 'perceived employer demand' may simply create a dis-equilibrium in the market – an oversupply of specific labour or skills.

Apprenticeships

Much has been written about apprenticeships in recent times and the new government clearly sees them as a part of major strategy for workforce development. It is worth dwelling on the value of apprenticeships in terms of supply and demand. Earlier we referred to addressing skills gaps as akin to a precision tool

whilst addressing skills shortages was seen as more of a scatter gun approach. Apprenticeships result from a skills shortage, but because the trainee is employed by the business the shortage turns into a skills gap – apprenticeships can therefore also be viewed as a precision tool – in fact they can offer a perfect model of supply and demand.

Ideally apprenticeships should be driven by businesses themselves – the employer ‘demands’ the skill and the labour, which is delivered (to the employer’s requirements) by the local training provider and the apprentice. In theory this economic symmetry cuts out waste and addresses skills needs with optimum effectiveness. In our later sector specific reports, this project will fully test out that theory.

The Supply Side – Universities; Colleges & Private Training Providers

FE Environment & Challenge

FE has sometimes had a hard time convincing the world that it can respond to employers needs. Train to Gain contracts haven’t always helped their cause: free training, for NVQ work based training isn’t necessarily the same as meeting an employer’s needs for training. What is free may not be valued and what is delivered to prescribed pre-defined contracts (NVQ outcomes) can appear more of a supply led initiative rather than a demand led outcome.

Moreover, Train to Gain government funding has opened up the market place – so that all kinds of fast response, lean suppliers of training could compete for a slice of LSC ‘business’. Colleges with their core, full time 16-19 year old market needing to come first – have sometimes lost out to smaller more employer focused providers. And even when they have got the business, and its been delivered well, that doesn’t guarantee that the employer will come back for other kinds of training, e.g. full cost short courses, delivering specific skills to the workplace. It is too easy for FE to be ‘type-cast’ as deliverers of government funded training and nothing more.

There is a further problem for further education colleges: FE is often seen as a panacea for all of society’s needs which have not been met at school or which university has no place for. So colleges are charged with tackling social exclusion, and some have worn this particular badge with pride and determination to address inequality in their communities. But this doesn’t necessarily help the perception of the college as a ‘first port of call’ for businesses wanting training. Indeed it may work against the college – so that it is perceived as a bastion against social deprivation rather than as a place for “doing business”.

Aside from the social inclusion argument, colleges are places where young people go to learn a skill. This full time provision is the core work of FE – the 80% which needs to be nurtured. Having time and resources to focus on the 20% - upskilling the UK workforce can be onerous – and at times is in direct conflict with mainstream full time provision (e.g. allocating space in the college). And of course, a place which is

80% occupied by young people is going to look like an institution for teenagers – not a resource for businesses.

So before we even start to talk about quality, it is fair to say that FE faces an uphill struggle just to get a seat at the workforce training table.

Norfolk Provision – Some examples

Colleges vary in their approach and understanding of sectors. Some colleges in the past have been too keen to please the primary demand of the (government funded) student and this has led to an over-supply of skills in some sectors (e.g. hairdressing) and an apparent under-supply of skills for other sectors (e.g. engineering).

City College Norwich

City College Norwich specialises in seven sectors:

- Hospitality and Catering
- Computing & Networking
- Accountancy & Financial Services
- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Creative & Cultural (including journalism)
- Energy

Three of these sectors have Centre of Vocational Status (CoVE) (hospitality; computing; and financial services) and five are National Skills Academy (NSA) partners. The college has recently developed a Journalism academy offering foundation degrees. Out of the 7 sectors, only ICT which essentially works across sectors is not part of the NSA.

The college is one of the largest in the UK with 6,000 14 –19 students and an annual budget approaching £50m. Each of its academies is led by a ‘board’ of employers – (for example Lotus sit on the Manufacturing board; and AXA are closely involved in the Financial Services Academy).

The college prides itself on employer engagement, especially in developing apprenticeship programmes (they have 160 apprenticeships currently with AXA across the country). In the hospitality sector, Principal Dick Palmer estimates that 95% of hotels in the area have dealt with the college and most will have an ex-apprentice working with them. City College recently catered for 1700 covers at the County Show, demonstrating their capacity to deliver in the sector. In the retail sector, City College has demonstrated its commitment to training in the ‘real’ world, by opening a shop in Chapelfields. This venture, part of their Skills Academy approach, has the backing of local employers who sit on the NSA board and monitor progress towards skilling people for the sector.

City College is unusual in the sense that it is an awarding body in its own right. The first college in the country to gain Awarding Organisation Status in April 2008, it allows the college to accredit high quality training provided by employers with nationally recognised qualifications. Awarding Body status has enabled the college

to work, for example, with key companies in the financial services sector (Aviva, Axa, Moneyfacts, Virgin Money and the Norwich & Peterborough Building Society) to develop new qualifications such as the “Introduction to Financial Services course” for new recruits to the sector.

CCN has also used its awarding body status to develop new qualifications in other sectors too. The Police force is a good example of CCN’s ability to get underneath skills issues and develop a solution which brings long term results. Recruitment is an expensive business and any saving on training up new recruits will of course be welcomed by the sector. City College Norwich, in partnership with Norfolk Constabulary, has developed a Diploma in Policing and Public Safety which covers the core knowledge and understanding required of police officers, cutting down the time that new recruits have to spend as a trainee once they have joined the police force. As the website states: “While the Diploma does not guarantee entry to the police force – the students still have to satisfy the same assessment requirements as any other applicant – it does provide them with a great chance of successfully doing so. The transferable skills gained from the course also mean that it provides invaluable training for those deciding to progress on to other roles within the police besides that of Police Constable, or wider community safety work, and for progression onto further educational courses”. [CCN webpage - Police Career](#)

This course is currently being piloted; the forthcoming public sector cutbacks may have a significant impact on its ability to deliver successful recruits into the industry so the college and Norfolk Constabulary will no doubt monitor its success over the coming year.

A further example of engaging with employers is the work the college has been doing with a mobile phone repair company. CCN introduced a course for local unemployed people – which included actual training for repairing mobile phones. Students spent two intensive weeks with the college before starting work with the company. In total 40 people were trained and recruited in this way and this resulted in a doubling of productivity compared to people who were not recruited from the college.

This is not an isolated incident of productivity gain either. Archant Newspapers also reported a dramatic increase in productivity, for CCN telesales apprentices working with the company.

So, there are good examples of FE employer engagement and with sector based development which has enabled the college to gain an invaluable insight into how sectors work and what is needed, within the workforce; among apprenticeships; and at the pre-recruitment stage.

What more could City College do to ensure that it is the first choice provider for workforce training in the greater Norwich area?

To what extent is the college meeting the needs of smaller companies and micro businesses?

Easton College

Easton College is unusual as an FE college in that it specialises in one sector – land based industries. Easton College prides itself on knowing its employers and understanding their skills needs. The college benefits from stable leadership (the principal has been there since 1993) and a board of governors who are passionate about the rural economy; are aware of the skills issues and act as a bridge between employers and local activities.

Easton College works with all of the largest employers in the county and has created a new Edexcel national employer based diploma which incorporates an advanced apprenticeship and technical certificates – with the option to progress to a foundation degree.

Easton College is centrally involved in recruitment activity for the local economy – working ‘upstream’ into schools and ‘downstream’ into employers in order to deliver the supply of skills needed for industry. The college sees itself as not just part of the sector, but ‘owned’ by the sector. The college works with UEA (Centre for Contemporary Agriculture) and the Hethel Engineering Centre (skills gaps and labour shortages are reported in the land based engineering sector).

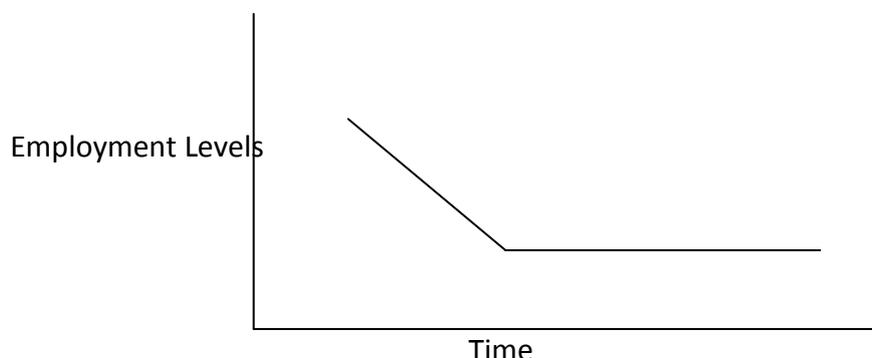
The college is not just the friend of big business. Each year Easton College takes around 2000 enrolments for short industry specific courses, often involving people from small rural businesses.

Key issues facing the agriculture sector are lack of entry level supply. The sector is perceived as ‘old’ and a long way from the cutting edge digital businesses based in the city, so encouraging school leavers to choose a land based career is difficult. With a dominant 50+ age profile, this could mean more imported labour to fill retirement vacancies in the future.

However, labour movement between sectors is greater than many other industries; e.g. from construction into agriculture or even among skilled engineers – using the skills gained in mechanical engineering to take up a second career in the land based sector. So one needs to use the phrases: ‘skills shortages’; ‘hard to fill vacancies’; or ‘labour shortage’ with caution.

An interesting analysis of the sector is provided by David Lawrence, Principal of Easton College. The decline in employment in the land based industries has been a long term trend - but of course this is an essential sector for the national economy and unlike a sector in terminal decline, the rural economy needs people: scientists; engineers; farmers etc.. to come into the sector if it is not to face a period of recruitment difficulties.

The graph shows how employment levels in the rural economy have continued to fall over many decades. But the decline is not terminal since this is a primary industry – at a certain point employment will stabilise and new recruits will be needed. That time, David Lawrence suggests, is now; experienced people are retiring, leaving unfilled vacancies in their wake.



Soil science is a specialist career that is particularly in need now with no obvious sign of graduates meeting the need.

How can the Easton example of sector based engagement be used as a model for other colleges to use in meeting the needs of employers from other sectors?

To what extent is 'entry level' supply an issue which requires public sector intervention? What is the danger of non intervention?

The Institute of Food Research (IFR),

The Institute of Food Research (IFR), based on the Norwich Research Park, with the University of East Anglia, may be in a position to provide a solution to this particular need.

IFR is a world leader in research into harnessing food for health and controlling food-related diseases. Internationally recognised for its work, the Institute has been a partner in more than 30 European Union funded projects, and an initiator of the European Technology Platform Food for Life.

IFR is a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status, and is an Institute of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC). It has a staff of over 200, which is complemented by many visiting scientists and postgraduate students each year from all parts of the world, who visit IFR for collaborative research and training.

To what extent can IFR help solve the perceived need for soil scientists in Norfolk?

The University of East Anglia (UEA)

UEA has a reputation for working with employers and is particularly strong in the energy and environmental sciences sector, biological science and in health.

UEA offers a one stop service for businesses through its Research, Enterprise and Engagement Office (REE), set up originally as a knowledge transfer office – and dedicated to developing external links and commercialising research. Norfolk entrepreneurs might consider using the REE service to find out how to work with UEA academics and staff; access students for employment or internship placements; accessing university innovations and ideas; using university facilities; to explore professional training programs and partner with academics for research.

UEA's EVOLVE project was set up to "support individuals and SMEs in Norfolk through the current economic downturn and to help them into a stronger position as the economy recovers". The programme offered a range of short courses (due to end in September 2010). The EVOLVE Project's paid Internship Program runs until March 2011, with the backing of government financial support the program places recent graduates into local businesses to gain valuable work experience. SME feedback on the scheme and the contributions their business by graduates is hugely encouraging.

Both these UEA services are worth dwelling on. They could provide SME's with valuable access to world-class expertise in both training and collaborative research that would greatly benefit their long term growth.

The University is also involved in apprenticeships through the IDEA Programme. IDEA is about addressing, developing and delivering a skills escalator and associated business solutions for the digital economy. It is a joint venture between BT, Cisco, University College London, University of East Anglia, University of Essex, University Campus Suffolk and Suffolk New College. As the website states "The work of IDEA builds on the strengths of these founding partners to create innovative solutions to skills and training requirements and the promotion of qualificatory [sic] success through a skills escalator".

The university is also considering modular courses that would increase access to skills for people already in work.

To what extent can the Research, Enterprise & Engagement Office help develop SME's innovative capacity in the county?

How can the EVOLVE programme continue beyond its current funding?

How can initiatives such as the IDEA Programme (focusing on apprenticeships) be harnessed for better engagement with SMEs?

Norwich University College of the Arts

NUCA is a specialist University College focusing on art, design and media and the creative industries. It has numerous links with employers especially SMEs and micro-businesses. Academic staff are engaged in professional practice in their disciplines. Many part-time staff also run design or media businesses and provide support to SMEs on a freelance basis.

NUCA has developed a significant network of employers in London, other metropolitan centres and Norwich, who play a significant role in accommodating student placements and providing feedback on course content. The University College is currently delivering a programme of 65 internships in the creative industries for recent graduates, funded by the Economic Challenge Investment Fund. Whilst the creative and cultural sectors are distinguished by a high proportion of SMEs, Norwich has several large media companies with whom the University College has a number of links.

NUCA is an Authorised Training Centre for Apple and offers a range of Apple software training such as Final Cut Pro. It is also a key tenant at EPIC, the East of England Production Innovation Centre in Norwich, where its BA (Hons) in Film and Moving Image Production is currently located. A new project, The Ideas Factory, will further the University College's involvement with the local commercial sector – providing consultancy, advice and support services to businesses looking for creative input. NUCA is also interested in opportunities to develop new business start-up and incubation for the creative industries.

NUCA is unusual in that it is a champion of small and micro businesses and a conduit for graduates start ups in the county.

To what extent could NUCA's experience of working with SMEs be transferred to other sectors and other skills providers?

How can NUCA help create a sustainable model for incubator start ups at EPIC?

How might it be possible to experiment with a wider portfolio of short courses to bring more businesses into NUCA's orbit?

The College of West Anglia

CWA is spread over three counties and serves a mostly rural community. As a result of this diverse and dispersed catchment area it has developed an innovative method of delivery working with partners across 'West Anglia' to bring training to employers.

CWA was created out of Norfolk College of Arts & Technology; Cambridgeshire College of Agriculture & Horticulture, and later Isle College Wisbech. The bulk of CWA's activity takes place in Norfolk and North Cambridgeshire, and its client base extends right across the county – with several key employers based in and around Norwich. Having recently completed its Part A TQS, the prestigious "Training Quality

Standard,” CWA is keen to demonstrate to employers its focused and response based approach to industry skills. The college has an impressive Training at Work Programme Guide, offering training across 13 different sectors and its Employer Engagement Strategy (2009 – 2012) sets out a sectoral approach to employers in: primary & utilities; manufacturing; construction; distribution, transport, communications and retailing; business services (including computing and financial services) and public sector including public administration; defence; health and education). In the strategy, some insight is provided into each of these sectors with up to date information on the impact of the downturn on these sectors in different local economies.

The college has four CoVEs in sport; retail; manufacturing; and computing. It has also developed National Skills Academy partnerships in retail; logistics and manufacturing (CWA is often the ‘preferred supplier’ for Business Improvement Techniques), although the college is ambivalent about expanding NSA network activity given the cost of involvement.

This year, CWA has the largest contract in Norfolk for Train to Gain and for apprenticeships. It does more work in the care sector than any other, but is also actively involved in manufacturing; retail and polymers and plastics (it is the largest trainer in the region for this sub-sector).

Whilst CWA has an excellent track record in employer engagement its core business is still full time provision for 16 – 19 year olds and its recent Ofsted Grade 1 assessment reflects the college’s overall approach.

How can the College of West Anglia’s experience of delivering training across predominantly rural areas be effectively harnessed for wider SME engagement across the county?

To what extent is National Skills Academy accreditation a sign of good employer engagement? What other means might an employer have to identify good training practice?

Business Survey

As part of this initial survey of the skills landscape in Norfolk, we visited 16 companies across the county from a range of sectors:

	Construction	Agriculture/ Horticulture	Engineering	Motor Factors	Manufacturing	Packaging	Food & Drink Processing	Logistics/ Distribution	Health & Social Care
L&O Windows	Kings Lynn								
D Tekes		Kings Lynn							
Advance Engineering (UK) Ltd.			Kings Lynn & East Dereham						
Plastic Buildings	Main office in Kings Lynn but work through out Norfolk								
Andrew Page Ltd.				Yarmouth, Norwich, Kings Lynn,					
Bernard Matthews							Norwich & Halesworth		
Smartlift							Kings Lynn		
Con-Pak Systems					Downham Market & Kings Lynn				
East Coast Storgae								Kings Lynn	
Coles of Kings Lynn							Cromer & Kings Lynn		
Britvic Soft Drinks (Unilever)							Norwich		
Johnsons Ironworks			Great Yarmouth & Kings Lynn						
Essess Ltd	Kings Lynn								
Benjamin Foundation									Dereham, Norwich, Cromer
Gates Ltd.								Norwich	
Bowes Ltd.		Watton							

These businesses provide a snapshot of employer’s views about training, upskilling and FE provision. The responses come from a range of companies that include SMEs and National organisations.

Common themes

Many of the companies have a small permanent staff base but employ contract or agencies staff to undertake additional work; this has a knock on effect in terms of commitment to training. None of the smaller companies had any formal diagnostic program in place to check skills levels. The cost of training was perceived as a major barrier to providing training and most businesses sought ways to externally fund mandatory training. Many questioned the value of qualifications provided by FE or private providers, and took issue with the lack of underpinning knowledge delivered by providers. The apprenticeship scheme was perceived as “very confusing” – especially sourcing an apprentice. Quality of provision came up several times. Some companies could not name an FE college that provides qualifications in their sector; and where a company did use an FE college it was sometimes a long way

from their site and costly to send a learner to it. Training meant down time in the company and almost all felt this was difficult in these current economic conditions.

It is worth noting that no matter how good FE training provision is, there will always be businesses who don't use the local college for a range of reasons. Some have historically never used a college, perhaps because of what they had heard about FE provision (the old "tech") many years ago; others have tried FE but found that it didn't meet their needs, was unable to be flexible and could not respond to changing business circumstances; and a few claim no knowledge of their local college.

Responses from very small companies (1 – 10 staff)

L & O Windows is a micro construction company employing 5 staff + Contractors. They don't prioritise training and expect new starts to be fully trained; they will assess staff on the job to measure their competence – those not achieving the required standard will either leave or develop their skills on the job. L& O Windows say they are willing to consider training if provided at low cost but it is unlikely to be a priority and unless it clearly relates to the trade they would be unlikely to consider a course. As with many micro businesses, it is difficult enough just focusing on getting the business and then delivering the contract. The idea of taking time out to upskill staff does not fit easily within such a slim-line structure and whilst business skills (marketing, management, finance) or strategic skills (growth; succession planning etc.) may be a good idea for the company, the likelihood of making time for this kind of training and paying for it themselves, is very slim indeed.

D-Teks Ltd is a micro agriculture business employing 3 staff. The company would like to take on more staff and would even consider an apprentice if they could cover the cost. Their preference would be to work with an FE provider but they were not aware of the local college – College of West Anglia.

Plastic Buildings Supplies Ltd is a construction company currently employing 3 staff although before the recession the numbers were higher. They do not tend to do training, relying, instead on recruiting qualified and experienced staff. They were unable to name a local college or a private provider.

Smartlift Ltd is a industrial packaging business with 6 staff. As a small company it can't easily afford training and tends to only undertake courses to comply with mandatory requirements (e.g. food safety; health & safety).

Johnson's Ironwork Ltd is an engineering company with 8 staff. As a forward thinking business, they provide a lot of in house training. Employment has decreased with the recession but they are now looking to recruit, however only skilled workers will be taken on. They would consider an apprentice if there was no cost; they normally go through the local FE college.

Small companies (10 – 50 staff)

Advance engineering (UK) Ltd employs 15 staff. They stated a preference for using the local college as opposed to private providers. They currently have an apprentice as part of the apprenticeship scheme run through the college, they have been

impressed with the outcomes of this and the value of the qualification. The company would consider training but insist that it would have to be fully funded.

Con-Pack Systems Ltd is a small manufacturing firm employing 12 staff. Most training is undertaken on the job and staff are monitored for competence. They use the College of West Anglia for support and have used the apprenticeship scheme but were not totally convinced about its results. Terry Freeman – Director of Con-Pack commented that he saw real value in NVQ qualifications.

East Coast Storage is a logistics company employing 12 staff plus contract labour. They prefer to employ those who are already trained, but they do use a private provider for updates such as fork lift training. They have no budget for training and cite cost as a key barrier to wider training.

Coles of Kings Lynn is a food processing company with 13 staff. They provide their own training on the job and are not impressed with training providers who lack the kind of 24 hour shift work flexibility they need. Cost was also an issue.

Gates Ltd is a distribution company with 22 staff. They operate on a very low skills base. As a pick and pack business they are not interested in training. They employ people who have the tenacity to do the job but no formal skills are needed.

Larger companies (100 + staff)

Andrew Page Ltd is a motor factors company employing around 100 staff across different sites around the county. They provide mandatory training such as Fork lift; driving and health & safety - and deliver IT training internally, working with private providers who have been very helpful.

The Benjamin Foundation employees in excess of 100 staff and is supported by volunteers. The Benjamin Foundation provide a variety of in-house training opportunities and also source training from private providers including NVQ's. As a charity the cost of providing quality training is an on-going issue but they recognise the need for this to ensure our staff and volunteers can offer their service users the high quality services that they deserve.

Bernard Matthews Ltd is a high profile food production and manufacturing company employing in excess of 2000 people. 265 staff are based at the Norwich plant. The company undertakes a lot of internal training (much of it mandatory) and uses a range of training providers (both private and FE) for qualifications delivering NVQ/QCF. Much of the training is fully funded and may decrease as and when funding is either withdrawn or requiring employer contribution. The Bernard Mathews model is similar to the Lotus model of training. It involves working through the sector skills council – IMPROVE to develop workforce qualifications which are 'fit for purpose' verified and assessed by Ofqual and then offered and accredited by an awarding body. A training provider who has a contract for learning outcomes is used to register all relevant staff on to the programme, and key staff are trained up as assessors so that all of the training takes place in the workplace and under the guidance of Bernard Mathews own staff. This system of training, working in

partnership with sector skills councils, awarding bodies and local training providers to provide funding and accreditation— but delivering the actual training in-house is a good model – but it depends on substantial amounts of government funding to ‘oil its wheels’. Without such funding, new arrangements will need to be put in place – and employers will need to make purchasing decisions based on having to actually pay for the training. ‘Government free training doesn’t always correspond to what we need and who needs it, the age ranges are often limiting and you can feel penalised as a larger company for your size as though they expect us to have the money for training’.

Multi-Nationals

Britvic plc – part of the Unilever Group, is one of Europe's leading soft drinks companies. Their current operations comprise Britvic GB, Britvic Ireland, and Britvic France. The group is completed by Britvic International which manages the export and franchise of many of our brands across more than 50 countries. Collectively they employ 3500 people and they have a site staffed by 200 people in Norwich. Britvic runs programs to standardize training provision through internal and private training providers. This involves working with the sector skills council to develop standard qualifications specifically for Britvic operations. Britvic has developed its own apprenticeship scheme with MGTS and is SEMTA, IMechE and IET approved. Work is underway with NSA to develop a technical skills map with linkage to NSA and IMPROVE units.

In terms of bridging the gap between skills needed and the current skills baseline, Robin Howlett, Britvic’s Continuous Improvement Manager, East explains:

“Skill gaps are identified both in terms of established skills needed for a role and skills needed to drive business improvement. For example, a first line manager role has a defined skill set that can be compared to a trainee and the gap established. Likewise with machine operators. We’re currently working with NSA to identify a complete technical skills map by role and link it to Improve QCF units available. We will then look to a training provider and or Assessor who can support this country-wide so we have common standards of training and assessment. Generally where the skills need to be brought in, the preference is for non-FE providers.

“For performance improvement we have an internal TPM / Lean programme that delivers skills to attack specific wastes and losses. Britvic has a team of expert TPM and Lean practitioners who train and coach the skills needed to drive the business to world class levels of performance.

“There are 10 Britvic apprentices now undertaking their PEO and technical diplomas via a network of FE colleges and providers managed by MGTS. Another cohort will be recruited in 2011.”

The Skills Economy – Challenges of Supply and Demand

This report is an introduction to the skills economy and is intended to serve as a qualitative baseline for further sector studies within the project. Much has been written about the mismatch of skills but unfortunately this complex issue is all to

often reduced to sound bites which end up confusing rather than clarifying the situation.

Quotes such as the ones below demonstrate the danger of simplification:

A “report, by business organisation CBI, showed 45pc of companies were currently having difficulty finding new employees with skills in science, technology, engineering and maths - known as STEM subjects. And an even more worrying 59pc said they expected to have problems securing those key skills in three years' time.” (Norwich Evening News, 19th May 2010)

It is difficult to reconcile these claims (by employers) that there are not enough science graduates with the fact that many science graduates remain unemployed (See What Do Graduates Do – Nov 2008). Moreover, over the last decade more and more people have chosen science subjects for university degrees. The idea that businesses will know their future recruitment needs (3 years from now) and be able to foretell the shortage in STEM graduates at that time needs to be challenged.

The article continues:

“Mike Ottolangui, managing director at Rackheath-based engineering firm Milltech Precision Engineering, which provides a range of services to industries such as oil and gas and leisure marine, recently announced plans to recruit additional CNC machinists following an upturn in orders in 2010.

The company has invested in new CNC machines to meet demand, but has been unable to find people with the right skills.

Mr Ottolangui said: “Skills remains an issue. We are looking for highly skilled programme setters for CNC machines and we are finding it a real difficulty.

“The problem with this area is it is not a traditional engineering area and there are limited resources. In big industrial areas there is a bigger pool of labour and it tends to move around a bit more.

“There are moves afoot to address the situation, right the way down to young apprenticeships and engineering diplomas, but it's going to take a long time for this to have an effect.

“The shortage in skills restricts growth. We are in a position where we can grow. We have got the capacity with the new machines but can't get the labour.” “

So what is going on? The local college (CCN) have a National Skills Academy Partnership in Manufacturing and yet skills shortages in the Norwich area remain a problem. To find out more about this particular story, I made contact with Mike Ottolangui. Milltech now have their CNC machinists in place but at a cost – they had

to resort to a recruitment agency (and the associated fees) and finally found the right staff from further a field in the county (Thetford). This suggests that the perceived 'skills shortage' may be less acute than reported.

Mike Ottolangui is concerned about the lack of skilled machinists coming out of Norwich, and he suggests that his problem was not unique – there are many similar manufacturing companies in and around the city who find it difficult to recruit people from the Greater Norwich area.

Milltech's needs appear to have been solved. Not only have they trained machinists now in place but a group of businesses (including Milltech) have designed additional training units for a new apprenticeship programme delivered by the Group Training Association EAGIT, in partnership with the sector skills council SEMTA (and its respective National Skills Academy). Hethel will be involved in delivering some elements of the programme using advanced CNC machining techniques and local CNC manufacturer Haas – one of the best producers of CNC machines in the world, will deliver a series of awareness sessions and demonstrations for the new apprentices. Additionally the Haas e-learning module for CNC's will be available on licence to the students. Local manufacturing sector manager, John Bradley has been instrumental in bringing together all these key players to deliver the apprenticeship programme. A cohort of 10 students will start in September 2010 and if employers commit to taking on future apprentices, further courses will be run in future years.

Was Milltech's need an isolated problem or does it point to a more general issue to do with a mismatch of skills in this sector?

What lessons can be learnt from this example which can be applied to other sectors?

Conclusions

This report has attempted to sketch out the issues relating to the skills economy in Norfolk. It has shown that many of the issues are complex and there are rarely simple solutions. Supply and demand factors always need further clarification to determine what the supply actually relates to, and whose demand it is we're talking about (employers; government's; employees; pre-work students etc..). The report has hopefully demonstrated that there is a key difference between skills gaps and skills shortages and that these need to be treated differently. Skills shortages are rare and difficult to predict or overcome without potentially causing an over-supply of a particular skill. Employers react to changes in labour supply with understandable concern but this is sometimes translated into a skills shortage problem when it is usually a local (and possibly temporary) problem.

On the supply side, it is clear that there is some very good practice in employer engagement. Both the universities and the colleges have excellent track records in areas of workforce development, however there are still many obstacles to overcome in terms of engaging SMEs and micro businesses – who are so important for the county's economic development. As the brief business survey showed, there are many small businesses who have no interest in training beyond compliance. How can colleges play a greater role in reaching out to this disengaged sector? Many small businesses tend to 'firefight' and react to market conditions rather than plan strategically for the future. But to understand the small business person's mindset really requires direct experience of being a small business and few people in the public sector support network have that experience or knowledge. So bridges need to be built which will encourage small businesses to consider new ways of working, to think the unthinkable – and put training and development at the top of their agenda. But it can only happen if the training is flexible and relevant to their needs – if not it will simply cement the old view that the whole public sector offer is a waste of time.

The report sets the tone for a series of sector studies which will involve both employers and training providers – sharing the good practice that is evident throughout the county, applying successful models of engagement & delivery to other sectors and geographical areas – and where necessary, challenging both sides to do things differently and build a thriving skills economy.

Recommendations

1. Explore Norfolk sectors in detail – starting with manufacturing; gain a better understanding of the mechanics of delivery, the nuances of supply and demand, and the value of apprenticeships.
2. Further develop the www.skilluppnorfolk.co.uk website – to ensure information on training is available and easy to access and book.
3. Circulate this report to training providers and employers – and incorporate feedback into a follow up report for next steering group meeting.

References & Bibliography –

the following documents were consulted in producing this report

July 2010 - Skills For Sustainable Growth
Consultation On The Future Direction Of Skills Policy
BIS – Department For Business, Innovation & Skills

July 2010 A Strategy For
Sustainable Growth
BIS – Department For Business, Innovation & Skills

The 2010 Report Ambition 2020:
World Class Skills And Jobs For The UK
UKCES

July 2010 - New Skills For New Jobs:
China And The EU Shared Labour Market Experiences
To Inform The Harmonious And Sustainable Society Of The Future
Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities,
European Commission; The Institute of Population and Labour
Economics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

February 2010 New Skills for New Jobs: Action Now
A report by the Expert Group on New Skills for New Jobs
prepared for the European Commission

November 2008 What do graduates do?
HECSU (the Higher Education Careers Services Unit); The Association of Graduate Careers
advisory Services (AGCAS); UCAS

North Norfolk Business Survey Interim Report 2007

The following websites/pages were also consulted:

<http://www.shapingnorfolksfuture.org.uk/content/sectors-1>

<http://www.norfolkinsight.org.uk/keyfacts.asp>

<http://www.insighteast.org.uk/>

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/ccen//services/employers/employinggrads.shtml>

<http://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/content/eveningnews24/norwich-news/business/story.aspx?brand=ENOnline&category=Business&tBrand=ENOnline&tCategory=xNews&itemid=NOED18%20May%202010%2010%3A56%3A23%3A330>

<http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=24624>

<http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/CARMS/meetings/sna2010-03-06ag6iii.pdf>

http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/consumption/groups/public/documents/committee_report/eco_nde100310item15pdf.pdf

Appendix 1 - Contrasting themes from different stakeholders

Norfolk Skills Economy - Contrasting & competing themes from different stakeholders

Colleges

Focus on full-time students;
some large employers;
Plugged into public sector
funding streams
NSA accreditation for key
sectors; previous CoVE funding
QCF qualifications

Private Providers

A mix of market focus and
government contracts;

Old Government

Leitch Targets;
UK PLC - aggregate
demand forecasts;
Apprentices
Train to Gain targets;

New Government

"Pay to Gain" for employers and
employees;
Big Society - Learning for all;
Light touch - and less
bureaucracy;
Apprentices - the main form of
government workforce funding.

Employers

Pay nothing if possible;
Upskill for bottom line;
Accept funding-focus trade-
off;
Pay full price for what you
really need.

Employees

Free Training;
Career potential

Full-time students

Course of my choice;
Possibly related to future job; and/or
mobility aspirations (move to
exciting city)

Appendix 2 - Shaping Norfolk's Future – Skills Economy Priorities

Finance

SG2	Produce 'Professional Events Guide'	Booklet and Website. Coordinate professional institutes in Norfolk representing the whole of the financial services sector to publish seminars and courses. Contribute course event on behalf of IFS institute.	Provides labour force with integrated programme of professional development courses.	M	Fig, professional institutes (ATT, CIOT, ICAEW, ACCA, PFS, CII, IFS, AAT)	1K
SG2	Work with Academy to help meet financial industry's skills needs	Tailor-made and specialist courses. Help direct strategy through role on board of East of England Skills Academy.	Industry has a skilled labour force tailored to its specific needs.	M	Skills Academy, Fig	0.5K
SG2	Working with the Academy to provide programme of seminars and lectures	Coordinated programme of lectures and seminars. Help direct activities through role on board of Norwich Skills Academy. Work with Academy Director to share business intelligence and consider opportunities for joint events.	Professional development: raise the City's profile as a city of financial excellence.	M	Skills Academy, Fig	0.5K

Engineering

SG1, SG2, SG6	Skills for Engineering Initiative	Identify the gaps and failings in the current skills supply chain for the engineering and manufacturing sectors	Enable communication of the current skills gaps for the engineering and sector so that changes can be made to deliver a business demand driven agenda	High	HEC with Partners	£2000
SG1, SG4, SG5	Engineering Academy	Build an Engineering Academy at HEC	Through the academy raise the aspirations of school, college and business students and support raising their attainment levels that meet the needs of businesses	High	HEC with Partners	£5000
SG1, SG6	Skills Training programs	Deliver training programs that raise skill levels of school, college and business students	To enable a more motivated, skilled and therefore successful workforce to meet the needs of businesses both today and in the future	High	Skills Trainers and Brokers working in partnership	-
SG1, SG2	Skills Gap Analyses	Through a variety of partners provide skills gap analyses for businesses to aid understanding their skills needs and identifying solutions	To enable a more motivated, skilled and therefore successful workforce to meet the needs of businesses both today and in the future	High	Partners	-

Rural Economy

Industry intelligence report produced.	Partners receive industry intelligence report covering the food, agricultural and rural business sector. This will ensure all partners have a good level of understanding of what issues are affecting businesses and what macroeconomic issues are having an impact.	No action as awaiting instruction from Norfolk County Council	12/12/09
----------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------	----------

Creative Industries

SG1 SG5	Creative Norfolk.com	Development of sector website	<p>To develop the activity of creative industries employers, U.E.A., N.S.A.D., City, Great Yarmouth and West Anglia Colleges on the website. creativenorfolk.com must become the training and employment centre for the creative industries.</p> <p>To consolidate the position of the website with more promotion/marketing and greater search engine prominence.</p> <p>To continue the website's position as the major promoter of SNF events and projects.</p> <p>To develop the website's regional prominence in association with Screen East, E.E.D.A., C.I.B.I.P., and others.</p> <p>To increase membership from the current level of 600 members to 650 members by the time of the 2008 C.I. Convention.</p> <p>To develop new funding streams from advertising, sponsorship and affiliate membership.</p>	High		£5,000
------------	-------------------------	----------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------	--	--------

Tourism

SG2	B10 Skills information provision	Act as a signpost to skills training via 'Norfolk Tourism Quality Training' (NTQT) website	To contribute to the overall improvement of the quality of the product	Medium	NT	
-----	-----------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------	-----------	--

Energy

SG1/SG2	Support Skills for Energy <i>[Skills Development]</i>	Contribution to the ongoing work of evaluating and developing better aggregated information from supply chain. This builds on strong EEEGR foundation.	Improved understanding of the skills dynamic, its impact and potential for the Energy Industry within Norfolk.	High	Skills for Energy EEEGR, NCC, Industry, EPIC, EEDA,	Figures given below are stated as indicative £3000
---------	-----------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------	------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------

Appendix 3 – Norfolk Training Provider Database

Status	Provider Name	Trainagain Category	Sub-Category	Location	Most common type of training in connection with businesses	Personal Contact	Email	Website	Telephone
Academy	OPITO – The Oil & Gas Academy			Norwich		Liz Davis-Smith			01953 859100
FE	City College Norwich		General FE	Norwich	Scheduled Courses	Mr Geoff Sorrell	geoff_sorrell@ccn.ac.uk	www.ccn.ac.uk	01603 773307
FE	City College Norwich	General		Norwich	Bespoke	Gary Howard	gary_howard@ccn.ac.uk	www.ccn.ac.uk	01603 773297
FE	Easton College	Rural & Land Based	Business skills	Norwich	Scheduled Courses	David Lawrence	dlawrence@easton.ac.uk	www.easton.ac.uk	01603 731225
FE	Great Yarmouth College	General		Great Yarmouth	Scheduled Courses	Mark Bayley	m_bayley@gyc.ac.uk	www.gyc.ac.uk	01493 419273
FE	Norwich University College Of The Arts	Multimedia, Film, TV & Video	Art, Design, Photography, Printing	Norwich	Scheduled Courses	Keith Bartlett	k_bartlett@nuca.ac.uk	www.nuca.ac.uk	01603 756239
FE	The College of West Anglia	General		Kings Lynn	Scheduled Courses	Mark Reavell	mreavell@westanglia.ac.uk	www.westanglia.ac.uk	01553 815204
FE	West Suffolk College	General		Bury St Edmunds	Scheduled Courses	Chris Woods	chris_woods@wsc.ac.uk	www.westsuffolk.ac.uk	01284 716299
GTA	EAGIT LTD		CAD/CAM	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses	Mr D Shorten	info@eagit.org	www.eagit.org	01603 401606
GTA	Eastern Seafish Training Association			Thetford				www.eastern-seafish.org.uk	
GTA	Poultec Training	Food Safety		Dereham		Ed Bails		www.poultec.co.uk	01362 850983
HE	EVOLVE - University of East Anglia		Web development tools	Norwich	Scheduled Courses		evolve@uea.ac.uk	www.uea.ac.uk/nbs/evolve	01603 691816
HE	Research, Enterprise & Engagement - UEA		HE Specialist	Norwich	Collaboration		business@uea.ac.uk	www.uea.ac.uk/business	01603 691574
HE	University of East Anglia - Continuing Education		Writing, Presenting, Communicating	Norwich	Scheduled Courses		admissions@uea.ac.uk	www.uea.ac.uk	01603 456161
Innovation Centre	Hethel Engineering Centre		Management	Norwich	Consultancy		enquiries@hethelcentre.com	www.hethelcentre.com	01953 859100
Local Authority	Broadland Council Training Services	Business IT, Software		Norwich	Scheduled Courses	Sharon Money			01603 788950
Private	A14 Training Services Ltd		IT Skills	Norfolk	Unscheduled Courses		info@a14cs.com	www.a14cs.com	01379 854486
Private	Access Training Safety Plant & Equipment UK Ltd	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation		Thetford					01842 879999
Private	Action Coach - Business Coaching		People & Performance	Norwich	Coaching	Roger Pemberton	rogerpemberton@actioncoach.com	www.actioncoach.com	01508 494414
Private	Active Talk Limited		IT Skills	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses			www.activetalk.co.uk	01603 627766
Private	AFA	Engineering & Manufacturing		Dereham					01362 692973
Private	Ambergen Ltd		People & Performance	Norfolk	Coaching	Miss Hannah Bowford	enquiries@ambergen.co.uk	www.ambergen.co.uk	01366 384297
Private	Anglia Training Associates	Business IT & Software		Thetford					01953 669429
Private	Anne Clarke Associates Ltd	Voluntary, Community, Social & Health Care	NVQ 2-3 Various / Health and social care / management / business admin	Downham Market					01366 389900
Private	Avanti Training & Development Ltd	Management Skills		Wymondham					01953 606088
Private	Britannia International Training & Safety	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation		Wymondham					01953 606100
Private	Business Today Ltd	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation		Norwich					01603 747518
Private	Capital Performance		People & Performance	Norwich	Coaching		adam@capital-performance.co.uk	www.capital-performance.co.uk	07957 958401
Private	Centre for Personal Development	Career & Personal Development		Wymondham					01953 607796
Private	Chalk 'N' Talk Training			Melton Constable					01263 861133
Private	Clear Training Consultants	Management Skills		Norwich					01508 520739
Private	Combined Heating Services Ltd	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation	Utilities	Norwich					01603 516687
Private	Common Purpose	Management Skills		Norwich					01603 305696
Private	Construction Training Specialists Ltd	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation		Norwich				www.construction/training.com	01603 610586
Private	CRG Training & Consultancy		People & Performance	Norwich	Bespoke	Miss Rosanne Goose	enquiries@crgtrainingandconsultancy.com	www.crgtrainingandconsultancy.com	01508 539908
Private	CRG Training & Consultancy			Norwich					01508 539908
Private	Crusader Consultancy Services			Norwich					01508 493118
Private	DECIPHER UK LIMITED			Norwich	Unscheduled Courses		ihindle@decipheruk.com	www.decipheruk.com	01603 717364
Private	Deltic Training Ltd.	Management		Norfolk	Unscheduled Courses		info@deltic-training.co.uk	www.deltic-training.co.uk	01263 734724
Private	DEVELOPMENT ETC LIMITED	People & Performance		Norwich	Bespoke	Ms Jan Munn	info@developmentetc.co.uk	www.developmentetc.co.uk	07799 381992
Private	DIALOGUE LANGUAGE SERVICES LIMITED	Foreign Languages		Norwich	Bespoke	Andrew Harrowen	ah@dialangserv.com	www.dialangserv.com	01953 860843
Private	DIALOGUE LANGUAGE SERVICES LIMITED	Writing, Presenting, Communicating		Norwich	Unscheduled Courses	Andrew Harrowen	ah@dialangserv.com	www.dialangserv.com	01954 860843
Private	Discovery Coaching & Training		Coaching	Norwich	Bespoke			www.discovery-coaching.co.uk	07887 745796
Private	Donna Intera	Career & Personal Development		Dereham					01362 654488
Private	Drive Alive UK Ltd	Motor Vehicle (Driving)	Defensive driving courses	Diss					01379 651044
Private	Earwig Deaf Awareness Coaching	Voluntary, Community, Social & Health Care		Great Yarmouth					07842 166840
Private	East Anglian Institute of NLP & Hypnosis	Career & Personal Development		Norwich					01603 626477
Private	East of England Construction Training Group	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation		Norwich					01953 607 707
Private	Eastern Counties Access Solutions	Health & Safety		Norwich					01603 735130
Private	Elite Training Services Ltd			Norwich					01603 731008
Private	Extra Mile Training & Consultancy			Thetford					01953 880208
Private	Freescape			Cromer					01263 510867
Private	Grant Solutions	Grant Funding		Norwich	Consultancy	Ms Erika Paganini	enquiry@grantsolutions.co.uk	www.grantsolutions.co.uk	01603 893478
Private	Great House Training Centre			Norwich					01603 785237
Private	Hygiene & Safety Alliance Ltd	Health & Safety		Norwich					01603 413956
Private	INDIGO Dyslexia Centre	Learning Barriers		Norwich	Consultancy		indigo@4dyslexics.com	www.4dyslexics.com	0845 347 9322
Private	Infinite Possibilities	People & Performance		Norwich	Coaching		info@infinite-possibilities.co.uk	www.infinite-possibilities.co.uk	0870 444 3227
Private	Insight IT Training Ltd.	IT Skills		Norwich	Unscheduled Courses	Mr Darren Blake	training@insighta.co.uk	www.insighta.co.uk	01603 767669
Private	International School of Aerospace NDT Ltd	Engineering & Manufacturing		Norwich					01603 401717
Private	ISC Networks Ltd		Web development tools	East	Scheduled Courses		info@iscnet.co.uk	www.iscnet.co.uk	01480 420000
Private	Jarrold Training		IT Skills	Norwich	Scheduled Courses			www.jarroldtraining.co.uk	01603 677107

Private	Little Miss Media	Multimedia, Film, TV & Video		Dereham						07940 196181
Private	LJ Create Ltd.		IT Skills	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses		info@lcreate.co.uk	www.lcreate.co.uk		01603 748001
Private	Maier Partnership			Norwich						01603 821008
Private	Mancroft International	Management Skills		Norwich						01603 861650
Private	Matrix College of Counselling & Pscchotherapy		People & Performance	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses		sue@matrix-training.org	www.matrix-training.org		01603 812479
Private	Matrix Training Consultancy Limited		Management	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses			www.matrix4training.co.uk		01603 502240
Private	Meridian East	Business IT & Software		Norwich						0300 111 450
Private	MerrIT		Computer Programming	Norwich	Bespoke	Mark Merrywest	Mark@MerrITConsultancy.co.uk	www.merritconsultancy.co.uk		01603 327427
Private	MoCo Development Ltd	Career & Personal Development		Norwich						01603 283638
Private	New Life Training Green	Rural & Land Based	Welding courses	Diss						01379 642661
Private	NORCAS Training Consultancy (Open Access Drug & Alcohol Services)	Voluntary, Community, Social & Health Care		Norwich						01603 621116
Private	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce		Business	Norwich	Scheduled Courses		membership@norfolkchamber.co.uk	www.norfolkchamber.co.uk		01603 625977
Private	Norfolk County Council Adult Education		IT Skills	Norwich	Scheduled Courses		adulthoodeducationnorwich@norfolk.gov.uk	www.norfolk.gov.uk/consumption/idcplg?ldcSen		01603 306607
Private	Norwich IT Courses		Web development tools	Norwich	Scheduled Courses	Michael Grunberger	info@norwich-it-courses.co.uk	www.norwich-it-courses.co.uk		07746 739279
Private	NWES		Business	Norwich	Scheduled Courses		gy@nwes.org.uk	www.nwes.org.uk		01603 227840
Private	People Tonic		People & Performance	Norwich	Scheduled Courses		admin@peopletonic.com	www.peopletonic.com		01603 864366
Private	Petans Limited		Health & Safety	Norwich	Scheduled Courses	Michael Wilder	booking@petans.co.uk	www.petans.co.uk		01603 891255
Private	Pitman Training Centre		IT Skills	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses	Glyn Woodman		www.pitman-training.com/norwich		01603 619769
Private	Pitman Training Centre	Business IT, Software		Norwich						01603 619769
Private	PLANETWEB SYSTEMS LIMITED		Web development tools	Norwich	Bespoke	Sharon Sumner	sales@planetweb.co.uk	www.planetweb.co.uk		0845 122 7181
Private	PMB Software Solutions		IT Skills	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses	Mr Paul Barber	info@pmbss.co.uk	www.pmbss.co.uk		0800 781 3526
Private	Protocol Skills			Norwich						01603 614321
Private	Q Training Ltd	Voluntary, Community, Social & Health Care		Norwich						01603 721411
Private	Quality Training Services			Norwich						01603 785237
Private	RCS Training & Consultancy Ltd	Management Skills		Norwich						01508 538432
Private	Red People Management Ltd			Norwich						0870 224485
Private	Rising Stars		People & Performance	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses		enquiries@reachyourfullpotential.co.uk	www.reachyourfullpotential.co.uk		01603 819938
Private	Rising Stars Sports	Sports & Leisure		Norwich						01603 511440
Private	RMH Training Services Ltd	Business IT, Software	Fraud Investigation	Norwich						01508 521330
Private	Seetec		Web development tools	East	Unscheduled Courses	Katie		www.seetec.co.uk		01702 201070
Private	Sheldon Associates Ltd			Norwich						01603 662438
Private	SLC Consultants Ltd	Train The Trainer		Norwich						01603 891298
Private	SLC Consultants Ltd Orchard			Norwich						01603 891298
Private	Solutions Training & Assessment Ltd			Norwich						01533 775333
Private	South East Regional Assessment Centre Ltd	Environmental	waste management	Holt						01623 710070
Private	St. Michael's Cottage Crafts			Norwich						01603 746106
Private	Steve Morphew Associates		People & Performance	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses	Kim Arthurton	info@stevemorphew.co.uk	www.stevemorphew.co.uk		01603 762523
Private	The Maddermarket Theatre		People & Performance	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses		mmtedu@btconnect.com	www.maddermarket.co.uk		01603 628600
Private	The Norfolk Construction	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation	Health & Safety	Wymondham						01953 600700
Private	The Red Cat Partnership		Health & Safety	Norwich	Unscheduled Courses		enquiries@redcat.gb.com	www.redcat.gb.com		01603 502136
Private	The Trainee Plumbing Workshop	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation	Utilities	Attleborough						07866 887878
Private	The Training Association	Rural & Land Based		Kings Lynn						01485 600225
Private	Tips for Good Management	Management Skills		Dereham						01362 699392
Private	TNG Ltd	General	work based learning	Great Yarmouth						01493 858931
Private	Town & Provincial Seminars	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation	All training in property related topics for surveys for solicitors / lawyers / surveys	North Walsham						01692 500164
Private	Trevelyan Training Trackside Competences			Norwich						01603 740798
Private	U.E.A Business & Investment Management Game	Business Training & Advice		Norwich						01603 458220
Private	Women's Employment Enterprise & Training Unit	Business		Norwich	Unscheduled Courses		admin@weetu.org	www.weetu.org		01603 230625
Private	Work House (Norfolk) Ltd		People & Performance	Norwich	Bespoke	Jenny Eaton	jenny@work-house.org	www.work-house.org		01603 230625
Private	WoW4 Limited		Writing, Presenting, Communicating	Norwich	Bespoke		askus@wow4.ltd.uk	www.wow4.ltd.uk		0845 619 9654
Private	www.cciassociates.co.uk	Management Skills	Development programs for specific companies / public and private / management personal developmen	Norwich				www.cciassociates.co.uk		01603 721477
Private	YMCA Training	Business IT, Software		Norwich						01603 620642
Private	YMCA Training	Business IT, Software	Apprentices health and social care / child care / retail / admin / customer service / level 2-3 / Private ICT training	Great Yarmouth						01493 444570
Private	Z.F.L Ltd	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation		Thetford						01842 821692
SSC	National Construction College	Building & Construction, Associated Regulation	Health & Safety	Bircham Newton	Scheduled Courses	Mark Baird				